Tampere University of Applied Sciences

Remote Work – Hard work or hardly working?

The Effects of Remote work on Motivation

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ABSTRACT

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The Effects of Remote Work on Motivation

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The purpose of this thesis was to figure out how remote working has affected employee motivation and how the existing hybrid model of working could be improved to ensure flexible and effective working at Soldem in the future.

Background research was done on the basic building blocks of individual motivation in the forms of 3 different motivational theories and previous studies on the subject. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used to gather data in forms of an in-depth interview conducted to 11 employees and previous wellbeing questionnaires.

At the start of the pandemic, many businesses had to swiftly adjust to restrictions while maintaining profitability and productivity. Soldem has tackled the issues effectively by assembling a hybrid working model that enables employees with flexible ways of working.

Through research it was discovered that the majority of employees are content with the company output, compared to employee effort. Soldem is seen as a trustworthy and functioning company in the eyes of their employees. Remote work has had a very positive impact on a couple of individuals, and no sign of any drawbacks regarding the hybrid model was discovered. During the qualitative research the majority of respondents claimed that a qualitative wellbeing interview would be a better alternative to the existing quantitative surveys. Many employees agree that companies should invest in workforce mental health. To further strengthen the employer-employee synergy, in-depth wellbeing interviews should be conducted regularly to gain a clear understanding on current employee motivation and possible improvements. During the interviews, employee workload should also be assessed to mitigate the possibility for employee burnout.

With these minor tweaks to the existing set of tools in their disposal, Soldem is well on their way to create an even safer work environment on top of their trustworthy and functioning operating model.

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Key words: remote work, hybrid model, motivation

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS

Inbound (Sales)	Inbound selling is the act of solving a customers' problem instead of selling a product in the traditional way. In inbound selling the customer contacts the company and creates sales potential
Outbound (Sales)	A traditional approach to selling, which is more product focused (e.g., face-to-face selling)
NPS and eNPS	(Employee) Net Promoter Score. A quantitative employee loyalty metric, which can be calculated by asking how likely a worker would recommend the company and rating the likeability on a scale from 1-10. The lowest ratings are subtracted from the highest, giving the average NPS.

1 INTRODUCTION

Soldem is a Finnish sales-organization specialized in telemarketing and customer service solutions for B2B and B2C markets. The organization model at Soldem is not a traditional pyramid-hierarchy, instead they operate with an open system, where co-operation is key. Their main points in this model are teamwork, flexible job descriptions, self-organizing and constant development. The company head-quarters is in central Tampere.

The research for this thesis will be done by conducting personal interviews with staff and management and analyzing data and comparing it to earlier well-being surveys. Basic research on individual motivation and leadership models will be done to support the findings.

During the pandemic multiple businesses around the world had to make an un-expected leap of faith and try to figure out a strategy for maintaining a profitable business while also abiding the restrictions given by the government.

To avoid unnecessary contact and risking the spread of the virus among the of-fice, many businesses moved on to implement the rising trend of remote work. Although the situation was new for many companies, numerous solutions were already available on the market, some of which were already in heavy commercial and private use. (Courtney, E. flexjobs.com)

Soldem was also on the brink of an inevitable and colossal change with COVID-19 swiping through the nation. A hybrid-working plan was planned and executed quickly, and remote working was introduced to the company's employees. The hybrid-work model is built on a system that Soldem calls the "traffic light model", which consists of three working models for three different situations. For example, when COVID-19 cases are on a high rise in the area, the company model switches to "red light stage", and every employee will be working remotely, if pos-sible, but office spaces are still available to those who cannot work from home. The employees that work at the office during "red light stage" are required to wear facemasks in common areas around the office and must keep a safety distance to other workers. When infection cases or on a steady decline for long enough,

the company switches to "yellow stage", which is basically a hybrid-model solution. Those that can work at the office are recommended to return but working from home is now optional. Current restrictions must still be abided.

After the dust of restrictions has started to settle, the company is slowly moving on to "green stage", which basically means returning to the regular way of working: Everyone present at the office as usual.

Some employees wish that the hybrid-model of working could still be maintained in the future. My goal is to figure out how remote working has affected employee motivation, and possible improvements that could be made to the existing hybrid working model. The goal of the in-depth interviews is to find out where the company is at in terms of employee motivation and wellbeing, and how the company could ensure better wellbeing in the future.

2 INDIVIDUAL MOTIVATION AND PRODUCTIVITY

The impacts of remote work on human productivity and motivation are one of the thesis's sub questions. Basic study on worker motivation and productivity in general should be conducted to answer this topic more broadly.

In the United States, worker productivity has improved by more than 33% since 1995 (statistics as of 2008). This could be interpreted as a motivation boost and seems that the overall atmosphere among workers increases as time passes. It is not always the case, according to P. Robbins, S. (2008) and A. DeCenzo, D. (2008). They claim that there are many aspects that influence the situation, but they only mention the two most important ones: salary and company benefits.

While productivity grew by 33%, salaries climbed by 11% (P. Robbins, S., and A. DeCenzo, D. 2008). Still, it's a raise in compensation, and employees should be pleased, but it turns out that the number of employees on the payroll shrank throughout this period of productivity growth. Downsizing and outsourcing reduced the number of positions available, and single individuals began to perform tasks that previously required two or three personnel. This sort of a situation looks very good on paper but can be very damaging to the workers.

Employees in a remote work environment may experience the same issue. Companies would start downsizing and the strain on the employees who avoided being laid off would grow because of financial concerns such as fewer sales and clients, as seen in the survey results. While the statistics may indicate that their productivity increased, the extra workload may have caused them to become overworked and offer inferior outcomes. And, because of the financial difficulties, there may not even be a salary raise. This can also have a huge effect on an individual's motivation and work effort, since the workload keeps growing but compensation stays the same. This drastically increases the risk of more employees quitting their jobs, since the compensation does not match the required and expected effort.

A good example of overworked personnel can be found in a workload effects study published on November 14th, 2018, by Rajan, D. The study found that over-worked cleaning employees in India suffered from serious health problems because of the lengthy and irregular hours spent cleaning rooms and assisting patients. Hospital personnel were more likely to have high blood pressure, diabetes, and multiple variations of chronic pain compared to the public. Exhausted workers reported frazzled nerves and irritation, which drove them to act more aggressively toward co-workers and family members.

But what is motivation? Motivation as a term comes from a Latin origin, the original word "movere" means "to move". The factors that drive a person to show voluntary effort that is persistent and goal-directed can be roughly characterized as motivation. The focus of motivation theory lies within the reasons behind the catalysts of human behavior. (encyclopedia.com)

Motivation is divided into two types: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation stems from a person's intrinsic appreciation of their job. It is created totally by the employee and not by external factors such as reward or punishment. The influence of personal success and obligations on intrinsic motivation are notable. (McGregor, D. 1960).

Extrinsic motivation is defined as actions taken with the intent of motivating the target. Extrinsic motivation is when employees are forced to work harder to surpass their co-workers rather than gain personal delight from the job or activity itself. Extrinsic motivators include wage increases, employee benefits, and even social standing. Extrinsic motivators that are less positive, such as 'punishment,' can be utilized to drive employees, even though punishment is the opposite of a reward.

2.1   Motivation Theories

To support my findings and create a better understanding on the model used by the company, it is important to examine existing theories on employee motivation.

These theories are then reflected to my own personal experience working at Sol-dem and the acquired research data. This will help in deducing the main factors in employee motivation and provide groundwork for more sustainable develop-ment in employee wellbeing, as well as a better hybrid model for work.

2.1.1 Theory X and Theory Y

Douglas McGregor questioned the views of firms and managers on employee behaviour in his book "The Human Side of Enterprise," which was re-released in 1960. Two theories were presented in the book: theory X and theory Y.

The manager on the Theory X side of the court sees his employees loathing their jobs and uses fear and rewards to encourage them. The employees are taught to fear for their positions, and are rewarded with money and/or other extrinsic benefits to accomplish goals. The manager in Theory X is expected to produce very limited development and poor working culture among their subordinates. Theory Y assumes that workers desire to be recognized to increase their self-esteem by taking on more responsibilities. Workers in Theory Y playpen, how-ever, are given opportunity to improve in a liberal setting and express themselves to achieve results. The manager in Theory Y is assumed to take a more encour-aging stance on leadership, which results in workers gaining more sense of inde-pendence, importance, and responsibility.

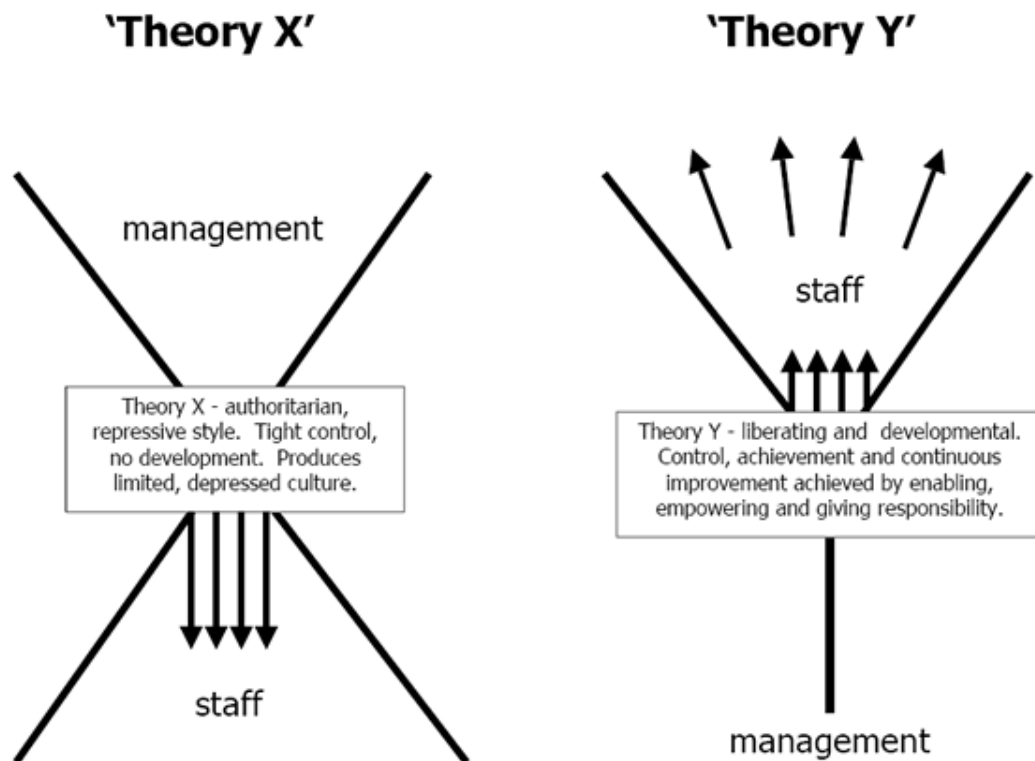An illustration of both theories can be found below. (See figure 1)

Figure 1: Theory X and Theory Y. (Image source: https://research-methodology.net/theory-x-and-theory-y/)

2.1.2 Equity Theory

Justice and fair treatment are critical not only for the health of our society, but also for companies to perform at their best. Giving benefits motivates employees, but it must be done in a fair and equitable manner across the board, since if individuals are rewarded differently for the same activity, tensions will build, and motivation will decline (Robbins, 1993). As a result, a proper and equitable compensation structure must be constructed (Ramlall, 2004). An illustration can be found below to gain a visual perspective on the essence of the equity theory of motivation. (See figure 2)
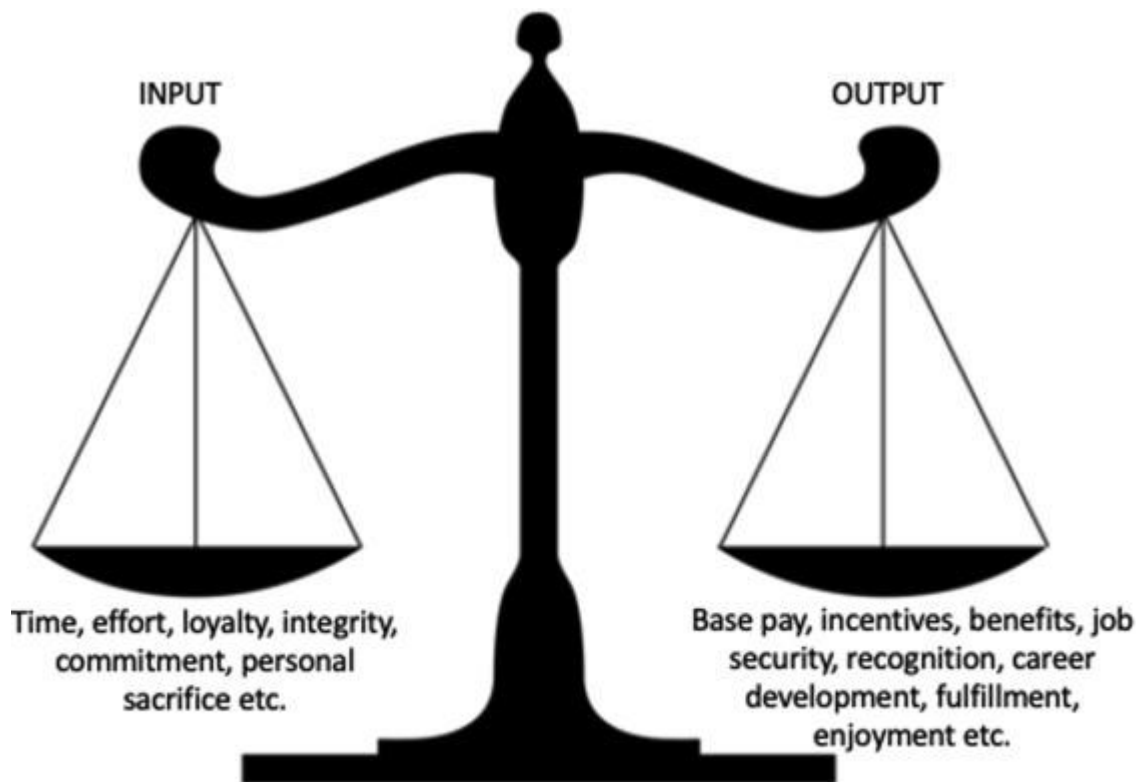
Figure 2: Illustration of the Equity Theory of Motivation Key Factors. (Image source: https://www.jacr.org/article/S1546-1440(20)30870-X/fulltext)

2.1.3 Expectancy Theory

According to the theory of expectancy, the degree of a propensity to behave in a given way is governed by the strength of the expectation that the performance would result in a specific outcome. The individual's desire is also influenced by the outcome's attraction. (managementstudyguide.com)

Employee motivation, according to the theory, is determined by how much an individual desires to be rewarded (Valence), the likelihood of the effort leading to expected results (Expectancy), and the assumed outcome of the performance leading into being rewarded. (Instrumentality).

In short, Valence is the individual's own assessment of significance about the expected end-result and is not the true sense of fulfilment received when attaining a certain goal.

Expectancy is the belief that increased effort leads to greater results. Factors such as the required skill for doing the task, the availability of adequate resources, the availability of critical information, and receiving the necessary assistance for finishing the job all influence expectancy. An illustration of all three components can be seen below. (See figure 3)
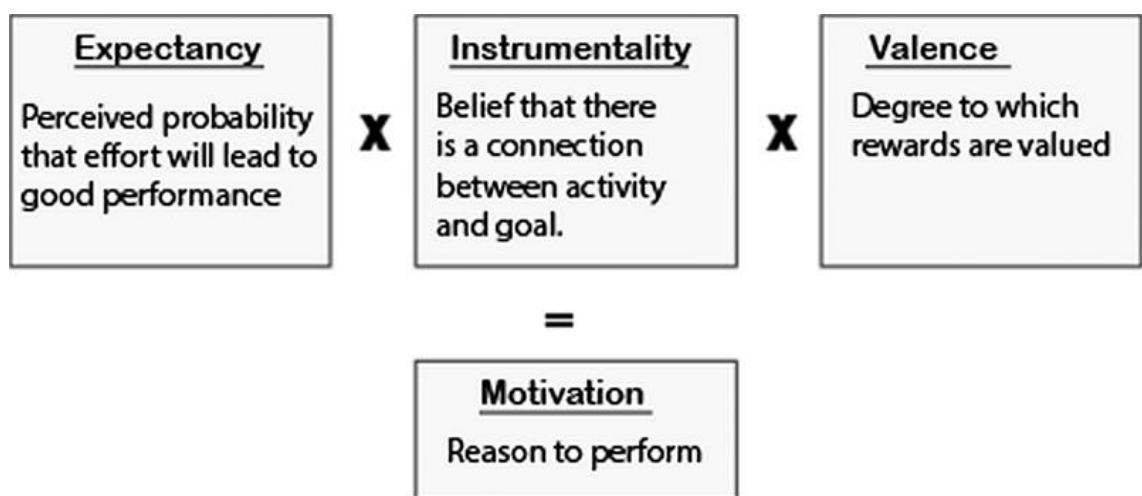
Figure 3: Main Components in The Expectancy Theory. (Image source: https://www.businesstopia.net/human-resource/expectancy-theory-motivation)

Instrumentality is the belief that good performance ensures a valid outcome. To summarize, here are the three main relationships that the expectancy theory is focused on:

- Effort-performance relationship: The likelihood of recognition towards an individual's effort
- Performance-reward relationship: The level of effort that an employee is willing to push towards for the compensation to feel just.
- Rewards-personal goals relationship: The individual's attraction to the possible benefit.

Managers must ensure that the desired performance levels are met and that preferred outcomes can be linked to the desired performance levels. Employees who deliver great results must be rewarded, and the system must be equal and fair. It is the responsibility of the organization to develop tasks that are exciting, dynamic, and challenging. Various techniques, such as questionnaires and personal interviews, should be used to analyse the employee's motivation on a regular basis (managementstudyguide.com).

2.2 Reflection

In this chapter, we will compare the theories to current working models in the company. This will give us a clearer picture of how things currently are in the workplace, and what efforts can be done to enhance both employee wellbeing and thus, their efficiency.

These findings will also be used to reflect on the data gathered from the qualitative research later in chapter 5.

2.2.1 Leadership

During my work experience at the company, I have found that both leadership models described in the X and Y theory are used, depending on the team leader. In my experience this can create a feeling of unequal treatment among the workforces. If teams are assigned without the input of the employee, it should be made sure, that each leader is progressing with the same leadership model. To ensure safe and stable growth of the business and worker wellbeing, it is important that the company focus their efforts on pushing the model presented in Theory Y. This creates a feeling of security to the employee, further strengthening the relationship between a manager and their subordinates. Since Soldem operates on a highly cooperation-based model, pushing the leadership model of Theory Y could be healthy for the company's future.

A liberal approach to leadership presented in Theory Y works wonders on a job that is as focused on good results and performance as the telemarketing scene

is. If leaders are only focused on numbers and constantly supervising their subordinates without acknowledging each employee as an individual, it creates a feeling of dread and mundanity, further distancing the team leader and their workforce.

More freedom, mixed with a leader that emphasizes development is key to a longlasting team relationship (McGregor, D. 1960).

2.2.2 One for All, All for one

Since previous studies have shown that unequal treatment can build up tensions and decrease motivation, it would be wise to ensure that all team leaders are operating under the same leadership model (Robbins, 1993). If all employees are treated equally across all teams and rewarded or punished with a fair and just manner, my hypothesis is that it would drastically lower the risk of an employee leaving the company out of frustration or feeling of being treated unfairly.

In my opinion, the compensation is handled well within the company. Every employee has a fixed monthly salary and can gain monthly bonuses based on their performance. The company also issues friendly competitions for the salespersons every now and then with minor bonuses.

2.2.3 Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

In chapter two's introduction I mentioned intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Most commonly intrinsic motivation is derived entirely from within an individual, without any external motivators. This includes things like an individual's own accomplishments, appreciation of the job or position in general, and own field of responsibility.

Extrinsic motivators are most seen within salaries, benefits, and punishments in the working environment. There are many other extrinsic sources for motivation, depending on the job or field an individual is working in.

At Soldem, there are multiple teams that an employee can be assigned to. When employees start their job, they are assigned to a team in either Inbound or Outbound teams. Inbound teams consist of indirect salespersons and Outbound teams focus on direct telemarketing. After the start period, which is usually the first four months, an employee is given more responsibilities. For example, an Inbound employee will be trained to take care of the English-speaking line or receive training to start working with customer service web chat.

During my own working time at Soldem, I have received a variety of training and I currently work in the Digi-Team, which is a new concept. The Digi-Team members specialize in digital forms of customer service, like webchats and emails.

These positions offer a variety of challenge and responsibility, which aid in deriving intrinsic motivation. An employee can always check their own recorded performance, which also helps in setting personal goals and recognizing accomplishments.

There is a plethora of sources for extrinsic motivation at Soldem. Firstly, every position at the Company has a monthly salary, and bonuses are paid for good performance. It is rare for a telemarketing job to offer a monthly salary, since most telemarketing jobs are based solely on your sales and performance, which can scare off newcomers. Soldem also trains their staff thoroughly before casting them into the "deep end". The offered fixed amount of compensation on top of in-depth training and possible bonuses is a great source for extrinsic motivation. The open and relaxed atmosphere at Soldem makes the office a safe place to be at the start of one's sales journey, which is also an external source of motivation. The newcomer in extrinsic motivators is the hybrid model mentioned in the introduction of the thesis. Many employees, I included, have worked, or are currently working remotely and wish for it to remain as an option. Some employees even went as far to say that they would quit completely if office working became mandatory and the possibility for remote working was scrapped.

I conducted personal interviews with my peers to hear their thoughts on the hybrid model, which is currently active at the company, their preferred setting to work in, thoughts on the pandemic's effects on their job, and overall motivation.

3   INTERVIEWS

3.1   Method of Research

There are mainly two types of research commonly used in theses: qualitative and quantitative research.

Qualitative research is the process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting non-numerical data, such as language. Qualitative research may be done to discover how a person sees their social environment subjectively, and how it is interpreted. Qualitative data refers to non-numerical data such as text, video, photographs, or audio recordings. This type of data may be collected through diaries or in-depth interviews, and then studied using grounded theory or topic analysis.

Quantitative research is a more numerical approach to data analysis. In quantitative research methods, numerical data is studied to predict, characterize and regulate factors of interest. The aim is to explore causal correlations between variables, generalize findings to a larger population, and make predictions and comparisons. (Mcleod, 2019)

A qualitative research approach was taken in the form of an in-depth interview. An in-depth interview was conducted to 11 Inbound employees, from which 2 work as team leaders. The main goal of the interviews was to collect information on the employee's wellbeing, preferred setting to be working at and how it affects their performance and motivation. Everyone was also to give their own current opinion on the employer and the possibility to suggest improvements was granted.

The interviews were done remotely via Microsoft Teams calls, each interview taking roughly about 20 to 35 minutes. The main questions raised during the qualitative research for this thesis were:

-   How an individual is feeling in the beginning and at the end of the interview

- Preferred setting to work at, remotely or present at the office, and how it affects their performance and wellbeing
- Pros and cons of their preferred work-setting
- The possible effects of, and how Soldem has taken care of their employees during the pandemic
- General opinion on the company
- Open Feedback

The questions were formed based on the cited literature and web articles. You can find both the original and translated versions of the questionnaires as appendices at the end of the thesis. (See appendices 1 and 2)

3.2   Interview Results

Each interviewee had their own vision on what works and what does not in terms of their preferred work-settings. All interviewees see Soldem as a trustworthy and functional employer and agree that the company has tackled the effects of the pandemic effectively, although minor improvements were requested in the way information is given on important and urgent matters. Some employees even praised the company for handling the hybrid model execution in very little time with such functioning results, which is 54.55% of all respondents. 3 out of 11 respondents also stated that there exists favouritism among the workforce, meaning that some workers get treated unequally and that employees face different treatment depending on the manager of their team. Although the feedback is mainly positive, the fact that the same negative pattern was notified in three different in-depth interviews is quite worrying and something that needs to be ironed out in the future.

The main points that unified all on-site workers was the social aspect of working on-site and the availability of help from colleagues present at the office. All interviewed office workers also claim that being present at the office aids in staying focused, active, and motivated, but wish for the hybrid model to stay active, since they feel that it is a useful addition to have in case of things like mild sickness. If a worker does not feel well or cannot be present at the office, it is better to work remotely than to call in sick and being absent for the day.

The interviewees that favoured remote work on the other hand feel that the social nature of the office space can be a bit distracting, which is why working from home is a better option for them. They claim that working remotely increases the level of independence and responsibility which motivates them to work harder. Interviewees that only work from home stated that they would consider returning to the office if the company would arrange closed workstations to enable a peaceful work environment. All interviewees wished for the hybrid model to continue even after the pandemic, from which two individuals even stated they would quit their job if remote working would not be enabled in the future.

3.2.1 Employee wellbeing

Every respondent was asked their general mood in the beginning and end of each in-depth interview. This was done to see if the interview itself was seen as a helpful way of enhancing general wellbeing among the workers. They were also asked about their thoughts on things like their employer and the perceived value of the employer's efforts, the effects of the pandemic on their motivation and output and opinions on possible improvements to help in motivating and maintaining mental health.

72.73% of respondents claim that they feel better after the interview. 54.55% interviewees wish that in-depth interviews like the one conducted for this thesis would be done on a regular basis. Furthermore, 36.36% of all interviewees stated that mental health is important and that the company should also focus on employees' individual wellbeing and wishes, instead of a more traditional questionnaire. All workers that gave an interview agree that the possibility of remote work should be maintained, since it adds to employee well-being and job-flexibility.

3.2.2 Work Environment

54.55 % of respondents are on-site workers and the remaining 45.45% prefer to work remotely.

A couple of aspects stood out in work-setting preference. Workers that gain intrinsic motivation from maximizing their work responsibility and independence are more prone to remote work, whereas the individuals that need socializing and external motivators prefer to get their boost from working on-site.

4   DATA COMPARISON

In this chapter the research findings will be compared to 2 previous surveys provided to me by Soldem. The surveys are quantitative, meaning that all data is purely numerical. This will give a broader vision to the company's wellbeing. The previously acquired results will then be analysed and compared to the acquired data from the qualitative, in-depth interviews to aid in producing the proper means to enhance and ensure better worker wellbeing in the future. There is also an employee NPS element present in both quantitative surveys.

In the working life of the past, it was common for individuals to stay with the same employer for years or even for the entirety of their careers. However, in today's world this has changed. Instead of monetary benefits, the key factors regarding employee loyalty have shifted more towards shared values, flexibility, and co-operation. Finding and holding onto the best talent on the market is becoming harder for companies as time goes on. Employee Net Promoter score is a necessity when it comes to employee loyalty metrics. (Ellis-Knight, 2021)

The surveys are dated to November 2019 and June 2021.

4.1   Before the Pandemic

In the 2019 survey, there were a total of 78 respondents. The survey consisted of 5 areas, containing a total of 32 statements, to which the respondents had 5 possible options to choose from: "I completely disagree", "I somewhat disagree", "neutral", "I somewhat agree", and "I agree".

The statements were as follows:

OWN WORK
- I enjoy my job.
- I have good work motivation.
- I know what I am being expected of in terms of goals.
- My work effort is appreciated at Soldem.
- I am happy with my team's atmosphere.

- I am happy with my work equipment. (Laptops, tables, chairs, etc.)
- I am happy with the office space.

MANAGER WORK

- I receive enough help from my team leader to develop my skills.
- My team leader has enough time to focus on me one-on-one.
- My team leader is fair and equal.
- Team meetings are useful.
- Personal meetings with my team leader are useful.
- I trust the managers at Soldem.
- I trust Soldem as a company.

WELCOME TRAINING

- The welcome training (approx. first 2 months) gave me sufficient skills to start working in sales.
- I have received personal sales coaching from the trainer.
- The trainer went through in detail what is expected of me regarding my goals.
- It was easy for me to get into the company community.
- It was easy for me to get into the team community.

DEVELOPMENT

- I recognize my own development targets.
- I feel that I have developed in my job in the last 3 months.
- The team's own training has supported my personal development.
- Influencer Coaching has supported my personal development
- The Salesperson's Development Program has supported my personal development.
- Apprenticeship has supported my personal development.
- Soldem's career coaching (TURAK) has supported my personal development.
- Talentchain has supported my personal development.

SALARY AND SHIFTS

- I am currently content with the provision- and bonus models.

- I feel that the salary is justified.
- I am content with my salary.
- I am content with my shifts.
- I know where I can get help regarding salary and shifts.

From the provided answers totals were made by dividing an average grade. The minimum possible ranges from 0 to 6, which was labelled as "Detractors", the middle ground ranges from 7 to 8, labelled "Passive", and the highest possible ranges from 9-10, labelled "Promoters".

During November 2019, 10 out of 78 respondents were in the "Detractors" -category with a percentual figure of 12,8%. These respondents answered mostly negatively to the survey, whereas the majority of 35 out of 78 respondents were in the "Passive" -category which can be translated to 44,9%. In the "Promoter" -category were the rest of the 33 out of 78 respondents, which makes up for 42,3%.

An interesting thing to note, is that most respondents in the "Promoter" -category (17 out of a total 33) had been employed for under 6 months at this point, whereas the majority of "Detractors" (8 out of a total 10) had been working for over 12 months.

4.1.1 During the Pandemic

Soldem also provided an additional survey dated June 2021, with a total of 80 respondents. In the survey, the eNPS measure provided similar metrics to the one analysed above. The same trend can be seen in terms of the eNPS metrics: the longer an employee has stayed in the firm, the more potentially they become a "Detractor". The overall opinion on Soldem is positive, many respondents stating that their employer is a trustworthy company to be working for and that their wishes and complaints are being heard.

The most useful piece of data in this quantitative analysis was the results of the open questions. In the survey, employees were asked about additional factors that make work more meaningful.

One employee stated that working remotely has been the biggest factor in both their wellbeing and mental health, due to the prior long distance between the office and their home. Another employee also highlighted the option of working remotely and the possibility to more flexible and independent work. This correlates to the findings from the qualitative interviews from earlier.

Two respondents focused a bit more on the leadership side of things, one praising their managers for being fair, calm, collected, and overall, a great leader, whereas the other respondent stated that they almost quit entirely because of their managers attitude and was saved by being placed in another team. This is in line with findings from the X and Y, and equity theories respectfully.

4.2 Qualitative and Quantitative Data Comparison

Here the general findings will be compared and analysed to further ensure the feasible steps to take to strengthen worker loyalty and wellbeing.

In both the qualitative and quantitative findings Soldem was viewed as a trustworthy employer. Most workers are content with their treatment and reward-to-output ratios are up to date, minus a few detractors. On-site workers prefer the social aspect of working and are more extrinsically driven, whereas remote workers look for more responsibility and self-management in a peaceful work environment. All workers wish for the hybrid model to stay as a possible option, since all view it as only a beneficial factor.

The longer an employee has stayed with the company, the more likely they are to leave negative feedback and become a detractor. Fair treatment was highlighted in both qualitative and quantitative research results, with some employees stating they have noticed favouritism among the workforces. In the interviews,

some employees suggested that the managers should be evaluated and re-viewed on a regular basis to ensure that the leadership within the company is always on-point.

The in-depth interview itself had a positive reception among respondents, with the majority wishing for it to be reoccurring. Workers state that mental health is important and should also be focused on in the future, for example in the form of an in-depth interview like the one conducted for this very thesis.

When comparing the data received from the qualitative research, it was noticed that the respondents gave more useful information and could better explain their stances and opinions in the form of an in-depth interview. The questions were arranged in a way that the same question would be asked twice in a different manner to gain as much data as possible regarding the desired subject. The questions were also designed in a way that the respondent cannot simply dodge a question and would rather have to at least give some input on the matter. A good example of this can be seen in the latter part of the questionnaire, where the respondent is first asked about their opinion on how the company could en-hance their work wellbeing and a question later, they are being asked to give examples on things the company could have handled better. After the question-naire, the respondent is also encouraged to give freeform feedback, the hypoth-esis being that some respondents would accidentally withhold information by simply forgetting or hesitating and that at least some withheld information could be unearthed by simply asking this at the end. The hypothesis was proven cor-rect.

When compared to the in-depth interviews, I noticed that while easier and faster, the quantitative analysis is not an effective tool to pin-point solutions, as opposed to problems. The purely numerical data with a chance to elaborate on one or two occasions does not give an accurate representation of the respondent's view, rather a fraction of it. To better understand strengths and weaknesses in terms of employee wellbeing, a dialogue must be created. Quantitative research can be utilized for support, but the most useful data in this field is generated through actual conversation.

5   CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

In this part of the thesis, all findings will be presented and analysed to create an action-framework that can be used to create suggestions that have impactful and long-lasting positive effects on the company's future.

The main objectives for the thesis were to figure out the effects of remote working on employee motivation and possible improvements to the hybrid working model.

5.1   Conclusion

After analysing past surveys and conducting a total of 11 in-depth reviews, it was noticed that remote working has had a tremendous beneficial effect on motivation and mental health on a few select individuals. All interviewees agreed that remote work should be kept as a possible choice, and it is only viewed as a positive among the workforces.

Most employees think that the Company has handled the effects of the pandemic very efficiently. Some minor improvements were requested in terms of information flow within the company. Some respondents felt that a few important and urgent matters had flown by completely unnoticed.

Remote workers in the company were prone to list attributes linked to intrinsic motivation as positive sides of their job, whereas on-site workers mainly listed attributes related to extrinsic motivation. Since employee approach to motivational aspects of work are so polarizing, it could be a good idea to offer flexible working models. This is also echoed in the way that the interviewees viewed the option of remote work.

On-site workers feel that all improvements towards remote working is the individual's own responsibility. Remote workers stated that returning to the office would be possible if more personal and peaceful workstations can be provided.

There were also other findings that came about while acquiring data through both quantitative and qualitative means. The findings are listed below.

Increased workload can be damaging to an employee if the required output to gain rewards is set to an unappealing state. It is important to survey employee effectiveness and to decrease workload per person when it is proven to yield better output. Managers should be reviewed regularly as well to make sure that they operate according to company standard. A good manager can make all the difference in the world to an employee, both in good and bad, which was reflected in the quantitative and qualitative analyses. Since managers are required to keep performance levels up to par with the desired outcome, an unequal manager creates disturbance in the team, thus never letting their team operate in its full potential.

Some respondents wish for in-depth interviews, like the one conducted for this thesis, to be a reoccurring thing with most respondents claiming that a wellbeing survey with a more conversational approach is beneficial to their overall mood and motivation. They stated that the interview made them feel that the company cares about them in a more individual level.

5.2   Suggestions

- Remote working should be kept as an optional form of working.

- Important and urgent matters are to be communicated to staff on time.

- Workloads should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that each employee feels motivated and able to handle their field of responsibility to ensure best possible output.

- Managers should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that each manager is leading their team according to the company standards.

- In-depth interviews such as the one conducted for the thesis should be held recurringly and maybe even replace aspects of a normal text-based survey. This would increase employee motivation, give straight and honest answers that lead to effective results and strengthen company image.

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Interviewee B1. 2022. Manager. Soldem. Interview 25th April 2022.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Interview Questions – Original Version

Soldem opinnäytetyön henkilökohtaiset haastattelukysymykset:

HUOMIO! HAASTATTELU SUORITETAAN SUOMEN KIELELLÄ. SAATU DATA KÄÄNNETÄÄN ENGLANNIN KIELELLE VASTAAMAAN MAHDOLLISIMMAN TARKASTI ALKUPERÄISEN VASTAUKSEN SISÄLTÖÄ OPINNÄYTETYÖTÄ VARTEN. ANNETTUJA VASTAUKSIA MUOKATAAN SITEN, ETTÄ EPÄSOVELIAS KIELENKÄYTTÖ, SLANGI TAI TÄYTESANAT SIIVOTAAN POIS HYÖDYLLISEN DATAN TIELTÄ. SOPIIHAN TÄMÄ SINULLE?

[PÄIVÄMÄÄRÄ]

Työtehtävä?

Työuran pituus Soldemilla?

Miten voit tällä hetkellä?

Oletko pääosin etätöissä vai toimistolla tällä hetkellä?

Mitkä asiat vaikuttavat valintaasi työskentelymuodon suhteen? Miksi?

Mitä muutoksia täytyisi tehdä vähemmän suosimaasi työmuotoon, jotta harkitsisit vaihtoa/paluuta edelliseen?

Miten suosimasi työskentelymuoto on vaikuttanut motivaatioosi verraten edelliseen?

Miten suosimasi työskentelymuoto on vaikuttanut tulokseesi verraten edelliseen?

Mitä etuja suosimassasi työskentelymuodossa on? Mitä haittoja?

Miten pandemia on vaikuttanut henkilökohtaisella tasolla työhösi?

Voisiko firma tehdä jotain työhyvinvoinnin parantamiseksi? Perustele.

Mitä mieltä olet Soldemista työnantajana?

Missä Soldem on mielestäsi onnistunut hyvin kuluneen pandemian aikana? Missä olisi parannettavaa?

Mitä mieltä olet haastattelusta? Miten voit haastattelun jälkeen?

Vapaa palaute?

Appendix 2. Interview Questions – English Translation

Interview Questions for Thesis:

NOTE: THE INTERVIEW WILL BE CONDUCTED IN FINNISH. ALL DATA RECEIVED FROM THE INTERVIEW WILL BE TRANSLATED TO ENGLISH AS ACCURATELY AS POSSIBLE TO AID IN THE MAKING OF A BACHELOR'S THESIS. ANSWERS WILL BE EDITED TO REMOVE ALL INAPPROPRIATE LANGUAGE, SLANG TERMS OR EXPLETIVES AND ONLY USEFUL DATA WILL BE KEPT IN. IS THIS OKAY WITH YOU?

[DATE]

What is your position?

How long have you worked for Soldem?

How are you currently feeling?

Do you mainly work on-site or remotely?

What aspects influence your preferred work-setting? Why?

What changes need to be made to your least preferred work-setting so, that you would consider switching?

How has your preferred work-setting affected your motivation compared to the other?

How has your preferred work-setting affected your output compared to the other?

What are the pros and cons of your preferred work-setting?

How has the pandemic affected your work on a personal level?

Could the company do something to enhance your wellbeing at work? Elaborate.

What do you think of Soldem as an employer?

In your opinion, in what has Soldem succeeded in during the pandemic? Is there anything they could do better?

What did you think of the interview? How do you feel after it?

Any free feedback?