



Exploring corporate culture and
communication in Finnish and Italian
business environment
Case: Prima Finn-Power Group



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**EXPLORING CORPORATE CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION IN
FINNISH AND ITALIAN BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT**
Case: Prima Finn-Power Group

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The thesis Exploring corporate culture and communication in Finnish and Italian business environment will research the essential corporate cultural differences which affect on the daily business processes in Prima Finn-Power Group. After the fusion three years ago, the two organisations encountered a change which concerned both the personnel and new business procedures. The business procedures supplemented each others and the products are complementary. More deviance occurred in organisational level, business behaviour and communication between Finnish and Italian employees. The thesis discovers what are the deviances that might affect to the co-operation and trading.

The theory of the thesis is based on a famous researcher's Geert Hofstede's previous research of Cultural Dimensions. The theory compares the essential attributes that the both cultures and corporate cultures possess. It also discovers where these cultural values and traditions derive from. It also explains the concept of culture and how it can affect the business.

The research was implemented among the personnel from Prima Finn-Power Group. Altogether ten employees were interviewed in September, 2010. The interviews were mainly a discussion in which the topics were given for the interviewee beforehand. The interviews concerned the corporate culture differences as well as the communication in both organisational cultures. It also discovered suggestions and opinions about the personnel publication Chorus, which could assist employees to understand the cultural differences, adapt the foreign culture and help in the integration process. The discoveries from the research were concerning the power of making the decisions as managers in same positions do not possess the same authorization of making the decisions. Besides, the trustworthy against colleagues from the other organisation stood out from the research. The communication was perceived as different but not invincible among the respondents. The attitude of the personnel affects on the co-operation whether they are willing to be in the same team or against their own company.

As the conclusion, the employees would have to get familiar with each other individually and each business procedures. The management is required to inform employees about the common goals, strategy and encourage employees to overcome the issues that impacting on the co-operation.

Keywords: corporate culture, cultural differences, intercultural communication, fusion

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Exploring corporate culture and communication in Finnish and Italian business environments

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Opinnäytetyö Exploring corporate culture and communication in Finnish and Italian business environment tutkii keskeisiä yrityskulttuurieroja jotka vaikuttavat päivittäisiin toimintamalleihin yrityksessä Prima Finn-Power Group. Kaksi eri organisaatiota ovat joutuneet kohtaamaan muutoksen kolme vuotta sitten tapahtuneen fuusion jälkeen. Fuusio vaikutti sekä henkilöstöön sekä se loi uuden työjärjestyksen. Yritykset sopivat yhteen toimintatavoiltaan ja sen lisäksi tuotteet täydensivät toisiaan. Fuusion vaikutus näkyikin enimmäkseen organisaatiossa, jossa suomalaisten ja italialaisten työntekijöiden käytös ja kommunikaatio eroavat kulttuurisista syistä. Tämä opinnäytetyö havaitsee näitä eroja, jotka saattavat vaikuttaa henkilöstön yhteistyöhön ja toimintatapoihin.

Opinnäytetyön teoria perustuu kuuluisan tutkija Geert Hofsteden aikaisempaan tutkimukseen kansallisista kulttuureista ja organisaatiokulttuurien vuorovaikutuksesta. Teoria vertaa olennaisia kulttuurillisia ominaisuuksia, joita molemmat kulttuurit ja yrityskulttuurit omaavat. Teoria selittää myös mistä nämä kulttuuriset arvot ja tavat ovat peräisin. Teoriassa on myös esitetty kulttuurin konsepti sekä sen vaikutus liiketoimintaan.

Opinnäytetyön tutkimus toteutettiin Prima Finn-Power Groupin työntekijöiden kanssa. Kaiken kaikkiaan kymmentä työntekijää haastateltiin syyskuussa 2010. Haastattelut olivat enimmäkseen keskusteluja aiheista, jotka oli annettu haastateltaville etukäteen. Haastattelut käsittelivät työympäristössä esiintyviä kulttuurisia eroja sekä molempien organisaatioiden kommunikointia. Haastatteluissa keskusteltiin myös henkilöstö julkaisun Choruksen parannusehdotuksista ja uusista ideoista. Choruksen tarkoituksena on auttaa henkilökuntaa ymmärtämään kulttuurillisia eroja sekä sopeutumaan vieraaseen kulttuuriin. Tutkimuksesta tehdyt havainnot koskivat enimmäkseen päätöksentekovaltaa. Haastateltavien mukaan esimiehet samassa asemassa eivät omaa samoja oikeuksia tehdä lopullista päätöstä. Lisäksi tutkimuksessa nousi esiin kysymys luottamuksesta toisiin kollegoihin. Haastateltavien mukaan kommunikaatio nähtiin erilaisena, mutta ei ylitsepääsemättömänä. Henkilöstön oma asenne vaikuttaa myös yhteistyöhön; joko he ovat samassa tiimissä tai vastaan omaa yritystään.

Johtopäätöksenä, henkilöstön tulisi tutustua toisiinsa henkilökohtaisesti sekä tuntee toistensa toimintatavat. Johdon pitää informoida henkilöstöä yhteisistä päämääristä, strategiasta ja rohkaista henkilökuntaa voittamaan yhteistyöhön vaikuttavat tekijät.

Asiasanat: yrityskulttuuri, kulttuurierot, kansainvälinen kommunikaatio, fuusio

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1. Introduction

Cultural knowledge and adaption are the key words of today's globalisation and business actions across countries. My thesis will concentrate on cultural, business behaviour and communication differences between Finnish and Italian business environments. By business environment I mean a group of people working in the same facilities or people who are interacting with each other in business sense. In today's fast growing globalisation, it is important to raise the awareness of intercultural understanding in order to become more capable of working in international environments and with different nationalities. In addition, conflicts and misunderstandings that might have negative consequences to the trade are avoided when one is aware of cultural backgrounds and differences. In this thesis, I will bring up cultural diversities between Finnish and Italian business environments and the main cultural issues they confront when they work together. Thereby Finnish and Italian business people will be informed about the cultural differences that affect them.

“Culture is the learned and shared values, beliefs and assumptions of a group of interacting people which result in characteristic behaviours”

(Craig Storti)

1.1 Background of the research/ Research field

To understand Finnish and Italian corporate culture, it is essential to understand the underlying reasons and backgrounds rooted from the ancient history and the country's culture. The purpose of the thesis is to examine and state those differences that occur between Finnish and Italian collaboration. And secondly, I will explain the ultimate backgrounds for the value differences between those two countries. The theory part presents general view of culture and culture theories. I will apply famous researcher's models for culture, corporate culture and business behavioural differences in Finland and in Italy. In addition, I will explore intercultural communication theories in different countries and use patterns to explain the different styles of communication. According to these models and patterns, and comparing Finnish and Italian styles, the theory part will be composed.

1.1.1 Prima Industrie S.p.A

The thesis will be written as a commission for multinational company Prima Industrie S.p.A. Finnish enterprise Finn-Power was acquired by an Italian company Prima Industrie S.p.A. three years ago. Today, Prima Industrie Group has circa 1.400 employees around the world. The company acts globally on sheet metal industry. They provide among others punching,

bending and laser cutting machines. In addition, they provide service contracts to maximize the performance and productivity for the customer. Prima Industrie Group has its headquarters in Turin (Italy) and main manufacturing plants in Finland, Italy, North-America and China. They have several sales subsidiaries and distributors in Europe, Canada and in the United States.

After two incoherent years of the acquisition, it is accurate time to begin to create a common strategy, brand concept, Information technology and more similarly functioning corporate culture; ultimately become one company by the business styles and work in harmony. My goal is to discover the underlying differences in corporate culture and communication and explore how these affecting on the co-operation: what are the issues that raise conflicts and how the incidents are handled. It must be remembered, corporate cultures are unique and they differ much even within one country and within different areas of business. The purpose of the thesis is to obtain the differences and afterwards visualize them.

Prima Finn-Power Group has established an Integration Committee; two members from Finn-Power and two from Prima. In the beginning of 2010 the company also established a publication called "Chorus" which is provided in the company's intranet and also delivered to everyone's e-mail account. The purpose of Chorus is to inform employees about the integration process. It aims to help employees to adapt the process by creating good atmosphere and creating ground where to build new common business culture. The content is to publish latest news and introduce cultures and also colleagues across their own country. By introducing people among their culture, it may be possible to get to know your colleague working abroad or even on the other continent as well as the cultural characteristics.

1.1.2 Limitations of the research

The concepts "culture" and "cultural differences" are broad by themselves. The thesis will be limited to explore the business cultures only in Finland and Italy. The first suggestion from the company's side was also to explore North-American's impact because approximately one third of the employees work in North-America and it is an important unit of the enterprise. It can not be forgotten that the market share is enormous in North-America. Therefore, this suggestion is implemented partly; North-America was included in the survey and the results are published also in the thesis. Nevertheless, the focus in the theory part is still only in Finland and Italy which are also the founder enterprises.

Despite the fact that the theory will concentrate on Finnish and Italian cultures, the research will also include North-America's impact to the common business culture in Prima Finn-Power

Group. The interviews will be conducted among the personnel and within the people who has cooperated with of the all three countries.

The thesis is written by a Finnish writer and the research is implemented from a Finnish cultural perspective. The writers own cultural views may have an influence in the thesis.

1.2 Methodology of the research

The research will be implemented by using qualitative research method. Qualitative research is chosen because it provides at the same time an opportunity for the researcher to observe the interviewee. It enables to observe the respondent's body language, gestures, reactions, tone and possible deceptions. The interviews are theme interviews in which only the structure is given for both the interviewer and the interviewee. The implementation is more a discussion based on interview structure. Theme interview creates a possibility to ask more specific questions according to the discussion's turn.

Naturally, all Finnish, Italian and North-American employees are interviewed but also Prima Finn-Power employees from all over the company. The idea is to take notice all parts of the company. The criteria for choosing the interviewees is simple: they all come from culturally different backgrounds and they have cooperated with Finnish, Italian and North-American nationalities. Altogether, ten people are interviewed during the autumn 2010. Nine interviews are conducted in Finnish headquarters in Kauhava and one interview at the Helsinki-Vantaa Airport.

1.3 Election of the topic

1.3.1 The challenge of collaborating internationally

Due to the fast growing globalisation, people are interacting more often with people from various numbers of cultures. They encounter these unfamiliar situations in normal offices as well as new job assignments. It brings more challenge to their daily life than they have used to in national business environments. These self-evident traditions like shaking hands, sending e-mail and having punctual meetings turns to be "not so self-evident" because people are used to run things, simply just, in a different way. Working internationally might cause conflicts and incidents because these self-evident traditions crash with other traditions. If you are not aware of a manner eg how to hand over your business card, your action might be considered as rude and in worst case it might even lead to tear the contract.

1.3.2 My interest and motives for the topic

My interest for the topic started when I was an exchange student in spring 2009 in St. Gallen, Switzerland. I had a course “Intercultural Communication and Understanding” where I became familiar with a part of the theory ‘cultural differences’. As I was living in foreign culture with other exchange students for six months, I really experienced different cultures and behaviours, different communication styles and even a culture shock. The theory was actually experienced in practise. I got interested from where our behaviours and communication is originates from and how we apply it and how we behave in everyday life when we cooperate with people from another cultures. Do I need to change my behaviour when I am abroad? Or does he? “When in Rome do as the Romans do”?

When doing this research for Prima Finn-Power and writing about the results, the theory becomes into practise. The company has experienced a merger three years ago, and left with none leading culture, but two equally powerful cultures. Even though Finland and Italy are both European countries, even a layman knows that the two countries are truly different. The countries differ from each other by their culture as well as business styles and communication. Partly the countries’ roots are in the history but also partly because of the religion - catholic and protestant. Also these factors will be explored in the thesis.

1.4 The purpose and objectives of the thesis

The purpose of the thesis is to explore and illustrate the essential theory of culture, cultural behaviour and communication, especially between the Finnish and Italian cultures. In addition, the purpose is to understand the underlying reasons why people behave in certain manner and why the mindsets contrast. The focus is on Prima Finn-Power Group’s corporate culture. The characteristics between Finnish and Italian cultures and communication styles will be profiled opposite to each other to clarify the differences which will help to understand both cultures in the future. As a result, the Finnish and Italian co-workers are able to work together easier: create a common understanding and communication for the future.

“Exploring culture is an exciting endeavour, as it involves a never-ending process of discovery. Not only is it the discovery of others, but in that discovery of others, a rediscovery of self”

Susan C. Schneider

The main objective is to discover the cultural and communication differences in Prima Finn-Power Group which might hinder the cooperation and cause conflicts among the employees and the business environment. Additionally, I will explore what the prevalent assumptions

about the Finnish colleagues for an Italian are and vice versa. Finally, the theory and the previous researches will be compared to the conducted interview results.

The other objective is to collect information from the theory and from the research and back up the publication “Chorus”, which is delivered in the company’s intra. Chorus’ aim is to inform the integration process and to help employees to understand it. Its purpose is to create common attitude, create basis for the business culture and to introduce cultures and employees around the globe. After people are aware of their own culture, and afterwards of the foreign culture, they may start developing new business relationships. Employees create their own strategy for how to approach others and assumptions what to expect and how to handle each situation. The purpose of introducing the cultures is to prevent possible misunderstandings. They know the backgrounds why the other nationality behaves a particular way and they are aware of the different communication style. The concrete meetings flow in harmony when both parties adapt to the other cultural features. The ideal situation is that the interacting, among the employees of Prima Finn-Power does not emerge any question marks!

1.4.1 The main research problem:

- What kind of cultural and communication differences do there exist between Finnish and Italian business environment?

And the supporting problems are:

- How would the research back up the integration process and the team?
- Can the personnel publication Chorus be used efficiently in this case?

1.5 Outline of the thesis

The thesis will concentrate on the differences between Finnish and Italian culture and corporate culture. The theory part will include definitions of culture and corporate culture by famous culture researchers. For instance, the cultural differences will be reviewed through Hofstede’s four cultural dimensions model. Secondly, the communication patterns will be investigated and presented and then the two styles will be set against to recreate a picture of the dissimilarities.

1.5.1 The structure of the thesis

The thesis will be constructed by four parts: theoretical backgrounds, empirical study, research implementation and conclusion.

Theoretical backgrounds

The first part, theoretical backgrounds, includes first of all a definitions of culture, explains corporate culture and cultures in crash. Then it presents cultural theory and how it is applied in workplaces, and the difference between Finnish and Italian business styles based on the source books. The first part also includes the theory of communication patters and the locations of Finland and Italy.

Empirical study

The second part, empirical study, clarifies the background of the research; how it has been implemented and what has been the research method. In addition, it will evaluate the validity and reliability of the research.

Research implementation

The results from the interviews will be presented and analyzed in the third part. The results will be also compared to the theory, Hofstede's previous research and all the findings from the sources.

Conclusion

Finally, based on the analyses a conclusion will be drawn of what the main differences are that occur in Finnish and Italian business cooperation and how they impact on the cooperation.

2. Definitions of culture

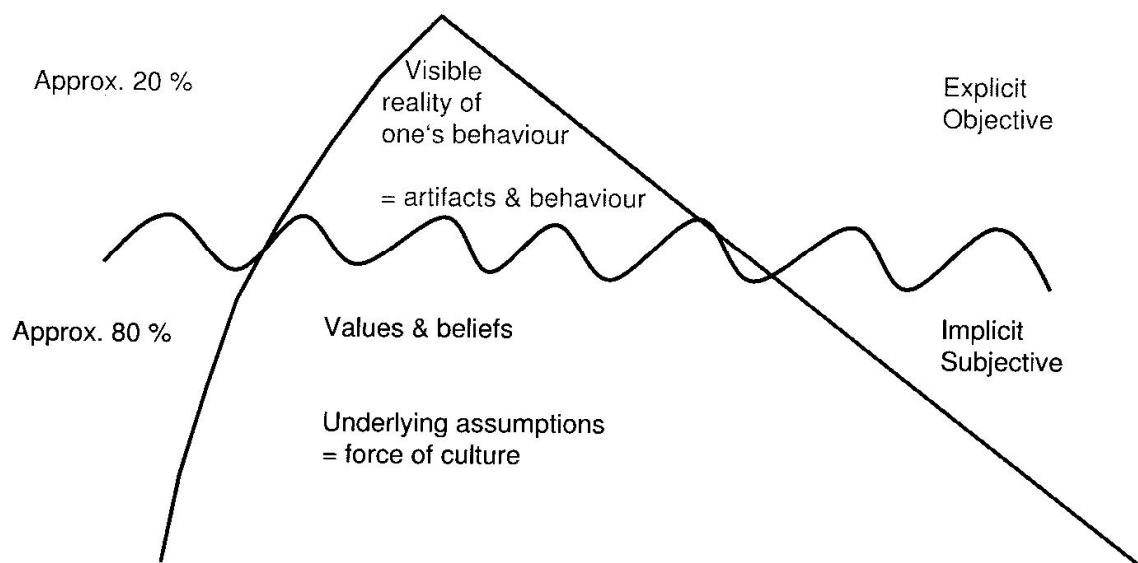
2.1 Culture

The word 'Culture' comes originally from Latin and it can be translated as "civilization or refinement of the mind" (Hofstede,2005 p.3). Culture means a group's shared system of meanings. It includes; what we pay attention to, how we act and what we value. It is our orientation system of how we perceive other people, their behaviours and environment. Culture is also learned. It is learned from our surroundings and from people around us; family, school, friends, hobbies, country, politics etc. Culture does not only depend on itself but also the interaction within the environment it exists (Schein,2001 p.8). There exist also several types of subjective cultures such as the following: national (France), ethnic (Muslims),

regional (country-side), gender (female), socio-economic (middle-class), educational (professor), religion (Buddhism), age (youngsters), and sexual orientation (homosexual). According to Schein, the culture controls more people than people can control it. (Schein,2001 p.41)

2.1.1 Iceberg model of culture

Culture can be explicit - visible, as well as implicit - invisible. An iceberg model describes the culture thus approximately 20 percent as explicit and approximately 80 percent as implicit. Those circa 20 percent are the observable aspects that eyes and ears can perceive; how one acts and dresses, what language one speaks, etc. Whereas, most part of the individual qualities lies in the non-obvious side; what one beliefs in and what one values, how one confronts space and time orientation, what one's role is etc.



Picture 1. Ice berg-model

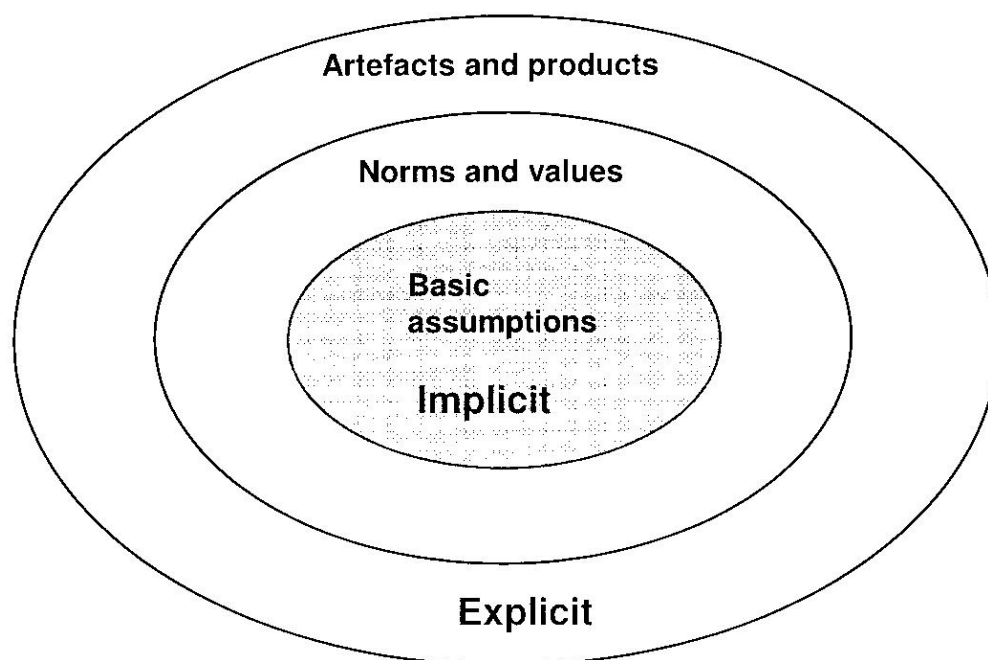
2.1.2 Layers of culture

Fons Trompenaars, a Dutch author, has impacted on the field of cross-cultural communication. His model of culture visualizes culture in layers. The outer layer contains of explicit artifacts and products which are the objective definitions for culture. The explicit culture can be observed by the reality of language, behaviour, habits, traditions, food, buildings, houses,

monuments, markets, fashion and other's appearance. According to Trompenaars, these artifacts and products are the symbols of a deeper level of culture.

The middle layer consists of norms and values. The explicit layer reflects to culture as a whole, whereas the norms and values reflect to an individual group. By norms, it is meant of group's mutual sense of what is "right and wrong". For instance, is it right or wrong to cross the street during red light? Norms may even develop on a formal level such as written laws and regulations. Values, on the other hand, determine what is "good and bad". Values reflect to the group's idealisation and the backgrounds why it was established or born.

The core layer includes the basic assumptions about existence. The reason why individuals differ can be correlated in the core layer. Each individual have created an own way of how to survive in nature and how to handle everyday life. The core layer distinguishes me from you. (Trompenaars,2003 p. 22)

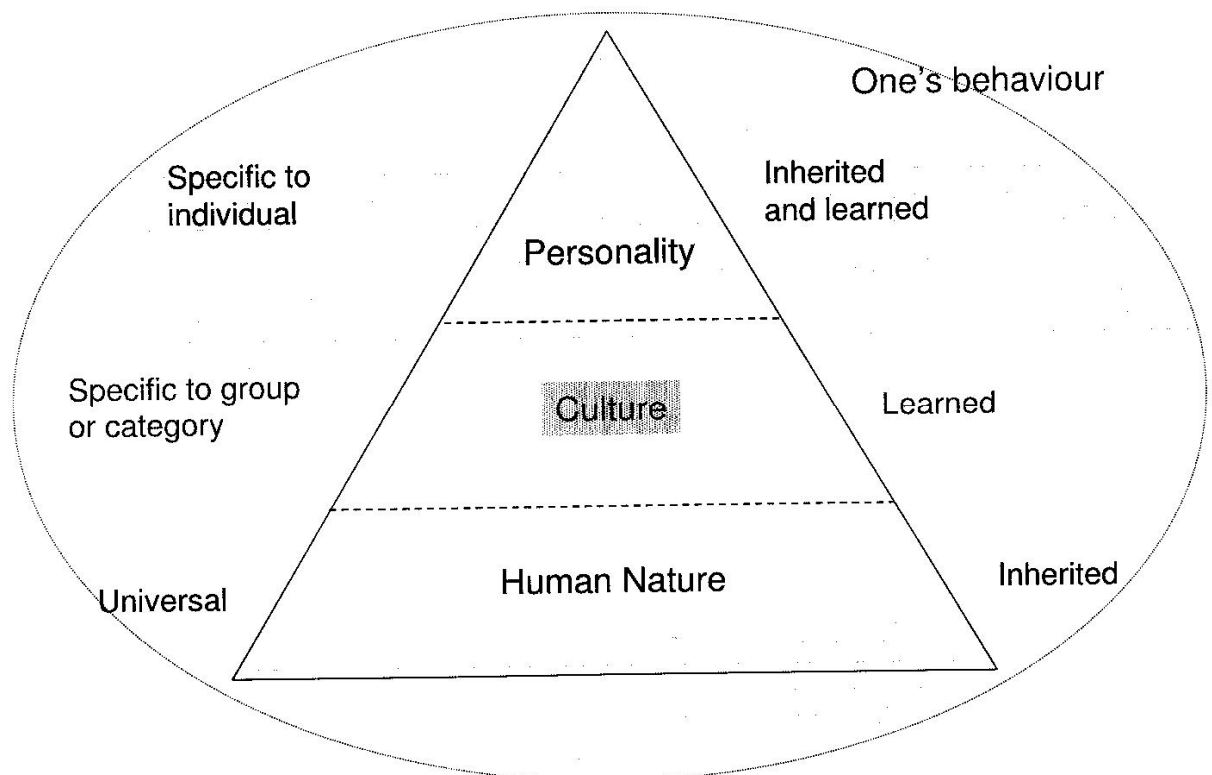


Picture 2. Onion-model

2.1.3 Culture as mental programming

According to Geert Hofstede, who is an internationally rewarded organizational sociologist from Holland, every person carries within his or herself patterns of thinking, feeling and potential acting that have and will be learned throughout one's lifetime. The software of the

mind or mental programming starts in early childhood within a family. To be noted, Hofstede states that a child starts to remember only after he has turned two years old. The mental programming continues teaching and saving the patterns from all social environments through this person's lifetime. Hofstede's model "Three levels of Uniqueness in mental programming" starts from the bottom up. Human Nature is what all human beings have in common. It is inherited within one's genes. It determines one's physical and basic psychological functions: need to drink water or ability to feel fear. The second stage is Culture which is specific to a group or category. As stated before, culture is learned from people around one and it can be both visible and hidden. In the top stage, there is Personality. It is an individual's characteristics featuring both the learned culture and inherited human nature. (Hofstede, 2005 p.4)



Picture 3. Human mental program

2.2 Corporate culture

Corporate culture or organisational culture means the customs and the practices at workplace. It contains both the managers and subordinates. Also corporate culture can be separated into subcultures; organisational and departmental. Even within one company, these subcultures may differ due to their actual functions, employees and managers. Each organisation has its own communication (language), cooperation, manager-subordinate relationship,

independence and authority. These can be categorized as characteristics of an organisation culture.

Also in daily life, the organisation is based on the corporate culture. There are unwritten rules how to behave, dress and address others and what the values in the office are. In length, these “rules” may become company’s mission statements or written values after they are pursued and become self-evident. Organisations may have their own language with possible acronyms to make the work run smoother, traditions (i.e. Christmas parties), and concept of dealing with feelings, gestures and the personal space. It also includes the office hour routines and relationship to time (i.e. being late). (Schein, 2001 p.39, 112, 124)

Edgar H. Schein is a PhD in social psychology and he has explored organisational culture and organisational development and he has invented the term “Corporate Culture”. Schein’s model Levels of Culture can be paralleled as corporate culture:

ARTIFACTS

The first level is Artifacts. Artifacts are the first impression what you perceive in the organisation; the infrastructure, decoration, office layout, dress code, the atmosphere and the behaviour towards each other. The organisation culture may seem obvious but the underlying reason is not clear; why the employees of the organisation act in certain way. Only by observing the organisation, it is not possible to depict the culture and this leads to the second level.

ESPOUSED BELIEFS AND VALUES

The second level is Espoused Beliefs and Values. By interviewing and having discussion with the members of a community the written rules may be presented; such as customer orientation, loyalty, honesty, and also the company’s rewarding- and punishment systems. One may wonder if the values and the customs are from the founder who has established the community. When the community confronts a new task, is the leader to be followed and obeyed and are the employees working in teams or as individuals. And finally, if an employee disagrees with the decision of a procedure, will he raise the questioned issue against the boss’ will among the other employees or continue to work in consensus?

BASIC UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS

To understand the third stage Basic Underlying Assumptions, one needs to take a look into the history of the company. What were the founder's beliefs, values and assumptions that have made the company successful? The people who have been involved establishing the company have indoctrinated the individuals or small teams together with their beliefs, values and assumptions. If the founder's values do not correspond what the environment does, the organisation may not take wind under it and may even fail. (Schein,2001 p.25-36, 127)

2.2.1 Corporate culture and leadership

Which came first - chicken or egg? Corporate culture or leader? According to Schein, the leadership comes before the culture. Thereby, the founder forms the culture. The leader already has his existing norms, values, behaviour patterns, rituals and traditions and with these beliefs he influences the organisation culture and the subordinates. When a company is establishing, the leader's values affect on the subordinates' values and eventually the subordinator's values convert into the leader's ones. What the leader pays attention to, measures and controls is important. And it is automatically important for every subordinate as well. (Schein,2001 p.2, 15-16, 246)

2.2.2 Corporate culture in fusion, acquisition and joint venture

Culture is truly hard to change. It is a stone for its member and it provides meaning and predictability and the leader is the one who manages the organisation. (Schein p.14) What happens when the organisation faces an acquisition or merge with another company. Whose organisation culture and leader is to be followed then? The integration of two companies should be based on operational level but not neglecting corporate cultural differences. (Trompenaars,2003 p. 104)

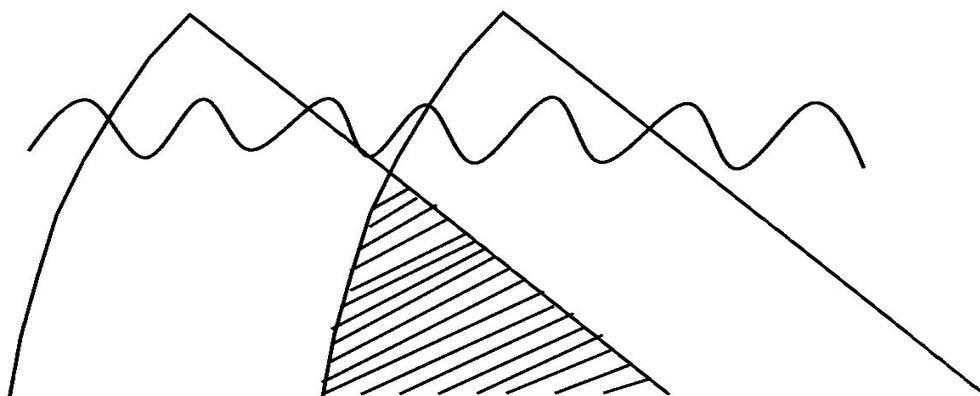
When two companies confront, the organisational culture needs to be parallel, reconcile, merge or captivate. In fusion, when two companies merge, the purpose is to mix those two corporate cultures. In this case, the best features from both cultures are stated to be the aspired conclusion. In reality it is more complicated and as a step of the result is to create a completely new culture which is common for both parties. In acquisition, when one company purchases the other, the purchaser's corporate culture becomes the leading culture and the other's the subculture. The employees in the subculture are forced to start acquiring and adapting to the leading culture and start working with new methods. In joint ventures, both

corporate cultures stay apart from each other as separate. Despite that, the problem may arise in common goals, motives and future objectives. All of these three transitions connect the fact that the companies involved have no connection in the history. Creating a new culture causes misunderstandings among the employees, customers and partners in cooperation. The basic underlying assumptions are presumably different as well as the business process' and styles. The incompatibility of corporate cultures is as huge risk as are the financial and product or market mismatch risks. Fusions that are taken place globally encounter both organisational and national culture differences and misunderstandings. The purchasing company must be aware of its own corporate culture before start merging with a new one. (Schein,2004 p.189-191)

2.3 Cultural crash

Globalisation and internationalisation have increased enormously after 1970s and companies become more and more multinational. Due to those reasons, people interact more often with people from other cultures. Cultural differences deeply affect commitments, relationships, decision-making and other critical elements of social interaction.

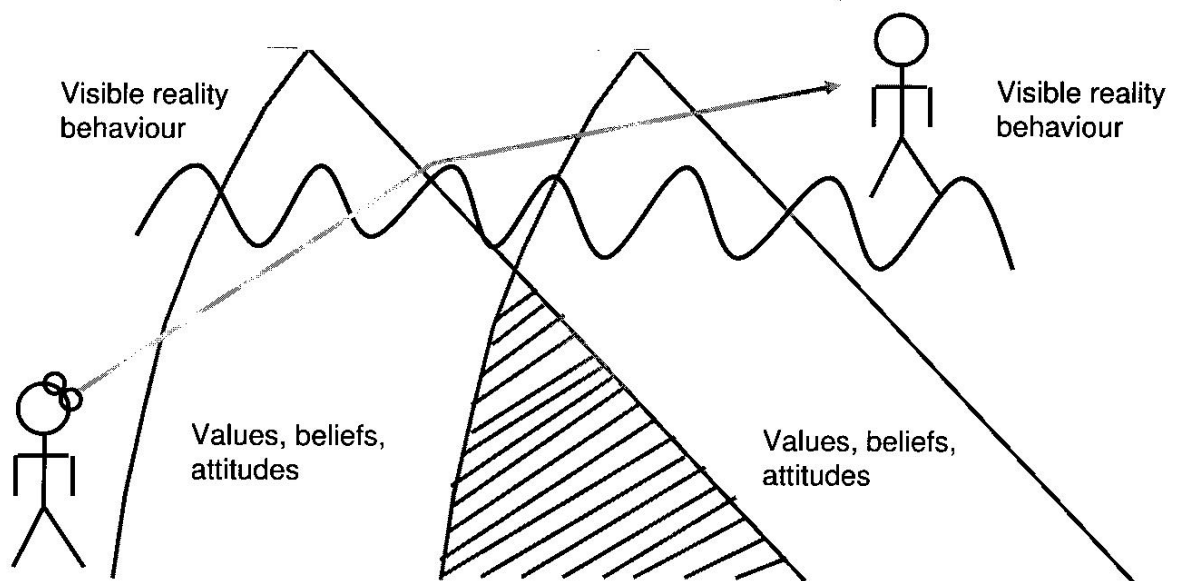
Business is not just business everywhere. One might handle business trading, business meetings and follow the agenda in a crucial way but that style does not work in all countries and cultures. The reason, why it does not work, lies in the culture of the country that crashes with another culture. If cultural differences are not understood or taken into account, they can pose significant barriers to the implementation or success of the business. Geert Hofstede states in his book "Software of the mind" that one needs to be aware of one's own culture, the mindset which guides you how to think, feel and act before one can learn something different. (Hofstede,2005 p.2)



Picture 4. Cultures in crash

Hofstede also states that the key of successful confrontation of two companies is that both parties are aware of their own values, customs and business style. It also requires an insight of the opposite culture and communication skills to ensure that the message is understood by both sides. (Hofstede,2005 p.339)

As two different cultures communicate and interact together, both parties need to adapt the other's culture. To adapt to culture, I mean to learn, know and understand the difference and not to judge. But first one needs to be totally aware of one's own culture and thereby be able to adapt the other one. When meeting a new person, the only things one can observe are the obvious, explicit qualities. Most part of the culture still underlies in the person's mind, values and assumptions. In the first confrontation with a representative from new culture, the cultural lenses help to understand not only the obvious features but also the hidden aspects - attitudes, values and beliefs.



Picture 5. Cultural lenses

The 3R's model applies also to the previous picture. The first R stands for Recognize: one needs to take a closer look inside of the culture's values, beliefs and attitudes and recognize the cultural differences. The next step is to Respect those differences. Even though globalisation has faded some cultural characteristics away, there exist differences that need to be respected and approved. There does not exist only one way to do a certain thing, but several ways. The last R stands for Reconcile. Once you are aware and respect the cultural differences, you may start creating new strategy how to work more efficient with the resources and how to survive the obstacles. (Trompenaars,2003 p. 7)

3. Theory of intercultural interaction and communication

3.1 Cultural dimensions

In the theory part I want to regard and compare famous researcher Geert Hofstede's research and results of cultural diversities. He has studied the mindset and the rules of culture by which people think, feel and act in certain manners in different cultures. He compares the results with other nations' results and as a solution he has created Cultural Dimensions of Nationalities-model to explain the difference in cultures between the countries. In order not to depend only on one researcher, also Trompenaars' and Charles Hampden-Turner's ideology will be examined. They have together developed a model of culture with seven dimensions which explains the cultural differences in patterns; opposites against each other.

Firstly, I will explain the bases of the dimensions and secondly I will analyze how these dimensions can be compared and applied to Finnish and Italian culture's characteristics (attributes).

3.1.1 Cultural Dimensions of Nationalities

Geert Hofstede has surveyed multinational company IBM's employees and managers in 76 countries by sending them the same questionnaire in their mother language. To be mentioned, he has lived around the world and observed companies' corporate cultures, business traditions and basically just people. According to the results of the previous research he has created Five Cultural Dimensions-model which will provide a cultural guide of what and how to adapt and understand other nationalities. These five dimensions are: Power Distance, Individualism, Masculinity, Uncertainty Avoidance and Long-Time Orientation Indexes.

In the following paragraphs four of these Dimensions will be examined intimately as the data do not exist for the fifth dimension for Finland and Italy. On Hofstede's webpage there is a list of all the countries he has surveyed and it is possible to compare two countries and their analysis together. The purpose of the thesis is to explore the existing cultural differences which might cause misunderstandings and conflicts as well hinder the cooperation among Finnish and Italian personnel in Prima Finn-Power Group. Thus the focus is on Finland and Italy. Hofstede's theory does not give the answer to a question but it creates a suggestive vision of the nation and the culture. (www.geerthofstede.nl)

Power Distance Index (PDI)

“All societies are unequal, but some are more unequal than others.” Besides, there exists inequality in our physics; some are bigger, some stronger and some are smarter. There are celebrities of whom some are born and some have gained their position of higher power status and the ability to influence others. The Power Distance Index reflects the way people deal with inequalities in different nationalities. In some countries less powerful members accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. The power distance may be noted in family as parent-child relationship where the parent naturally has the power. When children go to school they sense the teacher-student relationship. The school and education may cover for twenty years of child’s life. During this time, which is the best time to learn, the child develops his mental programming (Hofstede,2005). In school the child is passively taught the concept of power and how to deal with it in that specific country. Finally, he steps in to the working life in where he experiences the boss-subordinate relationship. Likely, the boss has the power to control and ability measure the subordinate. The basis of the concept ‘Power’ follows similar through a person’s life time in a country but the basis of the concept varies compared to another cultures.

Hofstede implemented his research among IBM employees working in eight similar positions but in different countries which provides a guidance picture of a culture how they indicate power distance. In the survey, the questions concerned of fear to express disagreement with one’s manager, manager’s decision-making style and their preference of the boss’ decision-making style. In nations, where the PDI is low the subordinators are not frightened. The managers are seen as not autocratic or paternalistic and the preferable style is more consultative. The subordinates and the superiors recognize each other as equal and the organisations are decentralized. On the other hand, in the high-power-distance countries where the subordinates are occasionally seen afraid of the boss, the employees express to have less consultative boss. Instead, they prefer a boss with autocratic style who still notices the majority’s vote. The subordinates and the superiors consider each other as totally unequal. The subordinates expect to be told what to do and they accept tall hierarchy systems in the organisations. (Hofstede,2005)

This chapter explains the following figures and the data is presented before the graphs. All of the 76 countries, from IBM’s previous research have scored points. Finland’s and Italy’s points are only evaluated in the thesis to back the theory and the survey. Secondly, all 76 cultures have been ranked down and the ranking may be noticed beside the scored point.

According to the IBM database:

ITALY	SCORED 50 points	RANK 51 (Higher PDI)
FINLAND	SCORED 33 points	RANK 66 (Lower PDI)

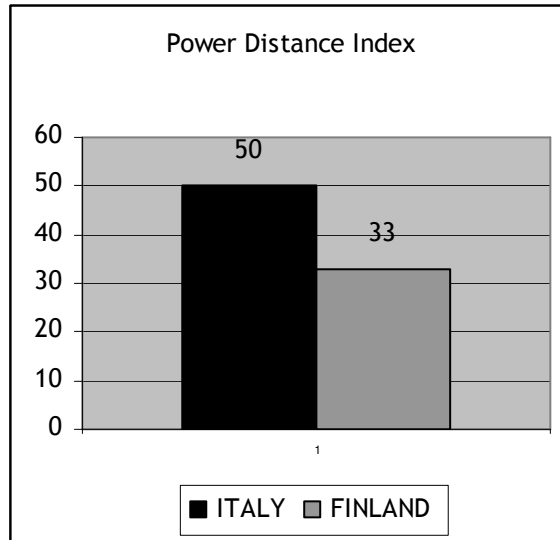


Figure 1. Power Distance Index

The difference of why the countries scored differently may be noted from the history. History and religion have influence to the countries' cultures and for instance religion has built the basis for the country's value order. Italy belongs to Romance language countries which derives from Low Latin and the roots are in Roman Empire. The Roman Empire has affected in Italy's but also other Mediterranean countries' value systems and therefore the culture is hard to change. Also religion has contributed its part which has made Italy unique "boot country" and therefore it differs significantly from Finnish culture. The powerful Roman Catholic religion in Italy is more hierarchic and strict by its traditions than Lutheran religion in Finland. Religion affects the culture by shaping people's thinking and world view. Besides, the religion influences women's position (also in business life), business style, traditions and ethics. Finland belongs to the Finno-Ugric language family and the culture derives from Fennoscandian region and also German language region. The Lutheran religion does not play a role in everyday life in Finland. The effect of religion is inconsequential in business life. In many countries the effect of religion is stronger and clearer than in Finland and it can be noticed straight in the decision-making and business style.

In low power distance nationalities, such as Finland, the dependence on the superior is also almost meagre and the dependence relationship is mutual. The relationship is open and the subordinates can easily approach one's supervisor. In high power distance cultures, like in Italy, the dependence is higher. In this case the emotional distance is larger and the subordinates do not argue with their superior due to the respect for higher status person in

the organisation. The hierarchy is also stronger in Italy than in Finland. Hofstede states that the Roman Empire was managed from one power centre causing that the inhabitants learned to take orders from one centre. The present hierarchy system in Italy is therefore rooted from the Roman Empire's tradition, for instance the Pope and the Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi. Also the respect towards a person with higher status derives from the former Palace culture. Whereas in Finland everyone is equal and the status differences are less notable.

Individualism index (IDV)

In most of the countries in the world, the operative view is to put the groups' interest before individuals'. Hofstede divides these into "we" and "I"-thinking. "We"-thinking occurs in collectivistic societies. The "we"-thinking starts in the family where the family sizes are normally larger. Besides, under the same roof may live several generations and relatives which require an attitude of thinking; what is best for the community rather than what is best for an individual? Already in early days, "we"-thinking is a big part of person's identity. The mutual dependence between the person and the group is important which binds loyalty close to the relationship. In a collectivistic family word "no" is seldom used due to negative confrontation.

In the opposite pole, there are the individuals. In individualistic societies, the family sizes are relatively smaller and the focus is on the individual's interest. Children learn to perceive themselves as "I" and the personal characters can be noticed already in young age. In individualistic families, telling the truth and expressing one's feelings are considered as an important value and direct feedback should be taken constructively. (Hofstede, 2005 p. 74-75, 86-87)

Hofstede examined Individualism Index by asking the IBM employees the factors of their ideal job. The respondents were asked to define (scale from 1 to 5) the importance of fourteen qualities of work goals. Personal time and freedom turned out to be more preferable qualities of an ideal job for individualists. The job needs to leave time for one's personal and family life and one has to be able to use one's own approach to manage the job. Also challenge is one essential feature for individualists. The job needs to provide a personal sense of accomplishment and therefore be enough challenging. Qualities that appeared to match more collectivistic ideation were physical conditions, training and use of skills. People consider good physical working conditions important (ventilation, lightning, space). They also saw training valuable so they could perform more effectively. Improving and learning new skills were also considered important.

According to Hofstede, these items from the IBM questionnaire are not totally covering the distinction between individualism and collectivism in a society. He states that the results only represent the issues in the IBM research that relate to this distinction.

According to results:

ITALY	SCORED 76 points	RANK 9 (higher IDV)
FINLAND	SCORED 63 points	RANK 21 (lower IDV)

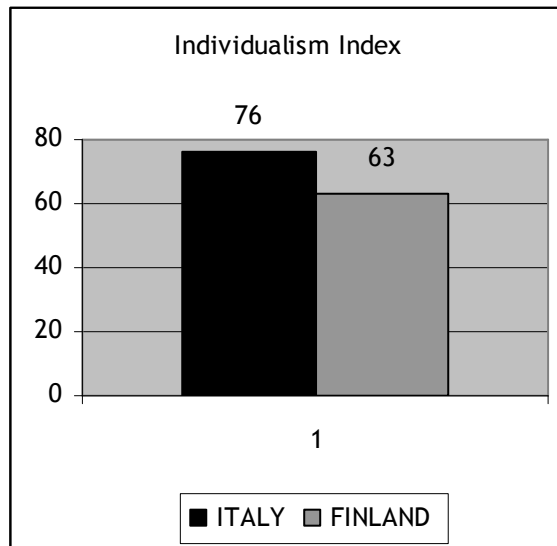


Figure 2. Individualism Index

Hofstede found a correlation between Power Distance and Collectivism. According to results, it is valid in Finland but not in Italy. Hofstede states that many countries that score high power distance, also scores low individualism index and vice versa. Regardless, it does not apply in this case in Italy therefore that Italy scored relatively high individualism rate of 76 points. It signifies that Italy would be in the top ten of countries that represents individualistic characteristics. According to the basic concept of collectivistic nations, in my opinion, Italy is a more collectivistic society than Finland referring to their organisation and family sizes, attitudes and individual determination. Although, in individual society, showing one's emotions is valued which fits to attributes that Italy is more individualistic culture. The survey was implemented in business environment and the results are valid among the employees of IBM, the possibility is that Italian business people stand for more individualism qualities at work than collectivistic.

People who have grown up in collectivistic families are more likely to work more efficiently in teams and on the other hand, people grown in more individualistic families, prefer to work as individuals. Some people say that "more heads are more creative than just one". Despite that, others just want to pursue work in their own, private and solo style. Working in teams and as individuals is a more organisation-specific matter.

In collectivistic cultures the employer-employee relationship is based on common advantage and the personal network is highly valued. Hofstede declares that sons of collectivistic families are more probable to continue after their father's step and follow into his occupation. The father-son author team is considered as admired in collectivistic world. On the other hand, this kind of situation might upset some individualist ones as the idea contrasts from their own and the action might be endured as unfair. In individualistic cultures the actual job is more important than relationships. (Hofstede,2005 p.99)

In short, individualism versus collectivism in workplace differs mostly in the mindset of how to weight the importance of: groups' or individuals' interest, the harmony in the team or the task itself and new person's compatibility with the rest of the group or new person's skills and the existing rules. (Hofstede,2005 p.104)

Masculinity Index (MAS)

Male and female genders are divided almost equally in every country. Again, the genders differ physically (height, strength) but the social roles between male and female also varies in societies. Female is the one who gives birth to a child and while breastfeeding, she is staying more home with the baby whereas the male is freer to move around and capable to earn the living; ages ago they hunted for living. The child learns the gender roles soon. Male's achievements mirror masculine features such as assertiveness and competition and female's roles reinforce the nurse-qualities and paying attention to relationships. Men dominate the social life outside the home and women control issues inside the home. Therefore, the gender roles are only partly determined by the physical aspects. (Hofstede,2005 p.117-118). Hofstede claims that in the family the most people receive their first socialization and the gender roles are learned within it: parent-child and husband-wife relationships. (Hofstede,2005 p.128)

As referred in the previous chapter, Hofstede used the same fourteen work goals of the employee's ideal job to determine the Masculinity Index. The importance of work goal items stands either for masculine characteristics or feminine ones. The masculine ideal work view included an opportunity for high earnings and an opportunity to get the recognition if one has performed well. In addition, the opportunities for advancement in the organisation as well as challenging work were features from masculine way of thinking. More feminine view contrasts a good working relationship with one's superior and good atmosphere and cooperation with other co-workers. The living area should be desirable for the whole family and the job should secure that one is able to work for the company as long time.

Masculine and feminine society's definitions:

A society is called masculine when emotional gender roles are clearly distinct: men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success, whereas women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life.

A society is called feminine when emotional gender roles overlap: both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life.

Hofstede

This masculinity versus femininity-dimension differs from the other dimensions therefore that the male and female respondents scored complete differently. Neither Power Distance nor Individualism Index showed a gap between the genders. (Hofstede,2005 p.119)

Results from Hofstede's research:

ITALY	SCORED 70 points	RANK 7 (high MAS)
FINLAND	SCORED 26 points	RANK 68 (low MAS)

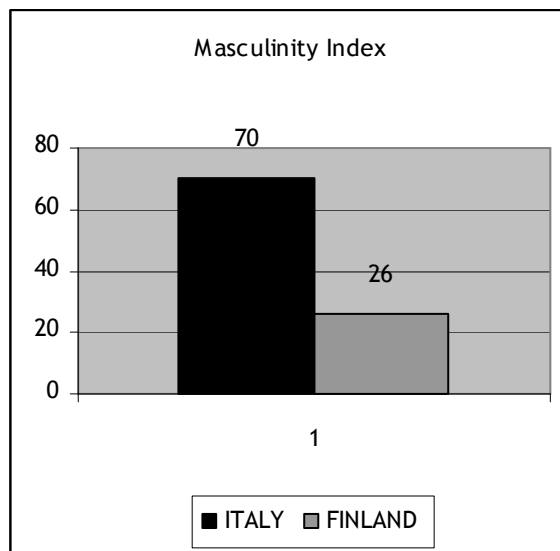


Figure 3. Masculinity Index

Hofstede's results demonstrate enormous distinction between Finland and Italy in the Masculinity Index. Women and men in Finland are almost equal at work as well as at home. There exists an equality law between women and men since 1986 (finlex.fi). For instance, the women in Finland had the right to vote first in Europe and third in the World in 1906. The number of women working in Finland was 51% in 2008 (stat.fi), even though there is no

correlation between masculine and feminine culture and gender distribution of employment. (Hofstede p. 145) Nevertheless Finnish women's position as managers in Finland has increased to 36 percent. (Lehto, 2009). Additionally, for over ten years there has been a female President Tarja Halonen in Finland which describes the equality too. Finnish women have learned to survive by themselves. That roots from the wars, where Finnish men needed to fight on the front and therefore women learned to survive by themselves, make decision on their own, loyalty and independence. Decision-making and management in feminine cultures is based on intuition and consensus.

On the other hand, Italian people have had male heroes such as Caesar, Brutus, Cassius and Napoleon, not forgetting the Pope. They also had war against Cleopatra, the Queen of Egypt. These heroes stay in the history and in the culture as admired people. "Heroes are persons, alive or dead, real or imaginary, who possess characteristics that are highly prized in a culture and thus serve as models for behaviour." (Hofstede,2005 p.7). These male characters apply the thought that men are compulsory to be men, earn the money and fight for the family or have a career. In Italian culture, women's work in the house is as appreciated as the work outside the house.

There exists also a relative note between masculine and feminine countries and the religion. Masculine countries prefer to have a tough God whereas feminine cultures prefer a tender one. Italy, as mostly Roman Catholic by the religion distribution, indicates tough behaviour, martyrdom, Pope and his administration. The Roman Catholic religion also confirms the masculinity due to that they only accept male priests which demonstrates the inequality between men and women. Feminine countries mirror more tender side. Finland, as a feminine country belongs to Lutheran religion which evinces more caring and softer traditions. As mentioned before, religion is less visible in Finnish daily life.

Masculinity versus femininity dimensions affect also how conflicts are taken and resolved. In masculine countries there is an intention that conflicts are handled with a good fight: "let the best man win". Respectively, in a feminine culture the conflicts are solved by compromise and negotiations (Hofstede,2005 p.143). Charles Kettering, U.S inventor and businessman, refers that in a masculine culture people "live in order to work" and in a feminine culture they "work in order to live".

The rewarding systems in masculine and feminine societies are based on different basis. The masculine society highlights the rewarding system which is based on the achievements and it is appreciated that the employee ascends without reckoning the other co-workers. Whilst in the feminine society, the companies reward their employees equally which reinforces the

affluent society's features. It is also typical that employees are expected to help each other and create contacts.

There exist differences in shopping between masculine and feminine countries. People from masculine cultures spend more money in their outlook; expensive shoes, watches and jewellery and they rather fly in the business class. This implies to Italian "*la bella figura*" - impressive style of dressing for both men and women. Again, in the feminine cultures the focus is not in the outer looks but rather in inner looks; healthcare and decorating one's home. The modest Finnish people do not care to invest in their outer looks rather much.

Based on a country's cultural characteristics, masculine and feminine countries have their strengths in different types of industries. Masculine countries have large organisations and are more industrialized. They have competitive advantage in manufacturing: performing efficiently, well and fast. In contrast, feminine countries, with smaller organisations, have their relative advantage in service industries such as consulting, transporting and customer specification. (Hofstede,2005 p.146)

Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)

"The future is uncertain, but we have to live with it anyway". The phrase is common for everybody in the world. The question in the Uncertainty Avoidance Index is again, how do different nationalities deal with uncertainty and how they try to forecast it? "The level of anxiety forms part and parcel of the shared mental programming of people in the society, in the family, at school, and in adult life". (Hofstede,2005 p.167) Anxiety is a term from psychology that expresses one's uneasiness or concern of what may happen.

Hofstede's research sorts out the respondent's occurrence and repetitiveness in job stress, the length of their career and whether they are ready to break the company's rules - even when they think it is in the company's best interest.

According to Hofstede's research:

ITALY	SCORED 75 points	RANK 33 (higher UAI)
FINLAND	SCORED 58 points	RANK 48-49(lower UAI)

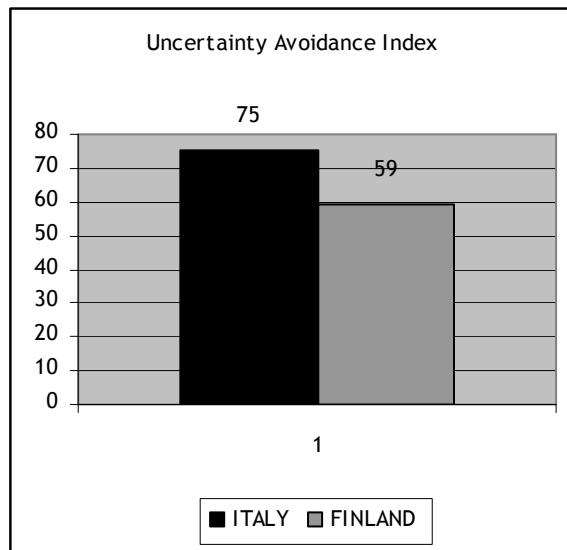


Figure 4. Uncertainty Avoidance Index

In strong Uncertainty Avoidance countries, the uncertainty is regarded as a danger and therefore the power distance plays a huge role as well. The mental programming in a society begins in one's early childhood and one feels comfortable in such structured environment. (Hofstede, 2005 p.182). To relieve the anxiety the countries have more formal laws and informal rules in workplace to control the rights and duties of supervisors and subordinates. These formal agreements are supposed to repeal the uncertainty feeling. On the other hand, in weak Uncertainty Avoidance countries people consider that rules should be established only when absolute necessity. They believe that many conflicts may be solved without formal rules. Weak UAI delineates liberalistic idea whilst strong UAI more conservatism thought. In addition, weak UAI countries also do not consider uncertainty as a threat.

Also the uncertainty avoidance derives from the history. The Roman Empire supported the system in where the power is centralized into one place from where the citizens receive the orders. Rules and laws create the feeling of security what the society requires for operating in preferable way. Hofstede states that only history is an essential factor in Uncertainty Avoidance.

Italy scored stronger Uncertainty Avoidance Index. More anxious cultures, such as Italy, tend to be more expressive culture. Body language and gestures, tone loudness, and showing one's emotions are essential for the culture. Countries that scored weaker UAI, the aggression and emotions are not supposed to reveal. These weak UAI cultures consider people with strong body language less credible.

Some researchers claim that also faith and trust for other people determines the Uncertainty Index. For instance, countries where the UAI is stronger, people are also more religious.

Religion helps people to endure uncertainty because it controls personal future and helps to survive unsure situations. Finnish people are not overly religious but they are said to be too modest and naïve to easily trust a new person because they do not consider uncertainty as a threat. They do not get to know the person before to seal the deal, as do the Italians. Finnish people are mostly trustworthy and they expect that from the others and from other nationalities too. Some cultures need more time to get to know the person they are cooperating with and after he or she has gained the trust, they might even consider making business with the other party. Many contracts have been failed because the other party is rushing for signatures whereas the other party needs to have more time to get to know the opposite person and then decides whether he can be trusted.

In workplaces, the strong UAI can be seen as societies that consider uncertainty as a threat. The employees in these societies need to look busy and do lot of work because time is money. The companies also try to avoid new developments (i.e. technological innovations) because these developments can be uncertain and they are more secure with all former and safe operations. Also strict rules for personnel are supposed to avoid uncertainty. On the other hand, the societies which stand for weak uncertainty, it is sometimes allowed to take it easy and they do not feel forced to work all the time. The task is guided and not prescribed.

Long-Term Orientation Index (LTO)

The fifth and the final dimensions is the Long-Term Orientation Index. Unfortunately the data does not exist for the last dimensions for Finland and Italy. Anyhow, the basic idea of LTO is to examine what kind of attitudes the members of the societies or employees in the workplaces have against time. Long-term orientation's opposite side is of course short-term orientation.

Long-term orientation's view is in the future, even five or ten years ahead. All the decisions and foremost business decisions are done concerning the future aspect. The decision-making may take longer time but the idea, that it is rewarded in the future, motivates for the huger effort. The respect for circumstances are taken noticed and sparing with resources is more valuable than spent money. The attitude against time is flexible and tight schedules are avoided because there is always tomorrow. Short-term orientation, on the other hand, values effort to produce the decision and results quickly. And the importance is in this year's profits. There exists a pressure of spending money and respect for traditions. Time is considered as a limited resource and therefore no time can be wasted.

The misunderstandings between Finland and Italy can arise, because Finnish people are used to tight schedules and respected deadlines which deviate from Italian flexible time concept.

Finnish business people live for the moment and they are eager to have the decision or contract as soon as possible for implementing the case.

3.1.2 Seven dimensions

In order not only to depend only on one researcher's theory, other similar research will be taken into account as well. The other researcher, Fons Trompenaars has also surveyed important business aspects from a cross-cultural perspective. He and his co-author Hampden-Turner spread their diagnostic questionnaire with 79 items to samples of managers in more than 60 countries. Over 60.000 superiors from various organisations all over the world responded to the questionnaire.

As a result from the research they created seven dimensions with opposite cultural qualities. These characteristics stand for the ultimate resolutions. With some countries, it can be impossible to place the culture to other pole completely. The characteristics only form a relative picture of country's attitude. These seven dimensions are:

- Universalism - particularism
- Individualism - communitarism (collectivism)
- Neutral - affective
- Specific - diffuse
- Achieved - ascribed status
- Time orientation - sequential versus synchronous cultures
- Internal - external control

Universalism versus particularism

The first dimension testifies people's attitudes of rules and relationships even if they would be against each other. For universalistic cultures, the rules and law determine what is right. In business life, people from universalistic cultures use tight schedules and agendas as well as agreements and contracts which are the basis for doing business. An important element is planning. Careful planning creates security for the future and it reveals possible risks and threats. Universalistic people are task-oriented which refers that the business comes before the relationship. Even in a middle of a tough decision, the person is oriented to think the business first even possibly risking the relationship.

Particularism as a belief allows exceptions for rules. People in particularistic cultures are relationship-oriented and therefore they keep in mind the second party before making the decision. They emphasise friendships and by that determine what is right or ethically

acceptable. Time is flexible for them and due to that they do not prefer rigid order of events. The deals are made based upon personalities and the agreements can be changed afterwards. They value harmony foremost and good atmosphere in the office.

Individualism versus communitarism (collectivism)

The second dimension describes how a person relates to oneself and to a team: what they want as individual or the interests of the group they belong to. As in Hofstede's theory of Individualism Index, the bases are the same in Trompenaars' theory. Individuals refer to "I"-thinking and they value personal freedom and self-responsibility. They are eager to competition and always attain personal growth. They foster contractual relationships that are based on the principles of exchange - when they personally give an effort, the other do the same as well.

The former term for collectivism is communitarism. "We"-thinking people in collectivistic cultures think first of the group's interest and they share a social responsibility. They cultivate harmony and cooperation among the group's members by following common social norms. The members of the in-group share resources and have sacrificed their individual interest for the group's interests.

Neutral versus affective

In relationships and interactions, people's emotions play a large role. It is said that 30 percent of what one states verbally is only taken into account whereas the rest 70 percents consists of how one expresses it. It can be easily forgotten that body language, gestures, tone and expressions are also important as is the actual message in communication. It has been said before that some countries are more expressive or affective and some are neutral by their learned way of showing emotions.

In neutral cultures one is not revealing what one is thinking or feeling. The tone in neutral cultures is monotone and people from the opposite cultures may feel that as a lack of excitement. They also lack of physical contact and they even might have tension in their face and posture. In Asia, there exists also a fear of losing one's face which means a fear to become ashamed in front of a boss or important quest or the fear of embarrassing the boss.

Affective cultures show the opposite side. Exactly, to show one's emotions openly. In affective cultures, touching, gestures and strong facial expressions are vital for the message to be wholly understood. Showing emotions help to build trust between co-workers or clients and customers.

Neutral culture can be proved to fit into Finnish attitude whilst affective mirrors the Italian culture. The lack of expressions and monotony in the voice of Finnish people might cause misunderstandings between people from expressive cultures. While Italian people are openly expressive, it might cause distrust for Finnish people, especially in business cases. Finnish people trust only on the actual message and the handshake. The extra touching and talking with hands might confuse them. One Finnish value is “less is more” which also applies to showing too much of one’s emotions. On the other hand, Italian people respect “more is beautiful”-value which collides with the Finnish’ one.

Specific versus diffuse

The following cultural dimension concerns the degree of involvement in relationships. Specific involvements in relationships distinct clearly work from personal life. They have a small private life which is kept private (only for close family and friends). In contrast, the public life is large and it is very open to others. These people are easy to approach and you still hardly know them because they do not open their small private door of their life.

The diffuse involvement in relationship is more holistic and integrated. There exists always a high personal involvement because the private life is large and it includes a relative large number of people. Besides, there is no clear distinction between work and private life. For new people, entering the small public space can be difficult and they might need a formal invitation from a mutual friend.

When people from these concepts collide, they face a danger zone. But in this case, in my opinion Finnish and Italian people are both definitely diffuse. Communicating and interacting with Finnish and Italian co-worker, the actual trade or project may be seen as a formal invitation to public, and at the same time private, space. Italian people are hospitable, and can invite friends of friends to their houses. The trust issue and prejudice for new people disappears through the mutual friend when he is fully trusted.

Achieved versus ascribed status

Achieved and ascribed status dimension determines the issue how one earns a status and which are the reasons behind why one is hired. Status achieved describes “You can do it”-attitude. Everything one has achieved, all the jobs one is gotten and every degree one has completed has been originated from one’s own performance and skills. The position and the title i.e. boss needs to be earned.

In ascribed status cultures, the status can be determined by one's age, gender, family, social network or education. If one has completed a degree, the title is important and it continues to follow one through the life time. Seniority and long-time career are appreciated in ascribed status cultures.

Time orientation and sequential versus synchronous cultures

Time orientation describes one's approach to time. Due to different approaches, there might appear misunderstandings among international and even national business environment. How do people treat deadlines and how they deal with urgency? What does "right away", "soon" and "as soon as possible" mean? There are different approaches and meanings for these phrases in different cultures; some might think "soon" is right away whereas some consider "soon" in two or three days ahead. Mikluha states that people from same background consider the length of the phrases similar, but in different cultures these espoused expressions are learned from the country's genotype. Time orientation also includes giving the meaning to the past, present and future. (Trompenaars, 2003 p. 77). When did the past end and when does the future start?

In most of the countries the time is considered as inessential or secondary important. In countries where people hold on to their appointments and schedule their daily activities, being late is not conceived appropriate. While the people who arrives late, argue that the punctual people are missing their lives because of their schedules and punctuality; the other party will late anyway.

When the view of time is sequential, all events happen in series; one after the other and the thinking is straightforward. Past is clearly in the past and the weight is in the future. Sequential time approach has been also referred to Hall's monochronic conception; time is linear and a person can only do one thing at the time. One really put one's heart into it and finishes it on time. When one is talking on the phone, the other one is asked to leave for not interrupting. Time is not conceived as renewable resource and therefore time is money. This adaptation of time reinforces as rush, stress and tight schedules. This is characteristic for Scandinavian people and especially for Finns.

In synchronous view of time, the past, present and future are influencing new ideas. Memories in the past are kept in mind intensive. This might prevent repeating the same mistakes made in the past. Nevertheless, the world changes ragingly and the same traditions may not cover new dilemmas that arise in present or in the future. For instance, when working among high tech products, the view is in the present. High technology develops itself in short period of time and the marketing needs to be innovative. The focus cannot be in the

past due to developed technology, neither does in the future because new innovations are established rigidly. Again, Hall's theory of polychronic view of time applies to synchronous idea. Polychronic people are able to do several things at the same time; talking on the phone while writing an offer and drinking coffee and at the same time organising oneself to the next meeting. Polychronic people can have several duties unfinished and they can complete them in disorder. The schedules are more flexible.

When concentrating on Finnish and Italian views of time and for instance their eating habits; Finnish are used to have three separate meals in dinner and the second course will be served after finished the first one. Everyone eats from own plate. The Italian tradition is that all the courses are served in the middle of the table and everyone is capable to eat in desirable order they prefer. This example applies to Hall's monochronic vs. polychronic-theory. In business meetings among Finnish and Italian colleagues, Finns need to give enough time and be more patient for the deal to be finished.

Monochronic cultures tend to schedule both their business plans as well as their private life. Hall himself criticizes it, because this enables people to perceive only one thing at the time. Polychronic people can perceive the whole picture at once which increases the effectiveness

Internal versus external control

The final dimension, internal and external control, focuses on how one looks at the nature and how one is assigned to the nature. The internal or mechanistic view of nature stands for the belief that people are able to control the nature and the environment. External view of nature, or in other words organic approach, is much older. In these cultures people believe that the nature controls them.

In workplaces, people who believe they can control nature they also work often at mechanistic departments; manufacturing, production, sales and as executives because the world can be controlled from those positions. Individuals, who believe in external control, work rather in R&D and marketing and they work within the resources given.

3.2 Intercultural communication

Communication involves at least two people; sender and receiver. Communication styles include how one organizes and presents information, how one agrees and disagrees, builds relationships, trust, and intimacy with others and how one shows politeness and perceives politeness. In business life the communication expounds how one negotiates, approaches, manages, resolves conflicts and makes decisions. These are individual customs for a person or

a group. When communicating with other cultures, even subcultures, and the disconnected communication style can cause confusion, frustration, anger and pain and the message can be perceived wrong. (Uehlinger,2009)

3.2.1 High context versus low context

I will apply cross-cultural researcher Edward T. Hall's theory to explore cross-cultural communication. He claims that "people have taken their own ways of life for granted, ignoring the vast international cultural community that surrounds them." He has created famous pattern: High context cultures versus Low context cultures. High-context and low-context communication refers to how much more the communicator relies on the words than on the other assists to receive the message. In general, cultures that favour low-context communication will concentrate more to the literal meaning of words whereas cultures that favour high-context communication rely more on the context that surrounds them (using different tools to provide the message). Low-context cultures rely on prior knowledge and experience. During business meeting, they might not say much but when they do, the meaning is reasonable, well-considered and important. These people use planning and theoretical data to help them to sort out a problem or to explore a new matter. They can be sceptical about something new but they trust their analytical instinct. High-context cultures use direct communication. Direct communication means that the message is conveyed through explicit statements which are stated directly to the people involved. The communication is primary verbal; less non-verbal communication. Nevertheless, they use i.e. Power-Points to clarify the statistics. The motto for LC-cultures is: What you see is what you get! On the other point of view, the motto for HC-cultures is: What you get is what you manage to see! High-context cultures rely more on immediate data at the moment. The communication is intuitive and non-verbal communication plays a huge part in their interactions. They use a lot of gestures, strong facial expressions and hands to supply the message. They convey the listener by fluctuating their tone voices and also by moving their eyes.

Therefore, the communication can be said to be indirect because the context covers as much as the actual meaning. The meaning can be also conveyed by suggestions, implications and other non-verbal cues. It is important to remember that individuals in the cultures do not only use one but both of these contextual communications. Usually, the situation in context and the involving people determine which communication to favour.

3.2.2 Linear-active, multi-active and reactive cultures

Linear-active people are patient, organized and business-oriented. They are punctual and follow their linear agenda and write memos. They prefer completing actions one by one and not to do several tasks at the same time. They get their information from statistics and database and gladly stick into facts, figures and plans. They prefer straightforward and direct communication and use less body language. Linear-active people are not afraid of logical confrontations with other colleagues but they dislike of losing face.

Multi-active people are extrovert and impulsive. People and relationships are close to their personality. They have difficulties to stick on timetable or be punctual; it is not unusual to change plans and schedules in a short notice. They are multitasking and capable of doing several things at the same time. Their communication is roundabout and they rather use facts and figures. Their confrontations are emotional and they use efficiently body language in all situations. Therefore they prefer more live communication than written material. Interruptions are accepted but not silent moments.

Reactive people are listeners. They are introvert and silent and think carefully before revealing their opinion. Actually, silent moment gives time for a reactive person to formulate his own response or opinion. Respect is the keyword when collaborating with other people; punctuality is respected, timetables can be changed, statements are promises and honesty is valued. Reactive person listens to the other party carefully and does not interrupt. They try to avoid confrontations. Body language is used subtle.

According to Lewis' theory of reactive, multi-active and linear-active people, the following paragraphs are stereotypes of each representative styles. By the communication style, Italians are more multi-active people whereas Finns resemble reactive folk. Each representative must be aware that common methods of everyday communication are not self-evident for the opposite party. The common communication is possible but it requires more work, observation and time.

3.2.3 Body language

Body language is an important player in cross-cultural communication. Through it, one can observe nervousness, anxiety, enthusiasm, interest etc. Hall notes that "each culture has its own characteristic manners of locomotion, sitting, standing, reclining, and gesturing". It requires time to get to know the person before one is able to understand the meaning of his body language and the message which should be delivered through it. The interpretations of body languages may still not always be right. When someone is standing with arms akimbo, it

does not necessarily mean he is not interested and the meaning may even be different in another country. In most cases the interpretations do apply to our posing, gestures and other body languages.

3.2.4 Concept of space

The concept of space and the knowledge of how to use the space around one, vary in different cultures. The differences can be noticed in town planning, public infrastructure, office and in restaurants. The personal space is experienced differently in different nations. Finns need plenty of space around them so they can feel comfortable. Italian people are used to crowded spaces and therefore closeness is a basic matter. They are already used to it in the family where the family sizes are larger than in Finland. Italians are able to work close to each other which creates the feeling of closeness and maintains the harmony. Italians may conceive the Finn's distance as cold, selfish and non-willingness to communicate. The only small and crowded place where Finns feel comfortable is Sauna.

3.2.5 Humour in business life

Humour is a good way to break the ice, but maybe only among same nationalities. The jokes are also rooted in a country's history and some jokes are not understood in the correct way in a foreign country. Finnish people take business seriously and they do not accept humour at meetings. Humour may lead into dishonest and it might cause confusion. The attendants rather want to discuss about the price, quality and delivery dates rather than spend time for jokes - after all, time is money. After the meeting Finnish people are more relaxed and they are more willing to add humour to the conversation. Some nationalities feel totally comfortable to have humour added in the business meetings. And they are also willing to pursue it afterwards. (Lewis, 1999 p.23)

3.2.6 Silence

Silence is a country specific value. Some countries consider silence as uncomfortable and even 3 seconds may feel like forever. For them, silence means lack of interest and excitement or even a failure. Communication is considered as two-way street of social interaction and it does not include silent moments. Interrupting is considered appropriate, whereas in other countries interrupting is considered as impolite and inappropriate. Finnish people value silence. With silence they show respect for the one who is speaking. Silence means that they listen and learn. For getting the impressions that Finnish people do not care to listen, are boring or not willing to cooperate is not the case when a Finn quiet oneself for a

moment. This means he is receiving the message and constituting his own opinion in his mind by comparing the alternatives. The silent moments have to be respected. (Lewis, 1999 p.14).

3.3 Summary

The summary will contain an overlook of a Finnish and Italian employee. What are the basic organisation norms, values and attitudes, communication styles, manners of using gestures and showing feelings and how these differ from the other nationality? The following characters are fictitious and they are examples of a presumable work day and organisation culture in Finland and in Italy. These stereotypes derive from the previous theory and as a conclusion I have created two imaginary employees and profiles.

Finnish employee Tarja

Tarja has a routine of going to work at 8am and finishing the work at 4pm. Lunch time is usually 11.30 am. Tarja is an analytical coordinator who lives in order to make plans. She follows a schedule and rhythm in her daily duties. She is a motivated employee, because she has a close relationship with to her supervisor. Her supervisor always asks Tarja's opinion and respects it. She is also able to make some decisions for the company without her supervisor's permission, but for financially larger decision she is obligated to have her boss' approval.

Tarja desires to work alone and she feels she is more effective when closing the door behind her and focusing for a couple of hours just by herself. Among all the tasks Tarja works at her best while she is doing just one thing at the time. She is also capable of working in a team with other calm colleagues. At meetings her voice is as respected as are the opinions of her male colleagues. The equality in the office is a value and everyone's ideas are regarded. Tarja may not say much in front of other people but all she says is pure fact and her message is clear. She has the Finnish guts to say things straight and honestly without the fear of getting judged.

Tarja is devoted to her job and willing to work extra hours for the company's welfare. She thinks that flexibility is a key word in today's urgent world. When the company is closing a deal, her gut drives her to push harder and aims her to the best possible result. She is modest and she doesn't have to brag with her achievements; the other colleagues respect her.

Italian employee Silvio

Silvio has been working for the company since fifteen years now. He followed in his father's foot steps and now works beside him in the same company. Silvio is a father of three children

and family is especially important for him. Silvio does not have regular working hours because he works until the job is done. His secretaries assist him to complete the work and keep him updated of the daily duties. The lunch may stretch for several hours because it is a good time to talk about business and there is no rush to get back to the office.

Silvio works closely with his boss because he is required to have his boss' permission to each decision regarding the company. He respects the boss' decisions and accepts the existing inequality between them. The rules and instructions are to be followed. In meetings with colleagues, the atmosphere is unorganised and sometimes it is impossible to finish the whole agenda for example due to the interruptions of others.

The results of Silvio's work are always high quality and executed the best way possible. Silvio's outlook is always groomed and precise which tells about his personal effort. To him, it is important to get familiar with the clients and maintain a successful customer relationship. Extra curriculum activities for example dinners are highly appreciated. Once you get to know Silvio, the communication becomes more relaxed and vivid but the politeness and respect always remains.

4. Research methodology and implementation

4.1 The research methodology

I use qualitative research methodology in my thesis. Some of the results may be also categorized under a quantitative result. Both of these two orientations complement the research providing also unique and mass results to the research problem. These approaches help to understand better the investigating phenomena. Besides, qualitative research reveals and opens the reasons behind the research problems. Due to the subject of the survey, qualitative research provides larger scale to observe the respondent during the interview. Therefore all individual research results are also influence of the researcher and the respondent's common mind.

The main objective of the research is to survey which the main cultural differences are that exist between Finnish and Italian corporate culture especially in Prima Finn-Power Group's organisation. Secondly, I aim to discover how to utilize the publication Chorus to improve the atmosphere and to help the company to survive the process of the integration. The research strategy is to depict, compare and explain the cultural impact from the conducted material.

4.2 Research implementation

Usually, a quantitative research method is used to provide larger outcome; the more respondents the more valid research. The sampling number in this case would not be an issue but the reason why I chose qualitative research method is that I want to resolve and observe what people really feel, think, experience and believe. The method that suits best for my attentions is an individual interview with constructed interview structure. It also enables me to observe the respondent's body language, gestures, reactions, tone and possible deceits. Besides, the reason to choose this method is because it provides a possibility to discover individual's own experience for the phenomena and different angles from the opposite culture. The so called theme interview, with only the interview topics provided, also creates a possibility to dig deeper and ask more specific questions according to opinions, insecurities, reactions and astonishments (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2007, p.75-77).

The main goal is to interview all the respondents face-to-face. Firstly, few interviews were going to be phone interviews but luckily I managed to meet all the respondents. The interviews were implemented at Kauhava, Finn-Power's headquarters, regardless of one interview which was implemented at Helsinki-Vantaa Airport. The contact person from Finn-Power, Development Manager Aino Alppinen organized all the interview schedules, whether they were actualized in Kauhava or in Helsinki.

The ten chosen respondents are from different countries and naturally from both Finn-Power and Prima Industrie. The criteria why these employees are chosen to the interview is that all of the interviewees are being collaborating both with Finnish and with Italian colleagues. Despite the fact that North-America does not include in the theory part, also it was observed and explored in the survey. Besides, the interviewees may contrast the corporate culture from these cultures to their own one. Circa one month before, the respondents received an invitation to the research interview which included basic facts and backgrounds about the interviewer, the objectives and the interview structure. One month beforehand, they may start discovering their thoughts, feelings and questions and prepare themselves for the actual occasion.

Naturally, all Finnish, Italian and North-American employees are interviewed which are the target cultures. Besides employees who have experience working in a foreign corporate culture is interviewed as well. The interviewees are employees from various departments; none of them are from the top management. Altogether, ten people are interviewed within September, 2010.

4.3 Interview

One approach to collect data is an interview. An interview is known as a fundamental survey model. It is a flexible method and it suits for many research occasions. An interview creates a connection and an oral interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee and it also enables more particular research of the topic during the interview (Alasuutari, 1993, p.35). This interview base is normally chosen when more explicit and deeper responds are desired. Therefore, a smaller sampling shot is required for an interview than for a regular questionnaire survey.

My interview structure constructed of thirteen topics. The structure was not followed question by question in every ten interviews; rather the questions were processed by following the discussion of the parties. The theme interview enables that the questions do not require to be presented in order (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2007 p.75-77). To have a possibility to ask more specific questions about the interview topics requires a theme interview which means that only the topics are provided for the interviewee and the discussion takes a lead in the interview situation. Therefore, with other respondents some topics were more deeply surveyed than with others. Nevertheless, all the thirteen topics were discussed with every respondent. The interview took from 45 minutes till 1 hour and 20 minutes.

4.4 Analysing the data

All the interviews were taped and written open after each interview. The interview was implemented anonymously and therefore no names are revealed in the research or the thesis. The first two questions can be analysed as quantitative data because they were basic questions that were presented similar for each respondents. The rest of the topics can be only compared with other responds. In a qualitative interview, the interviewer's appreciation and the mutual understanding can be reflected to the analyses of the discussion.

4.5 Research validity and ethicality

My research is implemented regarding correct research customs and following the ethical perceptions. According to Grönfors (Vilkka, 2008 p.119), the validity affiliates the topic the researcher reports, how she reports it and where she publishes it. In this report, I have reported all possible material, for instance e-mails, interview voice tapes and letterings. The material is what has been written in the report and the analysis has been progressed following the presented steps. Besides, I have informed the interviewees about the topic, told them how the results will be analysed and still remaining the anonymity.

The principles of validity are repeatability, generalizability as well as portability. These principles also fit into measuring validity in qualitative research. The repeatability in my survey can be questioned due to the reason that the target company is still in the middle of a change and the respondents feel it strongly in their daily business life and in cooperation with other cultures. Generalizability applied to my research therefore that the interviewee's opinions about the main issues were similar. Everybody admitted that there exists plenty of things to develop and the problem areas were recognized similarly. Part of research results can be ported to other surveys. As an example I can mention the reactions how people relate to change, fusion with a different nationality and business style.

Challenges in this research are definitely prejudices and stereotypes. Stereotypes help an open-minded person to start creating a relationship with a person from new a culture and afterwards enable to change his picture about the target objective. Unfortunately, it does not apply with everyone. After one negative incident with a member of a new culture, inflexible people may stick on it until the end. These formed pictures hinder or prevent the development of the relationship. Stereotypes may affect interviewee's attitude and therefore impact on the research results.

During the survey, I did not think ethical issues. The topic of my research is tender and the results are definitely not intended to discriminate or mock anyone. The responses may be partly offensive for some representatives due to the reason that the responses can be negative but these issues are also the ones that can be developed. Another reason why the responses are negative is that the respondents experienced the differences and difficulties in these topic areas but they also saw possibilities for a better future.

5 Research results

The interview results are presented below. The diagrams are explained in the chapter before them. After every interview topic, there might be straight quotations from the interviews. These quotes are comments that the respondents expressed during the interviews.

The thesis is written by a Finnish writer and the research is implemented from a Finnish cultural perspective. The writers own cultural views may have an influence in the thesis.

5.1 The number of responds

All together ten people were interviewed during September, 2010. The nationalities of the interviewees were Finnish, Italian, German, North-American, Russian, Belgian and one from the Arabic countries.

5.2 Age, gender, length of the employment and position in the company

The first three questions surveyed the background of the respondents. Age was divided from youngest respondent from 29 years old to the oldest one of 55 years old.

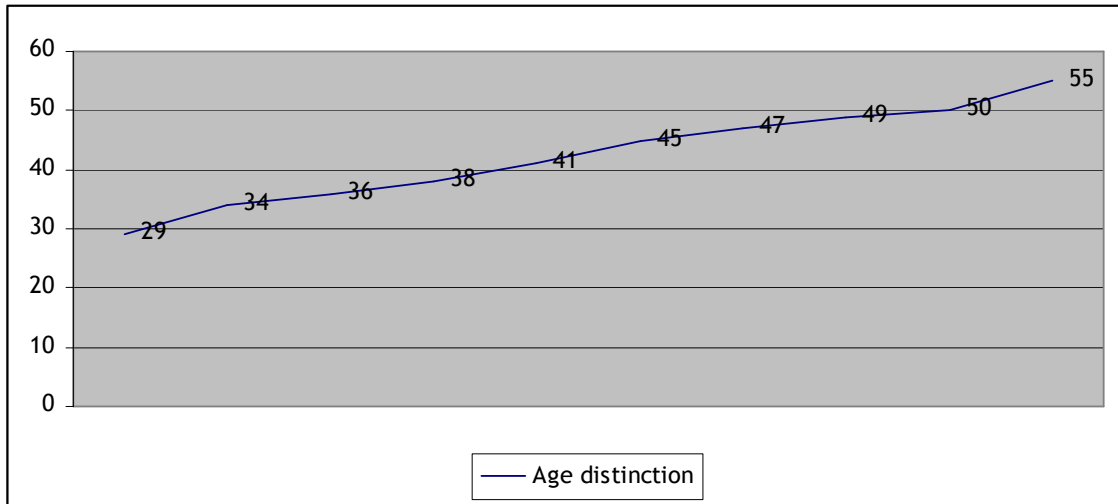


Figure 5. Age distinction

Gender of the total interview was divided between 10 % of female and 90 % of male employees. The length of the employment is from a four year employment till 21 years of working for the same company.

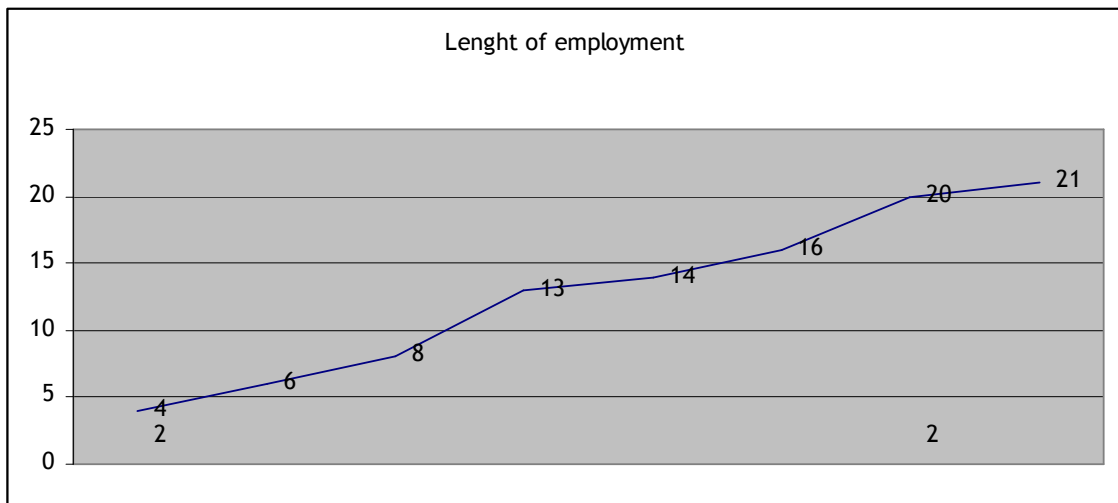


Figure 6. Length of employment

The range of position in the company varied from side to another. The titles of the interviewees are Area Manager, Product Manager, Sales Manager, Service Manager, R&D

Manager, Project Assistant and Exhibition Coordinator. This proves that broad scale of interviewees from different departments was interviewed.

5.3 Stereotypes

The initial question was to represent the three most important cultures. By stereotyping nationalities, it enables one to understand and even ignore the crossing cultural aspects that may increase the possibility to be misunderstood. Stereotypes are usually wide and broad; and they include the heritage of folk, manner of communicating or habits. When one is aware of these stereotypes before entering a new relationship with new nationality, one has some sort of image of the nationality or the culture what to expect. This image provides an understanding and soothes the shock of amusement due to the knowledge beforehand. Of course these stereotypes do not relieve the cooperation in the long run because in most cases people are different from expected by their stereotypes or in the first meeting. I wanted to survey what the employees think about the cultures and the representatives of the three, Finnish, Italian and North-American cultures. For the record, the following stereotypes include attributes from the whole country, not the employees of Prima Finn-Power Group. Below it is reported how respondents perceived the cultural features:

Finnish folk are perceived as people whose communication is awkward, uncomfortable and with no small talk. Besides, Finns are identified as quiet, honest, straightforward and direct people by their communication, whether they even do communicate. By the emotional side, they are seen as reserved and cold people, who do not reveal what they are thinking. Nevertheless, they are too kind and simple. By their outer outcome, they do not invest much and may even ignore their outlook completely.

In general, Italian people are seen as chaotic and disorganized actors, who do too many things at the same time. They explain by moving their whole face and hands, and therefore it takes longer time to come to the point. The emotions and gestures are shown vividly and one can easily realize and understand whether one's attitude is negative or positive. They are also perceived as reserved people when they think twice what to actually say. Italians are polite and formal by their behaviour. They do not accept their own or other's mistakes.

The American stereotype is a mix of everything due to the largeness of the country. Americans are perceived as superficial, direct, open, chatty and easy to get along with. They speak with a notable accent but there is no relation between the words and actions. They are "wannabe"-professionals, market-oriented and organized people, who solve the problem right away with a correct procedure. They are both formal and easygoing by their behaviour.

5.4 Communication differences

Language

The most important difference between the countries and the cultures is language. Prima Finn-Power Group's common business language is English which is the native language for the American employees only. It is a big barrier in the communication. The problems may arise due to the translations and incapability to express oneself in English. Both Finland and Italy have good language education but doing business in a foreign language might cause difficulties, at least in the beginning.

Documentation, reports, instructions and e-mails are written in global projects and cooperations in English. When translating into a foreign language, the meaning of the message may change and the spent time may double. The respondents have doubts, insecurity and they feel unpleasant to put the extra effort to express their selves in a foreign language.

On the other hand, the company is an international company and the respondents feel like it is all depending on people. Besides, individuals should create an own way how to be understood and express oneself clearly.

Formality

Formality in the interview included only the formality in people's behaviour against another person. The respondents agreed that Finnish business culture is not formal. The mutual respect and equality is present without any agreement. The appreciation between workers and management is implicitly high but explicitly low. This can be seen for instance how people do not address each others but still respect. There does not exist addressing people formally in the company and therefore there is no correlation between your target and how you express yourself. People from Finn-Power use less words but the message is recapped into the facts and points. The informal behaviour can be also noticed from the casual dressing code. To be noticed, Finns have to make an effort when guests are invited to the factory and they need to wear something more formal than jeans.

There is not addressing formal in Finnish language nor in English one. Therefore, addressing people by their first and last name is more natural when translating Finnish business language into English. The titles are not usually used in both Finnish and English languages. This assist to write for instance e-mails in English.

The Italian corporate culture is seen as more formal. Employees address each other differently according to their status, title and position; and thereby show their respect towards the other. Mostly surnames are used in daily communication. When cooperating with new people, the knowledge of the other party's position is important and it has an impact of how formal one has to address him. One of the interviewees stated that there exists a huge discordance between the essence of corporate and private life; in private life people are vivid and open, but at the office they consider more their presence and the tension can be sensed.

Italian people are known as classical stylish people and the first impression can not be misunderstood by their dressing. In everyday life, employees invest their outer look without having the need to impress anyone; it is added value. Nevertheless, one can recognize the manager by the dressing.

The American level of formal communication is contrasted to Finnish communication. People are addressed mostly by their first names and there is no addressing formally in the corporate life, except for people one has never met before. Politeness in behaviour is obvious. Normal greeting is just a hand shake and small talk.

Hierarchy

Hierarchy levels between Finland, Italy and North-America revealed more distinction. Finnish corporate culture is more horizontal. The relationship between the manager and the subordinate is closer, and the interaction is mutual. The departments are divided side by side and each of these has at least one team leader who ultimately makes the final decision. The departments or teams are constructed to work closely with other departments. To be added, project teams include people from different departments.

Majority of the respondents agreed that the Italian corporate culture is more hierarchic. The distance between the manager and the subordinate is more formal and distant, and it may even include intermediates. The process of making the decision takes longer time, because for instance, a team needs to have an approval from the boss before making the ultimate decision. The respondents noted that the high hierarchy system derives from the masculine cultural roots and from the history. They have learned to take orders from an authorized person and respect his correct opinion.

Emotionality and verbalism

The way how people use other avails to communicate varies a large deal. Finnish people are seen as cold people who only articulate by words. For some respondents, it may raise a

problem, if one cannot express what he is thinking; whether he is satisfied or not. Finnish respondents admit it honestly and advocate for a more detailed question from the opposite side to clarify the issue. The emotions are not hidden on purpose but due to the introvert cultural education, emotions are not shown. Finnish people can be understood to not being as serious as are the others when they do not reveal their emotions. This can also be noticed by people communicating by email, phone and face-two-face interactions. According to one respondent, Finnish employees use 95 per cent only e-mail. The pros by communicating via e-mail are written data and agreement written on schedules and deadlines and the costs. The cons, on the other hand, are non-verbalism and possibility to be misinterpreted by only the written language.

“Do not have to reach the same level, just need to understand that people behave differently”

On the opposite side, there are the “more” verbal and emotional Italians. Italians use mostly non-verbal communication when communicating and they can seem to be theatrical. These non-verbal avails are moving hands, varying tone voices, facial expressions and gestures. Italians feel comfortable to lie close to the other person, give touching and speak with a different loudness of voice. The non-verbal assistance may confuse a person who is not used to such an extreme way of communication. Besides, it may also create distrust for the opposite party, because for some persons the non-verbal communication is less important than the actual meaning and the insecurity is hidden by the colourful moving hands-scenario. By communication tools, the Italians use rather the phone. The issue can be solved immediately on the phone thus it does not remain any saved data for the future.

“Gestures was weird at the beginning - not anymore”

“Too overwhelming”

According to the results, American people are somewhere in between of these two extreme way of communications. Emotions are shown more vividly than Finns do and small talk is natural. The respondents also feel that people may hide their true feeling behind the small talk and therefore it can be interpreted as superficial; and the poker face is often kept on. The respondents feel they need to be critical and suspicious about the American openness and politeness. Besides, sometimes the expressions appear as forced and pretended.

Directness

Finnish, Italian and American people all adopt direct communication but in different occasions. Finnish people are said to be direct and franc in almost all environments. They tell nothing but the truth and opinions are expressed easily, even the negative ones which also can be softened a bit. Less time is needed to make a decision due to the direct communication which enables meeting's pass more quickly. Although, for instance in meetings, a Finnish person can remain silent and quiet, but still do have an own opinion. The issue is that he expresses it sometimes too late or when the meeting is over. The directness and straightforwardness can be seen as offending by those who are not used to such communication or the way to express disagreements. Finns are allowed and even encouraged to reveal their opinion around everyone, no matter whether it is in front of one's boss. According to one interviewee, even in a confrontation, Finnish employees still remain their respect and politeness. Finns are said to be mellow people but when they shoot, they can really shoot hard and with harsh words.

Italians are said to be not-as-direct as Finns are. It might take a longer time for them to express the truth, because they do not want to appear offensive. According to the respondents, Italians might say YES even though they do not mean it, and therefore some people have doubts whether Italians really tell the truth. The story around the actual truth plus the emotional effects can be misleading and unreliable. Additionally, Italians have to create a story to reveal the negative issues or just to say 'NO'. According to the results, Italians can get offended of the Finnish straightness and the honest comments. The large difference about the directness is that Italians do not reveal their honest comment in front of their boss. They can say different things when their boss is around than when he is not.

The respondents feel that American people are straightforward, honest and give direct answers. Nevertheless, sometimes one can get the feeling that American people think too much about themselves and that they know everything best. Americans are people who always want to remain polite. Therefore they might say different things than they mean but one can see from the face that he does not honestly think that way. Some things are kept hidden from others, even though it would have a great value for the others.

Interrupting and listening

There exists a great difference between interrupting others in these three cultures. Finnish people do not interrupt the other person when he is conveying his opinion. The floor of speakers runs in order and people wait a moment to express their own opinion, until the other has ended his turn. Americans also interrupt less often. In contrast, it is common in

Italy to interrupt the other in the middle of his speech and it is not considered as rude. This might create confusion and it is one point why Finnish people can remain silent and quiet in the meetings which are hold together with all nationalities presented. The respondents concur that these cultural differences can be adopted; Italians really attempt to control the enthusiasm to express their own opinion immediately in meetings. On the other hand, Finnish people attempt to learn to be stronger in the meetings and occasionally interrupt, fall into the discussion with more passion and express loud their opinions. Finnish interviewees admit that in the meetings the person who has the loudest voice is heard the best. One of the respondents claimed that adapting is not depending on the cultural differences but the personality of the people.

“Adapting is not depending on cultural differences but our personalities”

“Respect and make an effort to understand and be understood”

The respondents find also a gap between the listening. The mutual opinion is that Italians do not listen much and that can be true due to their own and strong opinions. Finnish and American people listen carefully. However, one respondent had doubts, whether Finnish people actually listen. He continues that afterwards Finns have not understood the concept at all.

“Finnish people only hear but they do not listen”

“Professionals are supposed to listen”

5.5 Corporate culture

Working hours

To work most efficiently together, these respondents find it sometimes difficult to find a common time for the cooperation. Even though the time difference between Finland and Italy is only one hour, the corporate cultural time difference is more significant. Finnish people start working early in the morning and finish working in the afternoon around 4 o'clock. Regularly, half an hour lunch break is hold around midday. Finnish employees, especially back group officers, follow strictly the working hours and the work recommends 7, 5 hours work per day. Due to the rush seasons and project deadlines, Finnish people are flexible to work long days. Italian colleagues, on the other hand, normally start working later in the morning but also finish the day much later than their Finnish colleagues. In addition, lunch breaks are

not held at the same time which shortens the common working time even more, in example finding enough time for video conferences and conference calls.

In America, the common attitude is tighter and more supervised; working hours are exactly 8am.-5pm. Nevertheless, the maximum working capacity might not be the best due to the effectiveness of the employees. Besides, the employees are not rewarded for the extra hours or working during the weekend. According to the respondents, e-mail is perhaps the only communication channel to keep in touch with American colleagues, because the geographical time difference is more than within Europe.

Business priorities

Finnish corporations, including Finn-Power, are very keen on the schedules, agendas, taking minutes and deadlines. The respondents thought that Finnish colleagues are ambitious employees who always accomplish their tasks before the deadline or the end of the day. Therefore, a problem may be developing due to the Italian partners who do not appreciate the importance of deadlines as much as Finns do. Finn-Power employees were said to think too high-technically.

“Sometimes even the small issues are set up in a complex system”

Although, Italian colleagues provide the best reports, according to one respondent, they do not follow the agenda in the meetings at all. Neither does take any minutes and therefore the meetings are usually only oral discussions. Sometimes, Italian partners do arrive late to the meetings. According to one of the Italian respondent, Prima is learning a lot from Finn-Power concerning about taking notes and following the agenda more carefully. The management is willing to receive information from the meetings. On the other hand, Italian partners think that Finnish employees do not care enough of the administration, because the things are done so differently.

“Managers love the information from the meetings”

Management

One of the respondents argued about the management level of these corporations. He thinks that Finn-Power is macro managed and the company itself, including the management level, thinks it is way too huge company as it is in reality. The technology is affecting too much on the business itself when only a basic concept is rather good. Again, Prima Industrie is more

simple, micromanaged and earlier family-owned manufacturer company with individual employees.

The interviewees also argued about the bonus and rewarding systems in each country. In Finland there exist full health care and days for employee's activities, whilst in America there exists a bonus system. They all agreed that back ground office workers are left without any financial rewards and bonuses are only provided for sales departments.

Length of completing a task

The respondents said that Finnish and American colleagues complete their tasks quite fast. They begin with the given task right away and finish it in a short time. The issue that fastens the process is the ability to make decisions. The responsibility area is shared among members or a team leader and fast decisions can be provided in a short notice. There is no manager needed to complete the task. In Italy the decisions are made mostly only by the manager, which moderate the process. According to the interviewees, the Italian boss gives the decisions and besides, the subordinates also ask for guidelines how to manage the process.

Strengths and areas where to do better

All the respondents agreed that every party has its strengths in different areas. Finnish employees are product-oriented because they are so aware of the products and the qualities of the products. Sometimes they even forget that the product does not sell itself and sales really need to work hard to reach the trust of the customer. Still, they are flexible with the customers and able to do small changes in the contract while keeping in mind the boundaries. The respondents comment that the Finnish technologic-oriented R&D is sometimes too rushed and the innovations are unnecessary. Furthermore, the products can be launched before they are ready.

“Finn-Power's brochures and given information for the customer is excellent”

Italian sales managers were complimented for the customer-oriented approach and that the sales managers put an effort and assistance to give the best solution for the customer. The Italian basic sale's concept is simple and it just sells. Nevertheless, the respondents fear that it might be difficult for the Italian sales team to sell the Finnish products due to the high technology and qualities. Besides, documentation is poor in Prima Industrie because all the communication is handled by phone and there is no time to write down the decisions. Italian sales managers have their sales support which releases time to maintain the customer relationships.

American corporate culture was rewarded for the best marketing and good sales personalities. The respondents said that America possesses the strong marketing culture.

5.6 Individualism

The interviewees agreed that all employees are working both as individuals as well as in a team and they are required to work in both ways too. Finnish respondents said that they have learned to work by themselves since they went to school. Italians, on the other hand, work often in a group and travel in pairs. American colleagues work rather in teams. In general, they all work well in teams.

The survey reveals that Finnish offices are more furnished as open offices where the information flows smoothly. In America the office infrastructure includes more closed rooms of one or two people.

“There is NO difference between the loyalty and commitment in these countries”

5.7 Gender roles

Everybody agreed that there exists a huge difference between the gender roles within the whole company. The interviewees claimed that the industry is male-oriented and women are mostly seen as background officers. Additionally, it is due to the sheet metal industry that women are not as appreciated as are their male colleagues in the customer’s view. The results can be seen in the division of female and male employees, wage and the gender distinction at the management level. They all regretted the fact that female sales person is not as respected as her male colleague. One respondent claimed that women are not interested in the branch or the leader positions. They still encourage more women to apply for the open positions.

One of the respondents argued that managers need to travel often. The manager must be men therefore that women need to take care of their children. Besides, managers also do have big responsibility and therefore men fit to the position better. And again, the industry is more male-oriented which defines also the gender roles in superior’s positions. An Italian partner referred to the fact that Italy, as a culture, is more male-oriented society and therefore it is almost impossible to see women in a management positions. Additionally, sometimes Italian female secretaries are being run all over.

“It would be strange to work with women in a technical matter”

5.8 The process of integration

Directly after the merge, only the top managers were planning and developing the implementation to integrate the organisations eventually. Therefore, the message was received from top to down and employees had to follow the new process. Every individual has to understand that the message is not a rule and people need to be open and create an own way how to proceed the integration. Otherwise one would be against one's own company.

The process and the integration can be seen clearly in the US. The concrete things, such as flags, employees working under the same roof and knowing each other, have assisted the process of the integration in a positive way. The respondents admitted that the integration can not be seen in the other factories at all.

“Luckily, there exist linked employees between the countries who are in touch with other countries and have helped the integration and reduce misunderstandings.”

5.9 Meeting policy

Meeting procedure

The disciplined manner of Finnish meeting procedure of agendas, minutes, presentations and punctual schedules differs from the opposite style of corporate culture in Italy. According to the respondents, the differences can be found in the beginning of the meetings, floors of participants and interruptions, agenda, decision making style and whether the final decision is authorized to make or made at all. Punctual Finnish employees start the meeting and normally finish the meeting on time. According to the survey, the Italian colleagues arrive to the meeting in intervals. They may still grab a cup of coffee or manage a task after the meeting is supposed to start. The meetings are often interrupted by people walking straight into the meeting room, participants talking on their cell phones and people talking over each other. They do not sit in their chairs but walk around the conference room. Even an Italian interviewee admits that the meeting is difficult to follow when people are talking over each other.

The respondents questioned some Finnish colleagues' attendance in the meetings and compared them to be only witnesses. Managers have the floor more often and these witnesses may express their opinions only after the meeting and after the decision is closed. Finnish people do desire to have more time to think before expressing their opinion and

unfortunately some suggestions presented afterwards may be the best ones. This may mess already existing plans, schedules and people's view about the upcoming decision.

Time usage

Finnish people possess the skill of recap everything in a nutshell. Less words, less twines, just facts. The franc and straightforward communication of these icemen means that everything is presented just the way it is without anything non-relevant added. Strict followed agendas and short floors of participants enable the meeting run through smoothly and fast.

In Italy, the agenda in the meetings is not followed as carefully as in Finland. One Italian interviewee admits that only 20 % of the discussed topics are included in the agenda. Some arguments may lead to another topic which is not even relevant and which lengthens the meeting. Besides, everyone always wants to express his opinions aloud. The colourful way of communication and strong arguments have an influence to the pass of passionate discussion in Italy. Every topic is presented starting from the very beginning even though it would have been familiar to all participants. Additionally, the interruptions always break the current issue of discussion. The respondents regret that for one hour discussion, two hour meeting is needed due to the external factors.

Decision making

In Finland the responsibility is shared among the teams and the team leaders. The time that it takes to make a decision is short according to the respondents due to the responsibility factor. The employees have gained the trust from the superior which enables them to make decisions on their own. They need to keep in mind the boundaries given from the boss and be aware of the present goal of the project. The decision making procedure is democratic. Everyone's opinions and comments are listened and taken noticed. Normally, the decision is arrived very easily and people involved agree on it. Although, Finn-Power employees are often allowed to make the decision, some colleagues do not want to do because they feel they need to complete it by themselves. Due to the reason that Finnish colleagues do not have secretaries who would implement and spark the idea forward, the Finnish employees are avoiding the responsibility which derives from a presented suggestion.

The common opinion among the respondents is that the decision making style is different in Italy and Finland. The decision making in Italy is more centralized and controlled. Normally, there is only one person, the boss, who is allowed to make the final decision or in most cases even he has to confirm it or to ask for permission from the higher level managers in the organisation. If the boss is not present, no binding decision can be made. The boss needs to

be convinced by the arguments. After the decision is made, it has to be followed like a rule and it can not be changed afterwards. The decision making style is also rather autocratic and in some cases not everyone's opinions are listened. The decision is often postponed because nobody is willing to take the responsibility and they fear the possible risk. The decision can also be delayed because some person's opinion needs to be heard before. This postponing may also delay the whole project.

“What's the point of Italian “manager”-title when he is not allowed to make a decision anyway?”

The respondents also noticed that people working on the same level or in the same position in Finn-Power and in Prima Industrie do not have the same rights. By rights, they meant the ability to make a decision which means that some co-workers need to have a confirmation from the higher level manager in the organisation.

Joint meetings

Some teams, including employees from the different countries, were credited for the common business language they speak. The common language may not be the speaking language but the professional language. In this team, all the members possess the same passion for the work which enables them to discuss with good atmosphere. Nevertheless, it always depends on the personalities and how they match with each other.

On the other hand, some respondents have experienced the cultural differences in joint meetings; the participants get easily angry and Finnish colleagues really need to work hard their way to get in the middle of the discussion. American colleagues are seen somewhere in the middle of the cultures.

Focus in the meetings

Colleagues in Finland may start the meeting without any formal greetings - straight to the point. When a foreign colleague is participating, Finnish people need to push themselves to be polite and have some small talk about non-business before focusing completely on the business case. On the opposite manner, the Italian and American colleagues are used to exchange a couple of words before focusing on the agenda. Small talk in this case means maintaining the relationship by changing latest news, sharing the greetings and asking about families. Thereby they maintain the trust which is important when doing business with foreign people. Some respondents still feel that after the greetings in Italy, the business meetings start with all the problems which does not create good atmosphere.

5.10 Conflicts

Conflict solving

The respondents feel that it is uncomfortable to get drifted in the middle of a conflict because one is not aware how the other party reacts. According to one interviewee, professionals (as everybody in Prima Finn-Power are) cannot afford a conflict, but disagreements - yes. The truth is that in every company, conflicts do exist by the passionate employees. As he says, a conflict should be solved by trying to convince each other by fair discussion. Besides, the employees need to remind themselves that they cannot be working against the company or a co-worker.

Finnish people solve the conflict usually by negotiating sedate. Both parties may express their opinions and finally they find a solution. Occasionally, a conflict can be negotiated via e-mail which can lead to an e-mail fight. Some people just leave the problem lying around which may afterwards create a friction in the personal relationships. There are employees who cannot work together due to the previous misunderstandings which have not been solved because people quiet themselves. This quieting issue is a problem when the opposite party is a stronger character who gets the final word and the Finn bends on his decision.

Strong-willed Italian colleagues solve the issue by throwing themselves in the middle of the discussion. This may include speaking with loud voice or even shouting. But yet they can also remain silent and be annoyed for a while. Anyhow, the conflict is often solved finally. The common attitude from the respondents reveals also that Italian partners can be too proud to admit being wrong or accept the opposite's option.

American colleagues try to solve the conflict by negotiation. They can also dramatize the issue by shutting the door and shouting or sometimes even embarrassing the other party in public.

Conflict appearance

When asked from the interviewees, where conflict appear and what the issues that arise the conflicts are, they mentioned the relations between the departments in general. The departments normally accuse the other department for the failure, misunderstandings etc. Departments are fighting and jealous, and in addition they are not interested about the other departments.

One interviewee adduces that The Group has now become the new “enemy” between the internal departments. He claims that The Group is the other company who now is fighting against the former two companies by making changes in the organisation continuously.

Also a positive issue was revealed from the survey; even though employees can be handling the conflict at the office, they can still leave it in the office and do not take it personally. The conflict shouldn't affect their private life.

5.11 Internal communication

All the respondents agreed the internal communication is weak and it should be more frequent. The information channel is normally e-mail, and reading takes also a lot of time beside the actual job. Despite, they all still admit that e-mail is the only channel to communicate when all persons concerned are working abroad, around the world. Nevertheless, there were arguments that the information does not reach everybody and there still exists two companies and brands and communication is made in different ways in internal briefings. The management needs to encourage employees to think there is only one company Prima Finn-Power Group and put an effort for the information. The information flow is still too much on person-to-person level because there actually does not exist a person who would administer all the information flow. The external communication is on a decent level unlike the internal one. Most of the employees are not aware of the current goal, mission or corporate values. Although the employees have access to the intranet, they don't know how to use it and from where to find information. The fact that articles are both in Finnish and in English causes an issue for some people. It should be in one language. Open office got credits for the easiness of departmental information but employees also wish more information between the departments.

One of the interviewee's suggestions is not to have common internal information because that kind of information makes no improvement and it can be interpreted wrong. Instead, he suggests team leaders who would inform the rest of the team after having received the information themselves. Thereby everybody would be informed in a correct way.

5.12 Openness

A few interviewees oppress that Finnish organisation is more open than the Italian one. Issues, particularly negative ones, are discussed and recognized more openly in Finland than in Italy. The problems are more hidden and treated as taboos in Prima Industrie. These respondents believed it is because the Italian partners do not desire to talk about negative issues.

Also another issue rose from survey. For some employees it is difficult to say anything negative about the past and current situations. Particularly due to the matters that appear in the co-operation between the colleagues.

5.13 Personnel magazine Chorus

The interviewees responded to a couple of question concerning the personnel publication Chorus. Everybody told that they read it occasionally. It has been published three times by November 2010. The common opinion is that Chorus is a sign of the concrete change of the integration. It presents reorganized teams and introduces notable persons. Below you may read comments and suggestions for Chorus.

Length of the publication and the articles

“Remains the interest due to the small size. Max 8 pages”

“Could be even longer, 15 pages”

“Max 10 pages, short articles”

“Proper length now”

Should theory be included?

“Basic values- theory is needed in daily work”

“Training of human behaviour and culture for sales people and people who travel around the world”

“Introduce cultures, yes”

“Theory of cultures would be great, because I don’t know the other cultures well. Introduce dining cultures as well.”

“It would be great to read about different cultures, also wining and dining cultures”

“It could present also other cultures than only Finnish and Italian ones”

“Not theory about cultural differences because it can be perceived as offensive, but theory of habits and traditions; cultures, cuisines etc.”

“Like an international cooking book”

Delivery channel

“Paper copy would be read for sure”

“Too much e-mail daily”

“Not a file which has to be fetched from the Intranet”

“E-mail is ok but it could be also a magazine which would arrive home. People receive quite much e-mail anyway”

“E-mail is easy to read and low-cost”

“Employees would focus on it more when it would be delivered home in a paper copy”

“E-mail is less expensive and most efficient delivery channel”

“Not professional channel”

“Employees can read e-mail beside work, on the other hand, people would read it certainly when it would be delivered home”

“Availability is secure by e-mail”

“No difference whether it’s a paper copy or not”

“Rather a brochure”

Photos

“Has to be”

“Must be many pictures”

“Important and good”

“A few photos about events”

“Nice and appreciated”

“Photos of achievements”

Interviews

“Has to be included, because then it’s more close to humans and employees”

“One interview per publication”

“More interviews; what has happened in the company”

“Face of the month”

“Introduce co-workers for each other”

“Yes, more employee-oriented”

“Interesting”

“Recognition”

Open discussion portal

“Senior employees may not know how to use”

“It could help but it’s not useful”

“There exists a portal in Italy already about ongoing training etc, but nobody actually uses it”

“Prefer a forum about issues in where everybody can share their opinions - but who would be responsible for monitoring?”

Competitions

“As a final lightening”

“Counterbalance for business”

“Interesting, it would improve the atmosphere”

“Nice exchange for the business, makes one laugh”

“No harm if it’s connected somehow”

Language

“Some people are not able to read it now due to the language reasons”

“Would prefer it in Finnish and Italian”

6 Research analyses

This chapter will compare the theory from the previous pages and the research results. I discovered some major findings in all topic areas. The findings from the survey affect more or less the co-operation between Prima and Finn-Power causing the feeling of insecurity of the future, lack of being understood and tension between the employees.

The research provides a brutal picture of the Italian culture and it's purpose is not to offend anyone. The environment where the survey and the interviews are implemented is Finland and the surrounding may influence the respondents as well.

6.1 Power Distance Index

One major difference can be found in Power Distance Index. The countries which scored high PDI, accept the fact that people are unequal. The precise Finnish people feel they do not receive enough exact and specific response from their Italian partners immediately, for which they are used to with Finnish colleagues. Whereas the more insecure Italian employees are afraid or incapable to give the complete replies without confirming it with one's supervisor before. In most cases, the Italian colleagues need to approve the new suggestion or idea by his boss which also delays the decision or project. By approvals, they deduct the responsibility of the decision and the possible consequences which would be caused by the failure of the process. This is a question of decision-making rights and responsibility of the decision. These unwritten corporate rules determine organisation-based values and they vary from country to another. The relationship between the Italian superiors and supervisors is more or less autocratic and long-distance. The respondents admitted that in Prima Finn-Power Group in Italy, the managers can be known by how they are addressed, treated, behaved with and how they are dressed. These attributes are more difficult to notice in Finnish organisations. Naturally, the managers are respected but not obvious way. Finnish managers allow their employees more freedom and the possibility to accept and approve decisions. Therefore the countries have scored differently and the reasons came out in my survey.

The decision-making rights also derive from the culture's power distance and the hierarchy levels. Finnish organisations are usually quite flat and the middle-levels do also possess the

ability to make decisions concerning one's own occupational territory and boundaries. According to Hofstede's survey's, the Power Distance Index, the two concerning countries scored totally different. Italian organisations are more likely hierarchic with several organisations. The decision-making process in Italy requires longer time than in Finland which might cause uneasiness between Finnish partners who are involved with the common project. Finnish colleagues must be aware that the decision by their Italian partners cannot be provided immediately. When scheduling a new project, one has to keep that in mind and understand the facts.

6.2 Individualism

The Individualism Index from Hofstede's research did not arise enormously from the interviews among Prima Finn-Power employees. The idea of Individualism Index is whether a person is having from the group's or the individual's interest. The respondents could not determine any difference straight. Both organisations are said to work great both in teams and as individuals. On the other hand, what comes to the Finnish mindset of schedules and strict deadlines, Finnish employees value regular working hours as well as short lunch breaks. Regular working hours leaves none current time for families and private life but the work is still done on time. In addition, in the organisations in Finland, the boss-employee relationship is tight and commonly trusted. The boss allows the employee to act freer and empowers him to work more independent without explaining and confirming everything with the boss. This makes the job to be more challenging and pushes the individual to gain the trust from his boss. These states refer to individual attributes.

At that moment, the interviewees were still thinking of the two companies as two separate companies and the best for the individual companies. They also believe the majority of the personnel still perceive two different companies (Prima and Finn-Power). This division or integration can not be seen concretely in the office layouts nor overly in internal information. The respondents believe individuals initially need to start accepting the fact that the company has changed its business model and has merged with another company. They need help and guidelines from the management to understand the future goal and start the we-thinking (Prima Finn-Power-thinking). They are also waiting for concrete results from the organisation change to be able to believe in the integration themselves.

6.3 Masculinity Index

In the theory chapter, the most different scores exist in Masculinity dimension. The respondents were analysing this question according to work, office and to the distinction between men and female colleagues. They were saying that the sheet metal industry and

industrial companies are more male oriented due to the technological and selling attributes. Women are not seen in key positions. In their opinion, women perform great in back office positions. The respondents claimed that females (both Finnish and Italian) are not enough credible to sell such products as the company does. The industry is male-dominated, as usually are the managers of the target group, and according to the respondents, men bear normal to purchase from other males. The salary is also different but it is also connected to the positions in the company. Besides, the rewarding system is mostly for sales departments and therefore female colleagues are not rewarded by their accomplishments. In truth, not all positions and departments are reward-connected and employees are aware of that.

The male respondents desire qualified female colleagues to their teams in selling and they proudly explained how they had received a female employee to one of their team to bring diverse ideology. The female respondent felt women are not as appreciated as are their male colleagues but the direction is good and the future looks promising. One of the interviewee had an opinion that women cannot manage in a manager position due to the fact that women are the ones who give birth to babies and are required to stay at home with them. According to him, family for women is reason for not to be able to travel often. Besides, managers in the company have to travel frequently. In reality, women do give birth but family does not hinder people to be enough qualified for the management positions if she is capable to manage the harmony between the job and family. Personality and flexibility are the qualifications for both genders.

6.4 Uncertainty Avoidance Index

Hofstede's final dimension Uncertainty Avoidance refers to the questions of how people face the future. By confirming and receiving acceptance from one's boss, the Italian colleagues are securing the future. The decision making power is centralized to one person, the boss, and the orders and decision are delivered for the employees from there. The employees are aware that the orders are to be followed and that secures their future. They prevent the individual responsibility whether the decisions wind up fail or end up being a financial risk. The Italian respondents could not name anything that would happen if the decision would end up being wrong or whether the approval had something to do with lack of trust. They need to ask authorized people's opinion before they can trust the decision themselves. They regard the decision as danger if they have to make it by themselves. This differs from the Finnish style of making the decision - fast. Finnish colleagues do not get approvals from their boss and therefore the decisions can be made intuitively. They have done background work and they trust their decisions. Finnish people are trustworthy and they expect other people to be trusted as well. Others may think Finnish employees to be naïve and that they have faith for new ideas and partners too lightly.

There exists a gap between the mindsets of Italian and Finnish people of how they trust and how they regard them to be trusted. Employees are not totally aware of the common advantage which would relieve the cooperation in the new organisation. Careful planning could be the key to prevent having a fear about the future. When people are aware of the direction and the goal, the decision can be made without having to dread the future and the decisions regarding to it. Internal news letter, weekly meetings among teams and personal discussions with ones supervisor assists individual to understand clearly the company's turn and helps the employee to realize his input and effort in the business process.

6.5 Formality

The level of formality differs in these cultures as well. Finnish people do not show emotions as openly as do their Italian partners and neither do they show respect openly. Equality plays an enormous role in Finland and therefore statuses and titles are not brought out. While, in Italy the respect for older colleagues and managers can be seen explicitly by their behaviour. Some people may consider Finnish lack of honouring as rude. As employees work more closely together, they get familiar with each other's traditions and level of showing and receiving respect. Italian colleagues must not get offended by the Finnish style of addressing people, behaving and acting around them. Employees learn to accept the habits of how other colleagues are treated. Whereas modest Finnish people need to work on as well as giving but also receiving respect and honour.

6.6 Communication

One of the major difference lies in communication and especially in the language - English, which is the main business language at Prima Finn-Power after the integration. Even though both countries, Finland and Italy are well-educated societies, the level of English language knowledge lacks, and especially the business language. Besides, no matter how skilled one is in a foreign language, there is a chance that one cannot express one's opinion in other language as clear as in one's own native language. Tense and even less tense meetings are easier to run in native language and thereby attendants are definitely understood. The reality still is that nowadays meetings in English, employees need to express themselves in English and understand the internal communication in English. Some employees are used to use English in their business life but a few had never needed to use the language. The business vocabulary develops after every occasion one has to use it and personal acceptance benefits the learning. For doing business, the company needs to have common language. And for having common language, the company needs to motivate the employees to use this language

as their communication tool. To prevent the possible incoherence in the communication, the parties need to create shared, own business language in order to be correctly understood.

Unfortunately language is not the only issue which may frustrate the communication. A Country's cultural attributes also impact to the communication. These attributes that affect the communication can be neutral and expressive ones. Finnish culture possesses the neutral communication style. Emotions are shown slightly and people's minds are difficult to interpret. The meaning of the message is most important in the communication and it is expressed solely. The phenomena may create the feeling of insecurity for expressive Italian person who is used showing emotions and expressions while bringing the message up. Therefore the Italian colleagues may find it difficult to interpret Finnish partners when they cannot tell what they are thinking. Most of the Italian people are using non-verbal influences in the communication, such as gestures, facial expressions and wide explanations. These imprints fade the actual message and Finnish people may not fully understand the actual meaning of the message. The Finnish respondents still admitted that they have got used to the colourful Italian way of communication and the communication becomes easier after every reunion.

There are two possibilities for a person to communicate with a person from different culture: one does not want to understand the other communication style or create a common mutual communication with mix of both styles. Asking and confirming is always allowed!

The employees are not totally aware of the other country's values. For instance, Finnish people value silence and therefore silent moments are accepted in the conversations because they provide time to think carefully before expressing one's opinion. They do not show their emotions either they feel satisfied or not. Emotions and expressions are not hidden on purpose; it is only a cultural matter. The Finnish respondents, who have worked more or less with their Italian partners, agreed that they have become more familiar using and copying the extrovert communication style. On the other hand, loud tone voice, emotions and gestures are normal in the Italian culture and it is accepted to express oneself with loud voice and shouting without meaning anything negative personally. In Finnish culture these can be perceived as offensive. At the beginning a neutral Finnish employee may be shocked about this, but after getting to know the other person and his business culture, the situation neutralizes from both sides. Both parties need to accept the cultural characteristics and find a way how to communicate and understand each others. When the parties spend more time and get to know each other, they learn all the time from each other's culture and the communication style. After the parties have become familiar with each other, it is much easier to start creating business procedures which finally include: accepting, understanding and adapting.

Directness

The question raised according to directness; are Finnish people too rude when they are franc and express their honest opinion straightforward without softening it and why do Italian people agree on things when they know it is something they cannot surely keep and implement. Finnish people are used to give and receive straight, honest and short answers to the questions or dilemmas they have presented. Even though the answers are negative or non-desirable, the responses are presented in a similar way as if it would be a positive decision. Finnish people have learned to take the negative decisions and after they have received one, they create a better solution with a better background work. The desired and implemented work is high-quality in the high-technological country. They accept the same level from their partners. They do have Finnish guts to tell the negative decision or comment without glossing it at all. This way of expressing non-desired decisions may offend Italian colleagues because the Italian employees are used to build a story around the decision. It is considered as rude to be against someone's opinion. It takes much longer time to express the negative satisfaction than just to say 'NO'. The respondents were not sure whether this refers also to the respect for other people and due to the honour; they try to wander the truth and avoiding the word 'NO'. In business environment it is extremely important to express doubts, fears and resources if the other party has not sensed it before. By telling the honest truth, confirming and asking opinions, employees avoid interpreting wrong and they arrive to the ultimate solution. It would be huge harm if the parties had agreed on something but still the implementation was different due to the lack of understanding or the knowledge that something cannot be executed. It just was not sad or expressed aloud.

6.7 Meeting procedure

The respondents compared the meeting procedure in Finland, in Italy as well as commonly held meetings. The meetings in Finland tend to start on time, follow the agenda and no interruptions are allowed. The meeting agenda is run through on time and regularly a decision is made afterwards. Meetings in Italy follow different kind of procedure. The meetings rarely start on time and if a higher status manager in the organisation has not arrived, it cannot be started at all. The interruptions are allowed. Attendants may talk on the phone during the meeting and people come in and go out from the meeting room. The discussion may take another course and issues that are not included in the agenda may be discussed mostly. With a common procedure the meetings can executed most efficient.

The Italian colleagues who have attended meetings in Finland, value the Finnish procedure. They admit that more work is done when the meeting is planned carefully beforehand and

there are no interruptions. There exist unwritten meeting rules which are also included in Finnish organisational business values. In Italy, there are not these kinds of organised habits and the attendants only show up. The Italian colleagues are not aware of Finnish values but one can learn them after a couple of times by observing the others. The unwritten rules are ie:

- Do not be late
- Do not interrupt
- Listen, then everybody else listens you
- Express your opinion short
- Be aware of the agenda and follow it

These unwritten values also are Finnish values. Prima Finn-Power has created company values, but there could be also values for employees. The values would include how to behave at meetings. By adapting both organisation cultures, the company may create own values. Employees will after a time also learn how to greet and address each other. The level of how much personal life one desires to share and how long time the greetings in the beginning of the occasion will take, stabilises after a time and it becomes a routine. Also the amount of small talk and business language as well as discussions stabilises to a desired level.

The other issue that emerges at meetings is interruptions. Especially interruptions while someone is talking. Finnish people are used to listen and express oneself after the other has finished his turn of speech. The Italian may interrupt the other while he is still talking. This confuses and might scare the Finnish attendees and as a conclusion they may remain silent during the meeting. Finnish people are both courageous but at the same time sedate and shy. When they face a stronger party, they may not express their opinion and easily acquiesce and approve the other party's suggestion. Therefore Finnish attendants are said to be only witnesses at the meetings and they open their mouth after the meeting is over. The respondents from both parties agreed that it is a problem when Finnish colleagues feel threatened and approve the other's idea. For Finnish employees to learn to be more encouraged, the Italian colleagues require to learn how to listen and not interrupt every time. These values are both adaptable and meeting procedure neutralises automatically after a couple of times.

6.8 Management

The respondents argued but also agreed on issues with the management. In truth, the management is responsible for the company; as well as for purchasing, selling and personnel welfare. The grounds for the merge were for example proper products; they supplement each company's products. The management desires to collect the best qualities from both

companies; also from the business strategies and implementation styles. They also need to regard the two organisation's cultures and for develop qualities that will fit best to the common strategy, new brand and new organisation for Prima Finn-Power Group. Informing is the key word that the employees are missing, even more. Internal communication must reach everybody, no difference where one geographically lies. Besides, the departments must be aware of other department's discoveries, innovations etc.

The respondents are waiting for first concrete results after the new organisational structure. The changes can begin to be visible after some time. After the integration, the only visible change can be seen in the blue logo with a spot of orange. In the offices, the integration cannot be seen according to Finnish and Italian respondents. However, in America the merger has brought new employees under the same roof and the flags etc. connecting identity signums were combined. The integration at work can be seen in travelling, having meetings with new colleagues, phone discussions, seminars and exhibitions together. According to the respondents it still cannot be seen in everyday work. The salesmen have continued to sell their product with their previous team, financial departments are still discovering the best common solution for administration and R&D department have had new projects together. The management level should inform employees about the strengths and new abilities which the integration has brought. What do the salespeople benefit? And what do background officers need to take into consideration concerning the "new half"?

The respondents valued each other's strengths and identified where do teams perform great; American salesmen were credited to be astonishing salespersons and the marketing is in high level in America. The Italian salesmen were also flattered for taking the customer relationship and maintaining very seriously. The sales assistants were regarded as important back-up in the process. Again, Finnish high-technology and product knowledge received compliments from the others. As seen, employees are aware of each other in general, but in the individual level employees need have more information.

The rewarding policies were also brought out in the interviews. The management level needs to regard these facts concerning to the personnel as well. Responsibilities, bonus systems, personnel benefits and waging would have to be integrated while regarding the country-specific rules and instructions. Jealousy can become one factor why employees do not want to co-operate with each other.

6.9 Conflicts

Misunderstandings and conflicts exist in every company. Prima Finn-Power's fusion has also created misunderstandings: which one has the stronger organisational culture and is it the

one that employees continue to implement? Why employees are addressing others so rude? Why does he say 'YES' when he means 'NO'? Why does the management want to change something we have executed for several years?

The problems or misunderstandings belong to every relationship: family relationship, friendship and employee-employer relationship. They build the relationship stronger, when the parties feel free to express their true feelings. Fortunately, these kinds of disagreements do not always grow into conflicts which derive from employee's misinterpretation. These conflicts are cultural shocks and misconceptions. Individuals also handle the conflicts differently; one confront the issue with a discussion with the other party, one give in and forgets it and others may never forgive and the conflict affects to the relationship for good.

At the moment the conflicts or arguments are created between the organisations and teams. Employees may be jealous or then they know too less about the other organisations rather they know the employees. Conjoint occasions and projects bring the teams closer to each other and they get to know the personalities behind the occupations.

Everyone handles conflict in a personal way. The ideal situation would be solving the conflict and foremost solve the conflict with decent discussion where the best solution is created. Unfortunately, passionate employees handle the conflict regarding to work also in a passionate way. There rather exist personal grudge which have caused the conflict in the office. The management level may meddle into conflict when it is affecting negatively into the team spirit or results.

6.10 Informationing

The respondents are quite satisfied to the external Informationing. The internal information is still lacking. They prefer more information and the information should regard everybody and it should be also delivered to everybody in the company. The respondents claimed that employees are getting much e-mail daily and the importance of the message is not always clear if all the information would be delivered via e-mail.

There are other methods to inform as well. One of the interviewees suggested that team leader or manager would receive the information and he would be the one who share the info for his team. Thereby, the information would be received personally and questions could be presented after every topic. Team-concerning meetings or weekly meetings are good opportunity share latest news and accomplishments. The issue that arises in Informationing is the interpretation. People understand the info in a different ways. There exist pros and cons. Positive impact is more points of views and the idea rich discussion afterwards. The negative

affection is when there is only one who receives the information and he understands it wrong, he is responsible to share it with the rest of the team.

Anyhow, the respondents are willing to get more information. The information should include how the processes are executed, what have the other organisation accomplished and where does the company stands regarding the competition? They also want to be told what are the employee's input and effects of his work. By telling, picturing, explaining and showing, employees finally understand the whole picture of the organisation and thereby the feeling of accomplishment pushes forward.

6.11 Personnel publication Chorus

The personnel publication Chorus has been received well due to its approach and revealing results from the integration. It has represented the new organisation structure and it has included interviews of managers and employees working in similar position but in different country. The publication is short itself and the articles are brief which maintains the interest through the whole Chorus. The respondents admitted to read the "magazine" and they were glad to give proposals and suggestions to create it more efficient for the whole personnel.

The length and deliver channel

The length of the publication Chorus is saluted great. At the moment the publication is read during the work day due to the reason that it is delivered via e-mail. Chorus is light reading with also an important message. It represents the concrete results from the integration. The short stories are easy to read and interesting interviews are methods how to present employees and their positions. The respondents agreed that eight to fifteen pages is proper length, in order to personnel has sufficiently time to enter into it and still maintain the interest. The respondents did not appreciate the idea that one would have to fetch the file from the intranet but they accepted how it is delivered now. A couple of the respondents suggested that the publication (or magazine) would be delivered home. They said that the paper copy would be read for sure. Thus the employees would be more focused and eager to read even longer Chorus after work (note: Chorus is published circa four times per year). A few argued that they receive quite much e-mail per day and Chorus may be drowned under other e-mails. There are again pros and cons: delivering via e-mail the delivery charges are zero and on the other hand, Chorus in paper would cost a larger deal.

Interviews and photos

By introducing colleagues around the world in Chorus, the reader learns them and their duties and whether they are the right persons to contact concerning to a project or an issue. The interviews are said to make the publication more close to employees and employee-oriented. They are willing to read about occasions and messes too. The employees are interested of what the company has taken part of and how it has been implemented and what is has achieved. Results and achievements motivate personnel. The respondents also felt the interviews needs to include pictures. Pictures are appreciated and important. It is simpler to connect name, position, task and face. Thereby people may also indentify and recognise employees when they visit each other's factories and the interviews are easy topic to start connecting to each other. They also suggested adding pictures from the events which create the concrete feeling that everyone's task is essential in anyway.

Theory in Chorus

I asked whether the respondents would like to read small theory sections about cultural theories and cultures. They admitted they are not aware of the cultural traditions, values and different organisation cultures, or not before they started to discuss about them. They wish to read small culture introductions and facts about other's values. They need basic information about values and cultures in everyday work. Chorus could include small boxes with country's values or cultural tips of how to communicate. The boxes could include what is typical communication or behaviour for each representative so it would not become as a shock in the first meeting. These tips cannot be taken too seriously, but only to use as an advantage and preliminary information. At the same time the representative could also read and learn about one's own cultural characteristics and thereby notice the possible differences and be aware of them.

A couple of the respondents suggested that cultures are presented as a cooking book. What is typical behaviour and tradition in this country and at the same time introduce typical dishes. The cultural characteristics would be presented as international cook book. It would be like a guide which could be read before starting a relationship with a colleague from different country.

Language

All the interviewees were able to communicate and read in English. They advised that not every employee is capable of reading in English and therefore the publication Chorus is unnecessary for them. The employees must be enabled to read internal messages. It is the

management who has made the final decision to publish only in one language. The costs of Chorus increase if it is translated into several languages. One respondent submitted that individuals need to create an own way how to understand the message provided in English and this is their responsibility.

Competitions

Even though Chorus is light reading with interesting topics, the interviewees were not against a lightening at the end. A competition or a quiz could raise team spirit and it could be also a meter how to measure the number of reader. A short competition is appreciated lightening at the end.

Open discussion portal

The respondents were not thrilled about an open discussion portal. They admitted that senior labour would not have enough knowledge how to use it and it would be unnecessary as well. The respondents admitted that there already exists an internal portal in Italy for trainees etc, but nobody really uses it. They would prefer a forum instead where everyone could express their opinions and download material. But who would be responsible for monitoring it?

For communicating more with each other, employees raise the awareness of others. There exist tools and application programs which enable communication between the organisations around the globe easily and with low-cost. These internal programs lower the level of contacting colleagues in another country or are also simple to use. Chats, call and conference calls are also provided in these applications.

7 Conclusion

When two companies merge together, it requires much work and several steps to start combining the organisational cultures and to discover the best qualities of each organisation. This process requires time to observe, knowledge of the organisational culture and flexibility. When two companies from also different cultures fusion together, it also insists the knowledge of the cultures. In my opinion, the knowledge is the key to the successful implementation as for both management and employees. As near as the two countries, Finland and Italy are located, the cultural roots varies even more. The core values of the inhabitants in these countries are like day and night. In this case in Prima Finn-Power Group, the employees bear not enough knowledge of the opposite country and the culture nor do of their own one. People usually forms a common stereotype of a specific culture, which also assists the beginning of co-operation. To take a closer look into the culture and in this case

business traditions, one needs to be first aware and recognize own cultural characteristics and organisational culture and then observe and notice the other culture's nature. With knowledge, understanding and experience one may start developing an own approach and adapt the other culture within the own boundaries.

One can not get discouraged by the fact that culture and cultural differences forms more than half of one's personality. The possibility of being understood wrong increases when the opposite party possesses totally different cultural values, norms, behaviour and communication and is coercive to not being flexible. One needs to be open-minded and eager to survive the situation by understanding the cultural differences and finally be able to adapt it for own behaviour. One cannot get offended when the other party does or expresses something that is against the unwritten rules - these are the values for the culture and the values do differ even in every organisation cultures. The employees of Prima Finn-Power are in the face of knowledge of the opposite culture. Some can sense the differences and some can even name it. By bringing them out, or even saying an issue aloud, it enables one to start thinking "how is it in my culture" and the compare it to the other one.

The management is required to give information and encourage employees to create an own approach for the new business operation. Day and night forms the total 24hour day and so do the employees form the Prima Finn-Power Group. Days change as does the daily business life and employees start to feel more comfortable in the new environment after they have become familiar with each other.

My suggestion is that the employees and team with different nationalities spend as much time together as possible for getting to know each other first and then create the business relationship. Familiarisation can be implemented by factory visits and face-to-face meetings, by internal communication tools or interviews which would introduce employees' daily work, present basic facts and interests. The business processes must be clear for everybody before trying to compare the practises. The company can use an IT drawing applications to clarify the process charts. There could be a change for one team member to visit other teams for learning its processes. This individual could eventually share the daily procedures for the rest of the team. This learning and recognitions can also help teams to work together more actively. The integration does not happen immediately whereas it requires time.

The employees must also be aware of the common goals, personal objectives and the value of the integration. By them, employees will be motivated to work and they have more similar insights of the future. Employees need to have common values for personnel as well. Regular bases of values can be written, such as the common meeting procedure and how deadlines should be executed. The unwritten values form in the teams itself. The unwritten values are

addressing each other, greetings, interruptions, replying to e-mails etc. At the beginning, asking is allowed and preferable. The opposite party is normally flattered when his traditions and processes are being interested of. One can also express opinions if some habit or communication is bothering or surprising. As the team works more closely together these surprises and question marks fade away and team will eventually find its relevant procedure. Every party has its strengths. Sometimes one has to say it aloud to realize the strengths and also the weaknesses to understand the whole picture.

Many issues are also depending on individual's attitude. As the company acts on a big change, the business models changes consensually. The employees are required to follow the new instructions and create new business models referring the new guidelines. If the individual is not willing to be flexible and follow the instructions, he will be working against his own company. The employees need to have a carrot that motivates their daily work. Common events and refreshing days motivate employees as well as personal and team concerning targets.

The personnel's publication Chorus can be used as introducing the cultures and teams, create the feeling of connection into one company and give advices of cultural behaviour and communication. It is not an internal communication channel, but rather a personnel magazine with news and what is occurring outside the office.

The respondents could not name consequences that have happed due to the integration or cultural and communication differences. The question is then given; are the cultural differences really a problem? The two organisations have now worked together for a couple of years and they are learning a lot from each other. This learning has not yet lead to any huge trouble and therefore on can tell that the track is actually right!

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9 List of pictures

Picture 1. Ice berg-model

Picture 2. Onion-model

Picture 3. Human mental program

Picture 4. Cultures in crash

Picture 5. Cultural lenses

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- Figure 4. Uncertainty Avoidance Index
- Figure 5. Age distinction
- Figure 6. Length of employment

10 Appendix

1. The interview structure

1. Name (optional)
2. Age
3. Position in the company
4. Length of the employment
5. Describe shortly Finnish, Italian and North-American co-worker?
6. What are the main issues that occur when Finnish and Italian employees interact and communicate with each other? (North-American)
7. How do they behave in a meeting?
 - Decision making
 - Main focuses (simply in the task or relationship)
 - How do they use time
8. How does the communication differ in these countries?
 - Formality
 - Verbalism
 - Directness
 - Interrupting
 - Emotional
9. How does the corporate culture differ between the countries?
 - What are the aspects that are done differently in those countries
 - Atmosphere
 - Easy and difficult qualities
 - Hierarchy
 - Individualism
 - Gender roles
10. What are the issues that arises conflicts? How are they handled?
 - Different attitudes to conflicts
 - Judgments
11. How do the leadership and companies' establishment affect to the business today between the countries?
 - Openness
 - Information flow
12. What are the aspects that the parties are not aware about each other? Don't understand?
 - Behaviour
 - Communication
 - Corporate culture
13. How would the personnel magazine chorus help to harmonizing the process?
 - Theory
 - Delivery channel
 - Open discussion portal
 - Length of articles
 - Photos
 - Interviews
 - Competitions