

Bachelor's thesis
International Business
2020

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THE KEY COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS IN MANAGERIAL WORK

– what is expected from a first-time manager

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The aim of this thesis was to research what kind of competencies and skills are expected from the first-time manager. The topic focused principally on the first-time manager's perspective, especially the process of starting a career as a new manager, and how the managerial skills could be practiced in the beginning of the career.

This thesis was carried out as a qualitative research, where the wide literature review was done previously. With the help of in-depth literature review, the phenomenon of the first-time manager's competencies and skills were able to examine more closely. In the qualitative research part consisted of conducting interviews for five (5) interviewees who were all in same level job in different fields with the working history approximately of 10 years. The interviews were semi-structured, which helped in analysing the research results better.

Based on the findings, there are a lot of expectations for different competencies and skills that a new manager should be able to manage soon after beginning a new position. Particularly, the ability to understand the work from the employee's perspective was seen important. The communication skills and availability were seen important as well, which would build the credibility of a new manager. In order to increase the work motivation, the manager was seen to have an important role in the feedback culture and improving the self-driven work environment. The manager's micromanaging was mentioned as a negative pattern during the interviews.

The follow-up-research idea is the recruitment process from the perspective of a first-time manager. The recruitment process is a big area that requires special competencies from the recruitment manager. Another suggestion for further development and research idea is to re-do this same study with a larger group of interviewees who have recently started their working careers. It would be interesting to research if the study results change based on the years of working experience.

KEYWORDS:

manager, managerial work, competencies, feedback, management, career development

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OSAAMINEN JA TAIDOT JOHTAMISEN TYÖSSÄ

- mitä odotetaan uudelta esimieheltä

Tämän opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena oli tutkia, että minkälaista osaamista ja taitoa nykyajan esimieheltä odotetaan. Aiheen tarkempi kokonaisuus muodostui erityisesti uuden esimiehen aseman aloittamisesta ja siitä, että miten esimies pystyy harjoittamaan esimiesosaamistaan uransa alussa. Opinnäytetyössä tutkittiin myös kommunikaation tärkeyttä esimiesasemassa.

Opinnäytetyö toteutettiin kvalitatiivisena tutkimuksena, jota ennen tehtiin laaja kirjallisuuskatsaus. Syväällisesti tehdyn kirjallisuuskatsauksen avulla, ilmiötä nykyajan esimiehen osaamisesta ja taidoista pystyttiin tutkimaan tarkemmin. Kvalitatiivisessa tutkimusosuudessa haastateltiin viittä (5) haastateltavaa eri aloilta, joilla kaikilla oli samankaltainen työntekijän asema noin 10 vuoden työhistorialla. Haastattelut olivat puolistrukturoituja, joka auttoi analysoimaan tutkimustuloksia paremmin.

Tutkimustulosten perusteella todennettiin, että uudelta esimieheltä odotetaan paljon erilaista osaamista ja taitoa, jotka esimiehen olisi hyvä hallita nopeasti aloittaessaan uuden position. Erityisen tärkeänä pidettiin kykyä ymmärtää työtä kokonaisvaltaisesti työntekijän näkökulmasta katsottuna. Uudelta esimieheltä odotettiin myös kommunikaatiotaitoja ja tavoitettavuutta, joiden katsottiin kasvattavan luottamusta. Työmotivaation lisäämiseksi, esimiehellä katsottiin olevan tärkeä rooli palautekulttuurissa sekä itseohjautuvan työotteen lisäämisessä. Negatiivisena asiana koettiin liiallinen mikromanagementointi.

Jatkotutkimusaiheeksi sopii rekrytointiin perehtyvä opinnäytetyö uuden, uransa aloittavan esimiehen näkökulmasta katsottuna. Rekrytointiprosessi on iso kokonaisuus, joka itsessään vaatii erityisosaamista rekrytoivalta esimieheltä. Toisena jatkotutkimusaihe löytyy tämän tutkimuksen toistamisesta, mutta lisäämällä haastateltavien määrää ja keskittymällä uransa aloittaviin työntekijöihin. Olisi mielenkiintoista nähdä, että vaikuttaako työkokemuksen määrä tämänhetkisten tutkimustuloksien muuttumiseen.

ASIASANAT:

esimies, esimiestyö, kompetenssi, palaute, johtaminen, urakehitys

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (OR) SYMBOLS

Generation Z	a person born after 2001 (Cambridge Dictionary 2020)
millennial	a person born in the 1980's, 1990's or early 2000s (Cambridge Dictionary 2020)
micromanagement	having control over every small detail (Cambridge Dictionary 2020)

1 INTRODUCTION

The managerial work has undergone many changes in the last decades due to the changing economic circumstances. In the beginning of 21st century, the operational environment has become more complex, which prompted organizations to adapt to new situations faster than ever before. There are chances and risks in rapidly growing globalization that has an impact on the managerial work as well. The constant competition, diversity, and development in everything requires the first-time managers to stay ahead of time. (Kauhanen 2018, 39-41.) The traditional roles of managerial work have slowly started to disappear and the way how the managerial work is being done, has changed as well. (Mäki & Liedenpohja & Parikka 2014, 9-10.)

In the past, status and role of manager was solely based on authority, which did not leave much space for the team to be self-driven at work. It has been discovered that companies have given up on the idea of keeping the strict control and hierarchies between different groups of employees and managers, which helped employees to take initiatives. (Mäki & Liedenpohja & Parikka 2014, 9-10.) The self-driven working culture has led employees to be more active and responsible of their own work (Huttunen 2018, 23). On the other hand, it has been recognized that too passive managing and/or too friendly managing approaches are not the most effective ways of acting (Mäki & Liedenpohja & Parikka 2014, 9-10).

According to Goffee and Gareth, the strict hierarchical type manager is not recommendable. The authority level is decreased, which enables the employees to have an opportunity to manage their own work. (Goffee & Gareth 2015, 13-15.) The decision-making, power and responsibilities are not meant only for a manager anymore. The companies have a more participative approach where employees' voices are also reflected in the top decision-making. The managers should focus on building more humane, open, and trustworthy management where everyone should work together and lead together. (Huttunen 2018, 23.)

However, the qualities and competences will not make one a good manager unless there is an urge for the job. The first-time manager needs to have the drive, energy, and willpower to take risks and learn new skills in the job. The excitement over the managerial work will give more chances to aim for the outstanding performance. (Goffee & Gareth 2015, 26.)

The work life is still changing rapidly, which pushes the managers to be more effective and ahead of their time. The work itself has also started to change with the help of fast-growing technology solutions. It is important to get to know the key competencies of a managerial work and what is expected from first-time managers stepping into the new role from the position of a regular employee.

The idea of this thesis came from my own career path where I shifted from the regular hospital work in the healthcare industry to an international health technology company. For someone, who has always worked on the grass roots level, it is essential to know what the first-time manager's work requires and what kind of expectations the employees might have for the new manager.

This thesis focuses on researching what these competencies in a managerial work are and what kind of skills are needed in today's managerial work.

The research questions for this thesis are:

- What kind of competencies and skills are expected from the first-time manager?
- How can the manager take care of own personal and professional development?
- What kind of effectiveness can the first-time manager obtain through communication?

The following chapters will go through the findings of the precise literature review followed by the qualitative research, which will form a complete understanding of the researched topic. The chapters are written in order to find answers to the set research questions. The last chapters consist of research results and conclusions of this entire thesis, where also the further development and research topics are presented.

2 WHAT IS EXPECTED FROM A FIRST-TIME MANAGER

It has been recognized that one cannot be born to be a manager. It is a journey where one should grow into. Becoming a manager requires constant skill building and making conscious decisions. (Mäki & Liedempohja & Parikka 2014, 7-8.) The transition from a regular employee to a manager position is a big step, which can be an overwhelming experience for anyone (Harvard Business Review's 10 must reads for new managers 2017, 1).

A manager is a person who represents the employer and must stand strong no matter what difficulties and changes the work environment goes through. Organizing the work and process is one of the main tasks a manager must be able to do well while taking care of being the most profitable as possible. Manager should also treat everyone equally and let the employees participate in decision making processes and work for achieving the mutual and personal goals. Creating the positive work environment and giving constructive feedback to teams will set the good example of doing the work professionally as well as becoming more trustworthy and consistent at work. Handling the stress and possible contradictions are also a part of the manager's job on a daily basis. (Mäki & Liedempohja & Parikka 2014, 7-8.)

When stepping in the new role of manager, the team should be informed as soon as possible about the transition. This way the employees would be aware and prepared for meeting the new manager. This can be a big change for some employees and therefore, the new manager should avoid making big changes in teamwork until having one-on-one conversations with each employee of the team. One-on-one conversations are a good opportunity to get to know the employees' skills and hopes as well as build a new relationship where it is possible to gain credibility and support from each other's. (Harvard Business Review Manager's Handbook 2017, 24.)

According to Clifton and Harter (2019), millennials and generation Z are seen having a new type of managerial skills that differ a lot from the past managerial type. In the past, the manager focused merely on personal achievements, own weaknesses, and annual reviews as well as personal pay checks. Nowadays, the millennials and generation Z managers focus on development, strengths, purpose of the job and ongoing conversations for not only themselves, but all the employees too. The work is seen more as way of life and not only as a job like in the past. Therefore, the new type of manager

gets easily inspired of coaching and leading instead of being a traditional manager who supervises everyone and everything without giving the employees a change to be self-driven at work. (Clifton & Harter 2019, 17-19.)

2.1.1 The roles in management and leadership

Traditionally speaking, the management and leadership has been two separate paths. The manager role was involved with operational matters, decision making, planning, reporting, and organizing the workload. The leader was seen more as a motivational person who sets the example on how to do the work. The leader encouraged the others to face challenges and get motivated for their work. The present-day manager can be both and use the coaching method for managing that has been a leader's role before. (Huttunen 2018, 45.)

It has been noticed that the coaching method is suitable for practical situations, especially with conversations between the manager and employee. The purpose is to inspire the employees to understand the strengths they have and how to utilize them better in the work. The goals must be set clearly by agreeing on what kind of steps are needed in order to reach for the set goals. In problem-based situations, the coaching comes handy in finding the practical solutions how to solve out problems. The coaching method will help find different options that could be used for that specific problem. This type of method will focus on the positive sides and ideas how things would get easier instead of talking about the things that have not gone right. The idea is to support and encourage the employee to go over the obstacles independently and build professional growth accordingly. The goal is to lead the employee to the correct direction where the answer can be found instead of just giving the answers immediately. (Huttunen 2018, 46-47.)

2.1.2 Staff planning and delegation skills

Staff planning is one of the crucial responsibilities the manager must do. Well-planned staff planning will increase the quality of work as well as motivation and work well-being. It has also a major impact on ensuring the needed skills for the required job. (Mäki & Liedepohja & Parikka 2014, 40-42.) When transitioning to a manager's role, the success can be built through the team, which means that the manager must coordinate, delegate,

and supervise that the set expectations will be met. Different things can help to build more success, such as defining the tasks clearly to the team and meeting the targets and objectives. In addition, helping others to succeed in their tasks and letting the employees to be self-driven at work will help. Lastly, developing new processes and strategies how to achieve business targets will also help in building more success. (Harvard Business Review Manager's Handbook 2017, 56.)

Diverse teams help get more perspective and success in teamwork. In multiprofessional teams, the employees can bring their own life and previous working experience to the table as well. Overall, the employees will have an opportunity to learn from each other and share the knowledge they have gained at work. (Mäki & Liedempohja & Parikka 2014, 78.)

In order to let the employees grow professionally, the delegation of authority and responsibilities is needed in managers' work. The delegation is a sign of trust toward the employees, which also gives them an opportunity to try out new tasks and possibility to gain new skills alongside. (Mäki & Liedempohja & Parikka 2014, 9.) The delegating skill might be one of the most difficult tasks for the new first-time manager. A common mistake that quite often happens is that a manager tries to do everything him/herself not to lose the control of the work. Therefore, the manager must learn how to become more disengaged with all work and learn to delegate the tasks to different employees. (Harvard Business Review's 10 must reads for new managers 2017, 36-38.)

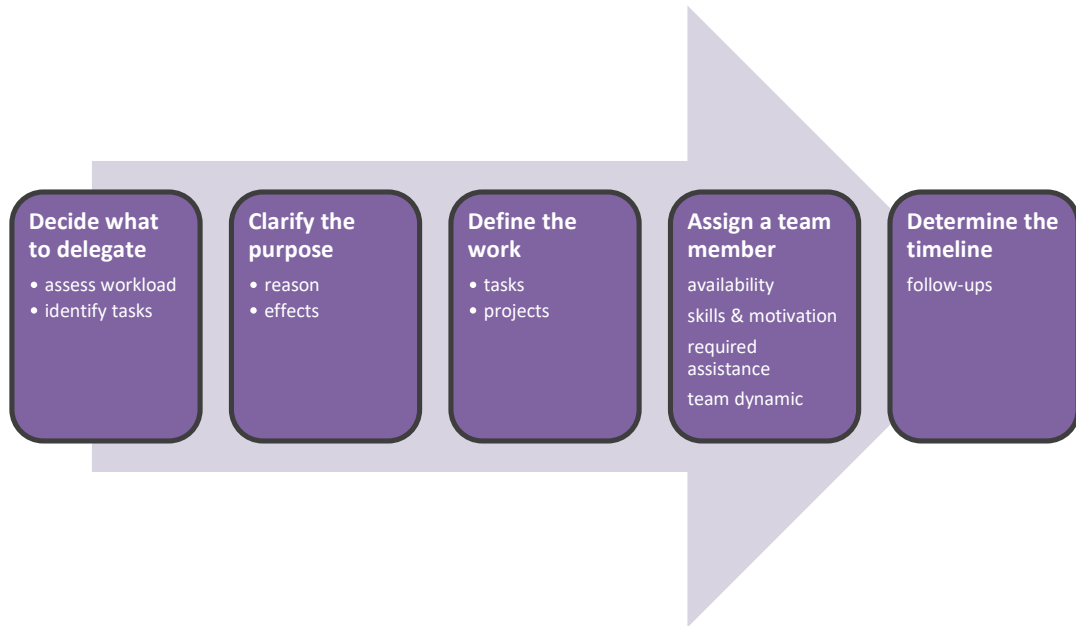


Figure 1. Developing a delegation plan (Tinline & Cooper 2016, 141-145.)

In order to learn how to delegate, the first-time manager can benefit from making a delegation plan for each task where the manager's contribution is not needed (figure 1). The good delegation plan helps the manager to assess the task and assign a right person for the task. The comprehensive description will help both the manager and the assigned person to understand what needs to be done. It can also work as a record for further purposes. (Tinline & Cooper 2016, 141-145.)

2.1.3 Strategy work

Strategy implementation has always been the role of the manager. Following the organization's vision and mission is important and managers can be in a spotlight for setting an example. Managers can take over the coordinating and integrating roles, which help with different factors of the entire strategy process such as in cultural context, planning and approach styles. With the help of managers, the engagement between the customer and organization can be gained easier. (Müller-Stewens 2019, 117-119.) There are some prerequisites for managers that need to be taken into consideration in order to succeed in the strategy work. For instance, the importance of decentralizing the hierarchical responsibilities should be done, which can help in fast-changing environment situations. The education, experience and development of a manager plays

a big role where the manager's expertise step in. The manager can give consultation, which will influence the strategy process. (Müller-Stewens 2019, 121.)

2.1.4 Conflict solving

According to Mikkola and Valo, the poor management will decrease the chances to handle the possible conflicts and negative relationships at work. As a manager, it is important to recognize the negative turning points that caused the conflicts and start fixing these from the beginning. When employees encounter challenges at their work, a good communication and management skills are needed. Good communication can be used as a support tool every day for avoiding the conflictual situations. (Mikkola & Valo 2020, 140.) Manager can prevent the possible negative outcomes by being available for the employees and encouraging them to raise up possible faults at work. The manager should consider all parties' feelings without judging anyone. The most important thing is to find out where it all started and what kind of topics brought the real problems to the work. (Mikkola & Valo 2020, 143-144.)

2.2 Personal and professional development in managerial work

Managers are in the middle between the senior management and the reality of implementation of the work that the employees take care of. The manager has a great opportunity to develop new processes and adapt to a new kind of working culture. (Tinline & Cooper 2016, 7.)

According to the research by Park & Faerman (2018), transition to a new manager role has an impact on self-management, awareness, and relationship management. It was found that a new manager goes through different stages in transition process, which helps to gain stronger emotional and social competencies. These competencies have been recognized very essential for developing the managerial identity as well. The research also pointed out that as soon as the new managers started to understand the managerial job better, they knew how to manage their own emotions in difficult situations to keep working stable and effectively. They also started to understand other's emotions and learn how to help them with effective problem solving. (Park & Faerman 2018.)

2.2.1 Building the managerial identity

The studies have shown that becoming a first-time manager is also about developing a new identity. Learning how to do the manager work is a long process that can go through the phases of knowing and not-knowing, excitements, and hopelessness as well as progresses and unproductivity phases. It is a journey where the goal is to understand how things were done before and what kind of actions are required to make everything better again. (Bolander & Holmberg & Fellbom 2019.)

The study by Kragt and Guenter (2018) found that especially the less experienced managers may have problems with finding the identity and effectiveness. The study showed that the leadership and managerial training positively supports the manager identity and manager effectiveness. In addition, the training hours seemed to have a direct connection to the skills of how to control the managerial work. (Kragt & Guenter 2018.)

2.2.2 The manager training

The manager training is highly recommended to succeed in the manager's tasks commendably. Especially, if the employee has been chosen to become a manager from the same team that he/she is supposed to manage in the future, this usually requires more time due to the possible challenges of position transition. Different kinds of courses and certificates are crucial for professional growth. These trainings can give tools and more in-depth knowledge how to become a better manager. (Mäki & Liedenpohja & Parikka 2014, 16.)

Based on the study by Plakhotnik (2017), not all organizations provide training and development opportunities to the first-time managers. The study showed that organization's top performers have higher chances to get promoted. Therefore, the top performers are expected to adapt quickly to the manager's position as well. However, even the top performer must learn many new skills, gain experience and knowledge base to be able to perform managerial tasks. Support is essential in first-time manager's work. Training will help with the transition where the manager must learn a set of new skills and a new identity as a manager. Especially, for the previous top performer, the ideology

must be changed that the work is not done on individual level anymore. The manager is responsible for the entire team performance. (Plakhotnik 2017.)

Plakhotnik's study revealed that the importance of being prepared to take the first steps in the manager role are crucial. Different problematic situations, such as first challenges and conflicts, may lead to mistakes if there has not been enough time for certain trainings and development opportunities. (Plakhotnik 2017.)

2.2.3 The professional growth

The constant professional development is important for the first-time manager, which must be tailored to each manager according to their needed skills. It is an individual process where also gender differences may play a big role. Leadership development will provide tools that help the manager to become more effective in leading others. Therefore, it has been noticed that leader development not only develops the manager, but it also has a positive impact on the organization as well. The leader development is seen as an important component, that can help with future success too. (Gipson & Pfaff & Mendelsohn & Catenacci & Burker 2017.)

According to the research by Bolander, Holmber and Fellbom (2019), the first-time managers tend not to separate non-managerial and managerial work, which lead to need support in this process. The first-time managers with less experience may face more struggles and uncertainty at their work. The key is to be willing to learn from current experiences in real-time.

For new managers, increasing and growing the authenticity is extremely important to succeed better in their managerial work. Looking for new experiences and contexts on how to do the work can give some good ideas that can be implemented on one's own ways of working. Getting honest feedback from the different people, such as employees, peers and higher managers will give valuable information from different perspectives. (Goffee & Gareth 2015, 56-57.)

For personal professional growth, it is important to understand own's strengths and weaknesses as a manager. Accepting the reality and knowing what one does not know will save the manager from making mistakes at work. The weaknesses will give opportunities for a manager to improve the personal professional growth. (Stern & Cooper 2018, 25-26.) Managers tend to be too hard on themselves even though they

are great with showing humanity to their employees. Sometimes, it might be difficult to remember that also managers need encouragement for their hard work. (Stern & Cooper 2018, 27.)

The first-time manager can receive feedback from different groups outside of the office, such as key stakeholders, peers, and superiors, which will help in the development process. These individuals can point out some factors in manager's work that someone else would not have noticed. Therefore, this is a unique opportunity to receive honest feedback that can be learnt from. Different peers outside of the office can also be used for networking, which has become more and more important in the business world. It has been noticed that women might use networks more for relationship building and emotional support whereas men use networks for more practical reasons. (Gipson & Pfaff & Mendelsohn & Catenacci & Burker 2017.)

Executive coaching and mentorship are also great development tools for the new manager. Especially, for new women managers in the predominantly male industries, these types of tools are excellent opportunities to learn from seniors and get influenced by their career. With the help of executive coaching and mentorship, the new managers can learn how to balance their professional and personal lives too. (Gipson & Pfaff & Mendelsohn & Catenacci & Burker 2017.)

2.2.4 The personal growth

A new team might expect a lot from a new manager in the beginning, which is a good opportunity for a new manager to start demonstrating the competencies in managerial work. Asking questions, taking care of the resources, help find quick solutions to urgent matters and explaining your decisions and actions can help the new team to build trust on the new manager. (Harvard Business Review Manager's Handbook 2017, 27-29.)

Establishing personal goals and objectives as a new manager is an important for succeeding in the new position. It is important to be strategic with career development in order to build skills and develop a good positive approach as a manager. One of the important objectives is to be ready to manage high pressure and look for optimal work-life integration (Tinline & Cooper 2016, 15.) It has been recognized that new managers tend to have an impact on personal life outside of the workplace as well. Therefore, the importance of personal and occupational well-being is necessity when adapting the new

position as a manager. Physical and mental health are extremely important for maintaining a steady and pleasant working life. The new managers must pay attention on finding the best ways to work for him/herself. These factors could be, such as, flexibility on working hours, opportunity to work remotely, being listened and guided, having trust-based relationship with seniors, peers, and team members. (Tinline & Cooper 2016, 150-151.)

When starting a new career as a manager, it is essential to understand the manager's role thoroughly. Transition to a manager's position brings great responsibilities since the manager is in charge of the entire team's achievements and job outcome instead of own individual performance. The core idea is to coordinate your teams' resources to meet the organization's goals. A new manager might reflect the management ideology to his/her own working history what kind of managers he/she used to have. However, this ideology is quite often a wrong way to go with because the previous managers have done a lot of work that was not visible for team all the time. Therefore, it's important to get to know yourself well and develop your own career and skills in managerial work for being able to gain the competences that are expected from the first-time manager. (Harvard Business Review Manager's Handbook 2017, 7-8.)

It was noted that it might take from six to twelve months before the manager can go from doing tasks to developing and directing people. This is part of the growing experience, where the manager can learn how to adapt the new way of working and how to implement the ideas in real work. (Harvard Business Review Manager's Handbook 2017, 20.)

2.3 The importance of communication

The first-time manager needs skills to communicate with others. Interaction and communication skills have a crucial impact on the entire organization's operations. Listening skills are a core skill for the manager. It is an essential part of the communication between an employee and the manager. (Huttunen 2018, 109.) According to the researches by Isotalus (2017), good communication skills give a positive connection with work performance, work well-being and overall commitment. (Isotalus ym. 2017,13-14.)

The foundation for communication starts with behaviour (Huttunen 2018, 105). Interaction can be verbal or non-verbal where the message is being transmitted between

a receiver and sender/talker. Facial expressions, body language and tone and way of speaking play a big role from the receiver's point of view. The message might be misunderstood if both parties have difficulties to listen and understand each other's. The communication should always be a two-way process where the interaction takes part. (Isotalus ym. 2017,16-17.)

The manager's interactions skills should consist of data management, negotiating, reporting, influencing, conflict management, networking, emotional supporting and co-operational skills. The manager is working with individuals daily where the manager meets the employees in different kind of situations. Therefore, it is essential to communicate with different people in various environments. What comes to the data flow, the manager should be able to be informative and report in order to keep the employees on track of work. (Isotalus ym. 2017, 50-52.)

2.3.1 Listening and emotional intelligence skills

The first-time manager should focus on strengthening the emotional intelligence skills, which are self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skill (figure 2). Having an emotional intelligence will help to understand different people's emotions and opinions, where the listening skills are essential. The self-awareness consists of knowing one's strengths, values, weaknesses, and what kind of impact this person has on others. The self-regulation skill is about controlling or redirecting different moods. Motivation means the skill of relishing achievements. Empathy skills help to understand the others' emotions and social skills can help to build a connection with others to move them in correct directions. (Harvard Business Review's 10 must reads for new managers 2017, 80-81.)



Figure 2. The emotional intelligence skills (Harvard Business Review's 10 must reads for new managers 2017, 80-81)

For instance, in a situation where there are many changes at the workplace, the manager must be able to have good communication skills in order to understand how everyone feels and how to process their feelings in the best possible way. The manager with good listening skills can separate facts from opinions, recognize the employee's possible attempts to operate, observe verbal and non-verbal communication and find the core message, give feedback after listening. All these together will help the managers to make decisions independently which way to go with his/her employees. It has been found out that bad listening skills will end up to unnecessary misunderstandings, which is time-consuming where also the results of teamwork will decrease. (Isotalus ym. 2017, 20-21.)

2.3.2 Team meetings

As a new manager, an importance of running a well-planned meeting is essential. Meeting can be extremely useful opportunities to obtain a mutual understanding of set expectations with the employees. When the meeting is structured efficient and short, it keeps the employee's concentration, energy and productivity much higher than having too frequent back-to-back meetings over the same topics. (Tinline & Cooper 2016, 128.)

It is important to make a wise decision when the meeting is needed. When the decision has been made, the manager should include only the relevant people who are needed for the meeting. During the meeting, the content should be presented clearly for everyone to understand it. A manager should also accept that the participants might have decent opinions that should be discussed as a team. This will also increase the satisfaction of the employees that they were heard during the meetings. (Zhuo 2019, 145.) The manager should encourage the employees to participate in open conversations regarding to any work-related matters. Everyone should get their voice heard. Therefore, the manager must observe the situation all the time that the quietest employee can also give their ideas and opinions. (Mäki & Liedenpohja & Parikka 2014, 79.)

Regularly held team meetings will also improve the social communication between the manager and employees. Team meetings should be organized on a regular basis to give a chance for everyone to have a discussion and agree on mutual decisions. The manager's responsibility is to organize team meetings in a way that it will not disturb the normal workflow. Building a strong community, where all employees want to participate equally for the same goals, has been recognized to be an effective way to improve the professional growth of each employee. It can help to realize if someone would like to expand their knowledge and skills for other tasks in the company as well as it helps to know if someone struggles with the current tasks. (Mäki & Liedenpohja & Parikka 2014, 76.)

The outcome of a successful meeting can be seen through the engagement level, learning opportunities on how to be more effective at work and a clearer idea of what next steps should be taken. Overall, the meeting can be considered successful if it was a great use of everyone's time. (Zhuo 2019, 142.) For a new manager, team meetings are a great opportunity to get everyone on the same page about the mutual goals and the status of work. Generating ideas within a team can also give a better understanding for a new manager to understand the potential of the employees to take more challenges. It is also a chance to handle the open questions regarding work and make decisions on next steps and possible follow-ups with the team. (Zhuo 2019, 147.)

Especially nowadays, when the meetings are quite often conducted virtually, it is important for a manager to prepare for the meeting by building the agenda and support it with visual documentation beforehand. While conducting a meeting, the manager should keep on track on everyone's active participation by making sure everyone can contribute. Follow-up documentation comes handy where the meetings bullet points can

be summarized for further purposes. All these factors can help a new manager to follow the possible outcomes and be clearer about what kind of actions should be taken in different tasks. (Harvard Business Review Manager's Handbook 2017, 96-99.)

From a remote work perspective, the communication must be concrete, tangible, and informative that all employees, despite of the geographical location, can continue working efficiently as a team. When the face-to-face communication is not possible, the manager must be able to support and give attention to all her/his employees evenly. The manager should be more available and be active communicator to create a fast-responding work community where the processes will not stop. (Isotalus ym. 2017, 142-143.)

As now the world has changed more into remote work, the managerial work has also started to change. With the help of more efficient technology-based communication channels, the multi-communication has become everyday life for employees – especially for those who work remotely. In multi-communication there might be parallel conversations going on with a lot of people at the same time. (Mikkola & Valo 2020, 29.)

For some, managing the employees might get difficult when they are out of sight. This is where the communication steps in to help. The employees have started to be more self-driven and focused on finishing their own tasks without someone supervising their closely. The work can get more productive this way. (Stern & Cooper 2018, 148-149.)

2.3.3 Development discussions

According to the study by Subburaj & Sangeera & Rekha (2020) the employee work engagement and involvement are connected to the job satisfaction. It was noted that employee's work engagement enables better performance skills, which creates a competitive advantage for the organization as well. Managers are in the key role in influencing, motivating, and supervising the employee's development process. Efficient development discussions can significantly help significantly both employees and managers in order to improve the overall job satisfaction. (Subburaj & Sangeera & Rekha 2020.)

The trial period is meant for evaluating the expectations that have been set for the employee. It is also an opportunity for the employee to evaluate if the job meets his/her expectations and if her/his skills, attitude and behaviour fits the working culture and the position itself. In order to make the trial period successful for both employer and employees, the regular One-To-One-conversations are needed. (Mäki & Liedenpohja & Parikka 2014, 52.)

The development discussions are recommended to be held once or twice in a year. The purpose is to have a private conversation between the manager and employee to discuss and evaluate the employee's work performance and decide on the next possible goals. The development discussion is an excellent opportunity to give and receive feedback to each other's. The manager must reflect the employee's previous performance to the current one and document the needed actions that must be taken for the upcoming year to accomplish the set goals. The development discussion is also meant for evaluating the manager's performance in the eyes of an employee. The possible expectations are gone through as well as the obstacles the employee might have that have an impact on the work performance. To gain more professional growth, the wishes for personal development and career must be talked over during the development discussion. This is an excellent time to think whether the employee has an interest toward other tasks or roles in the company and which ways the employee would like to improve her/his current skills. (Huttunen 2018, 229-234.)

2.3.4 Giving and receiving feedback

Giving feedback is important in the right way and place – no matter if it's positive or something constructive. (Huttunen 2018, 105.) It has been noticed that a good feedback culture has many impacts on improving the workflow. At best, it will also create more trust and learning moments for the work environment. People tend to think that feedback should be given only in the situations where the employee has accomplished exceptional work performance. In reality, the feedback can be given in other situations as well, where motivation and encouragement are needed. Positive talk and feedback will help the employees to commit to the work and do their best at work. The feedback culture will help the employees to receive acknowledgement on their work, which helps them to take new steps in their career as well. The employees want to get a recognition, especially if

they had succeeded in their work. The recognition can come from the manager, colleagues or even from the customers. (Huttunen 2018, 112-114.)

According to the study by Rao (2014), there are various types of feedback. These can be positive, negative, critical and sandwich feedback. Sandwich feedback consists of different parts, which created a feedback flow. It starts with a compliment, followed by criticism. The sandwich feedback always ends with another compliment. This type of feedback model can help the employee to understand the strengths and weaknesses more efficiently. The employee can improve the performance through feedback. (Rao, 2014.)

Sometimes, the remedial and corrective feedback are needed, for example, if the customer has given a negative feedback, many mistakes have been done or the set goals have not been reached. It can also be used in situations where the given guidelines, deadlines or processes have not been followed. In addition, one of the most crucial situations where the remedial and corrective feedback can be used is when the employee has shown inappropriate behaviour toward others and the work itself. (Huttunen 2018, 118-119.) This kind of behavioural feedback should be given thoughtfully and regularly because it's more personalized. There might be some issues outside of work that might have had an impact on the employee's behaviour at work. (Zhuo 2019, 87.)

In order to bring the feedback culture active as a new manager, the clear expectations should be set for each employee right in the beginning. Before the tasks start, the manager should agree together with an employee on what is expected from an employee. Along the entire work, the productive feedback process should follow where the manager has an opportunity to give advice and help the employee through the possible difficulties. Frequently given task-specific feedback is seen as an advantage because the actions that have been done for the tasks are still fresh, which gives a good timing to give feedback in the most detailed way. (Zhuo 2019, 85-86.)

The new manager should give feedback in a way that it will be heard and noted by the employees. The aim is to make a change in the employee's work input, which will also develop employee's skills. For avoiding the misunderstood feedback, it is crucial to give the feedback as specific as possible and agree on next steps that should be taken in order to avoid misunderstandings. (Zhuo 2019, 95-97.)

2.4 Employee engagement and motivation

During the past decades, the work wellbeing was assimilated only as physical wellbeing, such as work ergonomics, ability to work and other physical matters related to the occupational healthcare. The focus was on viewing the physical health requirements for being able to do the assigned work. Nowadays, the work wellbeing is much more, and the managers have a big role on managing the employees' possible work-related stress and how the employees can cope with workload. The work wellbeing is a comprehensive concept where the managers are responsible for the employees' wellbeing more than ever before. It is crucial that all employees stay brisk and motivated because the working time can take up to 60% of the entire daytime. (Huttunen 2018, 253-255.)

The studies by Isotalus (2017) have shown that a good management requires taking care of the employees as well as the tasks. The anthropocentric approach consists of focusing on developing employees' skills where the communication is transparent and open. This approach also includes the skills of observing and asking for ideas, feelings, and opinions that the employees might have. The task-oriented approach is more direct and mostly related to giving the documented facts and information to the employees. The communication is based more on the straightforwardness where the productivity is looked for increasing the technical knowledge. (Isotalus ym. 2017, 38-39.)

2.4.1 Sudden changes

Change, development, and innovations are the present topics in today's technology working environment. The manager must be prepared for sudden changes that might come into effect immediately. The key is foreshadowing, being one step ahead of the time. This is the way how the entire organization, including the managers and employees are ready to face the sudden changes in their work. When everyone stays on track, the change can be active, and the employees have an opportunity to adjust better and be committed to the new changes faster. The fast development and growth require changes, which pushes the organizations to try new things outside of their comfort zones. (Huttunen 2018, 140-142.)

The organizational change is often experienced quite hard from the employee's perspective. The sociological discoveries have shown that the new manager must gain

a good engagement with the new team to adapt to the culture of the workplace efficiently. (Clifton & Harter 2019, 20-22.)

For a new manager, there are several different competencies that are seen beneficial for succeeding in a new position. Relationship building is necessary at work, which will help build trust and sharing ideas between different peers. Skills in inspiring others will create a positive environment, which will give confidence, new challenges, and recognitions to the team. Besides this, the manager should be able to develop employees to help them to meet the expectations and gain strengths. The critical thinking is also seen as great competence for a new leader because it will lead a manager to smart decisions through efficient evaluation. All things considered, the manager can create accountability, which is one of the most essential things for a new manager. (Clifton & Harter 2019, 63.)

2.4.2 Motivating the employees

Own actions as a manager are the key for training and developing the employees into a high-performing team. Managers must set an example by representing and demonstrating how the work should be done while maintaining the organization's culture. In addition, the manager should encourage the employees to try new complex tasks even if there is a chance of doing mistakes. This is the moment when the manager can support the employees to learn from the mistakes. Overall, valuing the employees' abilities to take risks will help in reaching the goals. (Latham 2018, 63-64.)

Manager has an important role in motivating the employees to become high performers at work. According to Latham (2018), there are five keys that every manager should keep in mind when motivating the employees. First, caring for the employees' physiological and security need is important because without it, the motivation barely exists. Secondly, setting the high and specific goals for employees will let the employee to have challenging goals, which can lead into a performance improvement. Thirdly, focusing on job performance is essential because it boosts the motivation more than only focusing on increasing job satisfaction. The fourth key for a manager is to understand and change the work environment if needed, which can be different elements such as job characteristics, social culture at work and rewarding for performances. The fifth key is related to avoiding demotivation where the manager has an important role with his/her own actions. The ignorant behaviour will rapidly deflate the employees' motivation. (Latham 2018, 82-84.)

2.4.3 Employee engagement

Engaging the employees is an important topic to build a high-performing team in an organization. The manager should ensure that the employees are satisfied with their job. The satisfaction can be increased, for example, with giving responsibilities and different tasks, having an autonomy environment, offering new challenges, giving feedback and the opportunities to develop and grow at work. Based on the findings of Latham (2018), the organizational commitment has a significant role in keeping the employees committed to their work at the organization, and not seeking for a new job outside. Employees who are engaged, their job encompass organization's core values, respect, and passion as well. As a new manager, it is important to focus on emotional, cost and obligation factors related to the organizational commitment. When the employees are committed emotionally to their work and organization, they most likely have a bigger chance to become high performance employees as well. The findings by Latham (2018) have also shown that the obligation is one of the factors related to the organizational commitment. The employees might feel that they have an obligation to continue working for the organization because they have offered or paid for something in the past. The obligation is closely related to the emotional factor. Lastly, especially from the employee's perspective, the cost factor can also be one of the reasons for the organizational commitment. There might be some undesirable costs of leaving and changing the job, which also affects to the organization as well if a lot resources was spent on training of the new employee. (Latham 2018, 106-107.)

According to a study by Prince & Mihalicz (2019), the employee engagement is a key factor in improving client satisfaction as well. The study explored the importance of manager effectiveness in building the employee engagement. The results showed that the managerial effectiveness has a positive impact on this topic and the managerial training and skills play a significant role in improving the employee engagement.

The studies have showed that the current working culture has started to understand the work-family balance better than before. The manager can increase job satisfaction and commitment to the organization with different family-friendly policies as long as the organization allows. These could be flexible working hours, remote work opportunity, switching from a full-hour contract to part-time hours, and even offering on-site childcare facilities. (Latham 2018, 112-113.)

2.4.4 Reward system

Reward system is one of the managerial tools to give accreditation for the hard work an employee has done. The well-functional reward system supports the strategies, and it can be used as a tool for management of change when needed. It also works as an internal success measurement tool, which makes it as an essential part of managing. The reward can be tangible, such as a gift card, bonus, or other tangible benefit. Intangible rewards can be feedback, possibilities to build career path and receive additional training, for instance, to gain another higher position in the company. The reward itself works as an incentive, which helps the employees to face more challenges and gain more professional growth as well. This has an extensive factor for work motivation. Giving and receiving feedback should be one part of the systematic evaluation, which is good to be brought to everyday working life. The systematic evaluation helps the manager and employee to understand if there is something to improve or something that must be changed as well. (Mäki & Liedepohja & Parikka 2014, 88-89.)

3 RESEARCH METHODS

The qualitative research method was chosen for this study, where the focus is to get a better understanding of the researched topic or phenomenon. The aim is to study topic from the point of participants' views who are targets for the research. The qualitative research is interested in the target group's feelings, ideas, and experiences. For obtaining a better understanding, the interviews are often used in the qualitative research were and they were also chosen to be used for this study. The collected data from the interview can give new perspectives to the research, which helps to build a more precise interpretation of the topic. It has been recognized that the qualitative approach works the most effective way when the people will be interviewed in their natural surroundings, such as in their workplace. (Puusa & Juuti 2020, 9-11.)

The characteristics of qualitative research are related more to interpretation and rational approach, where the holistic perspective is being taken into account. In this qualitative research, the findings are not presented by statistical method. (Ghuri & Grønhaug & Strange 2020, 96-97.)

3.1 Interviews

The study consisted of five (5) different open-ended interviews that were conducted online. The interviewees were chosen through recommendations by my own friends who knew people working in the technology industry. The interviewees were working in different organizations, but all of them had a similar employee position level in their companies. All of them represent the same age group of 40-50. In addition, they all had worked for technology industry for approximately 10 years (figure 3). Conducting the interviews online enabled the employees to participate more flexibly, which worked as an advantage in scheduling the meetings to the best possible time slots.

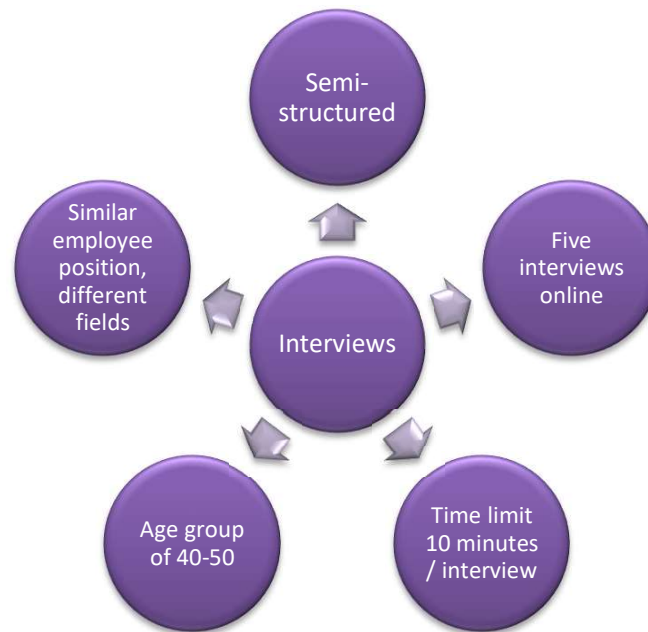


Figure 3. The main basis of the conducted interviews

The interviewees were guided before the participation about the steps of the interview. The interviewees were explained the purpose of this study, and what kind of information the interviewer would be interested to collect. The interview questions were not sent to the interviewees for avoiding the unintentional desire to prepare answers beforehand. The aim was to keep the interview as spontaneous as possible. All interviews were conducted in the way that disclosure was ensured. The duration for each interviewee was limited to 10 minutes (figure 3). The online interviews were not recorded for confidentiality reasons, but notes were taken down during the interviews. Before the interview, the objectives of the research and the confidentiality was emphasized one more time for each interviewee. The advantage was getting a real conversation during the interviews, when the interviewees did not have to worry about the recording matter (Ghuri & Grønhaug & Strange 2020,119).

The interview was semi-structured where the theme interview took place, which allowed the interview to be more flexible and conversational between the interviewer and interviewee. Through the semi-structured interviews, it was possible to obtain more detailed and accurate information when the interviewees were given more liberty to talk about almost anything that came into their mind during the interviews. The semi-structured approach was chosen to give a chance for the interviewee to explain some

thoughts more in-depth (figure 3). (Ghuri & Grønhaug & Strange 2020, 115.) The purpose of using in-depth interviews was to make the interviewees as narratives of the topic to identify the meaning, feelings, emotions, motivation, and beliefs better for this study (Hennink & Hutter & Bailey 2020, 117).

All interviewees were asked the same interview questions. There were three themes in each interview where the topics were the following:

- what makes a good manager
- what kind of expectations do you have for a new manager
- how could a manager motivate you to do the work

3.2 Reliability and validity

Reliability and validity are good ways to measure the credibility and quality of this qualitative research. The consistency of the results can be viewed with reliability and the validity can be used on viewing the correct ways how the research was conducted and how the findings correspond to a researched topic and phenomenon in practice. (Kovanen 2015, 272-273.)

The reliability consists of repeatability and consistency, where the reproducibility could be done by re-doing this study again with a different target group. The consistency could be measured again by using two different kinds of questionnaires in the future and compare the findings to the current findings of this study. (Kovanen 2015, 274.)

The validity for this study was accomplished well with the literature review of the researched phenomenon. The literature review formed the data triangulation, where multiple sources started to resemble each other's. The literature review aimed to use material that was not over 10 years old. (Puusa & Juuti 2020, 185.) The data from the conducted interviews and literature review started to also replicate, which gave a good saturation for the reliability as well (Konanen 2015, 284). The chosen research methods fit the research questions and objectives well, which also supports the validity. The findings of this thesis could also be generalized. (Hennink & Hutter & Bailey 2020, 117).

This study complied with ethical guidelines, where the researcher followed the ethical principles throughout the entire study. The interviewees and the content of the interviews were protected and kept anonymous continuously. The notes that were taken down

during the interviews were destroyed as soon as they were analysed by the researcher. No harm or danger was caused to anyone during the study. The data from the interviews were collected properly and it was analysed immediately after all the interviews were conducted. This increased the authenticity of the data when the data was used as most recent as possible. (Puusa & Juuti 2020, 175.)

In this qualitative research, the results from the interviews supported the data collected from the literature review. These findings answered the research questions well, which gives this thesis more credibility. The research methods were chosen well, and they enabled the data collection and analysing to become successful.

4 RESEARCH RESULTS

The research questions were expected to give answers to the set research questions that were: what kind of competencies and skills are expected from the first-time manager? How can the manager take care of own personal and professional development? What kind of effectiveness can the first-time manager obtain through communication?

The interviews had three theme questions themes followed by additional, more detailed questions if needed. The first theme question was “what makes a good manager”. The question was interesting for the interviewees, and they all started to give a list of words for what kind of competencies and skills a good manager should have. The skills with prioritizing, empathy, respect, support, and equality were mentioned along with the idea of being a nice and easily approachable manager for the employees. When asking for more detailed follow-up questions, it was possible to get more detailed answers from the interviewees.

During the second theme question “what kind of expectations do you have for a new manager of the interview, the interviewees emphasized the importance of understanding the work from the employee’s perspective. They all believed that a new manager should be able to understand the work and all aspects of it thoroughly to be able to be good manager for the team. Some of the interviewees pointed out that it would be difficult to explain the possible problems of the work to the manager who does not have a real hands-on-experience of the work that the employees are doing.

Another important aspect was the availability matter that was discussed during the second theme question. All interviewees mentioned that they would expect a new manager to give enough time for each employee for helping them with different problems. The new manager was also expected to be as interactive as possible with the team, especially in the beginning of the career that everyone would get to know the new manager well. The availability was connected to the communication as well, which was seen to be leading into better results of having a connection between a new manager and employees. Two interviewees brought up the incredibility factor too, where the manager could increase it by being available and communicative within the team on a daily basis. The second theme question’s answers verified the results of the literature review well.

The interesting finding of the interviews were that everyone agreed on the importance of manager's personal and professional growth into the managerial work. None of the interviewees expected the new manager to be immediately ready to manage the team without mistakes. Most of the interviewees also mentioned that the new manager can learn something new from the employees that could be useful in the management area. This topic was not asked from the interviewees separately, which makes it very interesting that all of them wanted to talk about it. On the other hand, all the interviewees had quite a long working history, which could have impacted on the given answers as well. Most likely, the interviewees would have thought of the situation by imaging them in the position of a new career and what kind of difficulties they would face in the beginning of the new career.

The answers started to vary a bit more regarding the last theme question "how could a manager motivate you to do the work". One of the interviewees commented that extra motivation is not needed from the new manager's side at all, where as another interviewee told that the manager can motivate the employees through his/her own actions, work ethic by setting a good example. Two of the interviewees mentioned that they would feel more motivated when receiving a good feedback of their performance. One of the interviewees mentioned that a manager who can take care of the employees' work well-being matters, can motivate the employees to work harder through the difficult tasks. The interviewee who did not see the motivation from the manager as important as the other interviewees did, justified his answer based on the personal gained high expertise on the work.

Some of the interviewees talked about the negative effects of possible micromanaging that could kill the motivation quickly. They mentioned that the new manager should trust the employees by giving them peace to focus on work and, freedom to be self-driven individuals at work. Too strict supervising, micromanaging, was seen as a non-motivating approach, where the employees would feel themselves uncomfortable in the working environment.

During the interviews, the importance of staff planning was also brought up several times with all interviewees. According to the interviews, the staff planning has a crucial role in work satisfaction and relationship with others. The interviewees all agreed that the manager must count the work amount equally between the employees and take different employee's wishes on shifts into account. One of the interviewees mentioned that this matter is one of the most visible manager tasks from an employee's perspective. Related

to staff planning, also the opportunities to grow in the company was seen important. All interviewees told that the new manager should help the employees to recognize strengths and weaknesses to help the employees to achieve higher goals in career. One of the interviewees added a comment that giving new challenging tasks to employees seeking for career development would also help the new manager with staff planning. This way the employees could slowly build more skills in different areas, which could keep the employees more motivated to do their current work.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The first research question “what kind of competencies and skills are expected from the first-time manager” came in very useful for understanding the research topic well. Based on my findings, becoming a first-time manager requires a lot of necessary competencies and skills that can be obtained and developed through a careful learning process. These competencies and skills consisted of, for example, having emotional intelligence, communication skills and understanding of equality to respect and manage the employees the best possible way.

The answer for the second research question “how can the manager take care of own personal and professional development” was successful as well. This thesis’ findings showed that the present-day’s managerial work has changed, which gives a new manager a good opportunity to gain new skills, for example, focusing more on the employees’ and one’s own work wellbeing and career development. Especially, from the employee’s perspective it is important that the manager understands all the aspects of the employee’s work, which also helps the manager to build the working environment more into a high-performance level. In order to improve the manager’s own personal and professional development, the manager should be active on the learning process and utilize the feedback from the peers as much as possible. Based on the findings of this research, one of the most important starting point for a first-time manager is to understand the manager’s role and the importance of balancing the personal and working life optimally.

The third research question “what kind of effectiveness can the first-time manager obtain through communication” turned out to be an interesting question in this thesis. The communication skill was found highly important because it had the most effective input on managing the employees. The first-time manager can find many solutions for different topics with good communication skills. It was also found out that the communication plays a big role in the employee motivation and engagement.

However, the semi-structured interviewees gave a lot of challenge to this research because some of the answers got more in-depth than I expected. In addition, controlling the time during the interviews turned out to be quite challenging because each interview was limited to 10 minutes. The interviewees had a long working history being experts in

their own fields and therefore, they had many opinions and ideas to mention for the questions.

The idea for a further development and research is to focus on one specific area of the managerial work, such as the competencies and skills in recruitment process as a first-time manager. This thesis did not include the recruitment process because this area needs its' own comprehensive study. Another research topic is to re-do a similar research with a bigger selection of employees who do not have many years of working experience. It would be interesting to see if there are any differences in answers between less experienced employees and more experienced employees.

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