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WORK ORIENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP
Case company ABC Vaasa

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ABSTRACT

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The aim of this survey was to find out the main objectives, which cause the problems and difficulties in work orientation. Wide amount of employees, working in a shifts and wide range of work tasks are causing difficulties in large organization. By interviewing the employees involved in orientation, is aim to find out how the orientation process could be developed in the organization.

In the theory section will be explained what the orientation includes; getting familiar with working environment/organization and the actual work training. The procedures in orientation are presented step by step: the orientation, the follow-up and the measuring methods. Also the benefits are presented; why the orientation is important for employee, employer and for the organization and how it increases the motivation. The research includes in-depth interviews, where is ready made question frames, but also own comments were allowed.

The motivation is a key factor in successful orientation, with an enthusiastic touch the orientation is more fluent and the same motivation should stay high among the entire process. Good and efficient orientation is important in many ways, e.g. it increases the productivity, work motivation stays high and the wellbeing at the work will increase. Self-motivation and independency makes the orientation process possible, but also the effort of the entire work community is needed, the organization must be involved in the orientation and to be supportive.

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Matkailun ja ravitsemuksen koulutusohjelma

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Tässä tutkimuksessa kartoitettiin ongelmia, haasteita ja vaikeuksia joita perehdyttäminen tuo tullessaan. Isossa organisaatiossa on monenlaisia haasteita kuten; henkilöstön lukumäärä, vuorotyö, hallittavuus sekä työtehtävien laajuus. Tavoitteena oli selvittää miten perehdyttämistä organisaatiossa voitaisiin kehittää, tutkimus toteutettiin haastatteleamalla uusia työntekijöitä sekä henkilöitä jotka ovat vasuissa/mukana perehdytyksessä.

Teoriassa paneuduin perehdyttämisen sisältöön; työympäristöön ja organisaatioon tutustumiseen sekä itse työhön kouluttautumiseen. Työssä on esiteltyä vaihe vaiheelta miten perehdytys tulisi edetä ja miten sen edistymistä voitaisiin eri keinoin seurata sekä mitata. Perehdyttämisen hyödyt kaikille kolmelle osapuolelle; työntekijälle, työnantajalle sekä organisaatiolle, ovat tärkeitä ja lisäävät motivaatioita näille jokaiselle kolmelle taholle. Tutkimuksessa käytiin vastaajien kanssa syvähaastatteluita, jossa oli kysymysrunko, mutta lisäksi jokainen vastaaja sai lisätä omia kommentteja ja ajatuksia haastattelun edetessä.

Perehdyttämisen onnistumiseen vaikuttaa sekä perehdyttäjän että perehdytettävän motivaatio, joiden ylläpito tulisi pystyä säilyttämään. Hyvä ja tehokas perehdyttäminen on tärkeää esimerkiksi tuottavuuden, työmotivaation ja työssä jaksamisen kannalta. Oma-aloitteisuus ja hyvä motivaatio mahdollistavat onnistuneen perehdyttämisen, mutta siihen tarvitaan myös koko työyhteisön panosta ja osallistumista.

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION	6
2 PRESENTATION OF THE CASE COMPANY	7
3 ORIENTATION TO WORK	9
3.1 Steps of orientation	12
3.2 Steps of training	13
3.3 Laws according to orientation	14
3.4 Forms of orientation	15
4 BENEFITS OF THE ORIENTATION	18
4.1 Benefits of the employee	18
4.2 Benefits of the employer	18
4.3 Benefits of the company	19
5 ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT	20
6 ORIENTATION FOLLOW-UP AND FEEDBACK	21
7 ORIENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP IN THE CASE COMPANY	23
8 RESEARCH METHODS	25
8.1 Validity and reliability	26
9 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERVIEWS	27
10 RESEARCH RESULTS	28
10.1 Mentors	28
10.1.1 Orientation plan and follow-up	28
10.1.2 Being involved in orientation	29
10.1.3 How to prepare for orientation	30
10.1.4 Difficulties and challenges of orientation	30
10.2 New employees	31
10.2.1 Experiences and expectations of the orientation day	31
10.2.2 Orientation materials	31
10.2.3 Orientation plan	32

10.3 Developing the orientation	32
11 CONCLUSION	34
11.1 Improvement suggestions	35
REFERENCES.....	37
INTERNET SOURCES	38

1 INTRODUCTION

The following report is a research for the case company ABC Vaasa. The aim of the work was to clarify how the orientation was succeeded in ABC Vaasa, how the mentors and the new employees experienced the orientation process. Both were interviewed and questions were settled so, that the main objectives would be possible to recognize.

This project brought up the main issues, which need to be improved and it also adduces the question whether the experiences of the personnel were in line with each other. Another the aim was to find out how the orientation experience succeeded and was it a positive experience? If not, which were the stepping stones?

This topic was selected because the orientation process needs constant development, especially in large organizations and by this research I could help developing my own work community.

Finishing the research, innovative orientation and follow-up methods will be created by the personnel. By interviewing the personnel it is possible to motivate those to be involved in the orientation process and change the attitudes towards the process, which may be impassive or even negative. The role of the employees must be highlighted so, that the total community will be part of the orientation process.

2 PRESENTATION OF THE CASE COMPANY

ABC Vaasa is part of the S-group which is one of the market leaders in retail and service trades in Finland. It is based on ownership of co-op members and the number of members is over 2 million persons. S-group consists of SOK (Suomen Osuuskauppojen Keskuskunta) which is owned cooperatives. Parts of S-group are 21 independent regional and 8 local cooperatives. S-group is employer for more than 43, 000 employees. KPO (Osuuskauppa KPO) is the regional co-operative in the Vaasa region, and the head quarter is located in Kokkola.

In Finland there are altogether 108 ABC stations with workforce. The ABC-chain is well known all over Finland for their great locations, accessibility, and availability. The ABC-chains motto is “one stop, many services”, which reflects well their actual functions. Availability means long opening hours, or even 24h service, and being open each day of the year, including holidays.

ABC Vaasa is a service station with different functions: they sell gasoline, items related to cars and vehicles; they also provide car washes and repair cars. ABC provides wide range of food selection as they have fast food- and a 'la carte restaurant as well as coffee and pastries from deli-side. Under the same roof they have a grocery store, as well as a cafeteria and a 'la carte restaurant which are open 24 hours. ABC Vaasa is also a popular place to arrange meetings; they have two meeting rooms for rent, one takes 20 and the other takes 80 people.

In 2013 the total number of employees in ABC Vaasa was more than 75 persons and the majority (67.7%) of them are women. The largest age group ranges between 25-34 years (32.3%) and the average age is 28 years, and the number of personnel between ages 20 and 44 is 78.5%. Mostly employees are permanent, only 27.7% are having a temporary work relationship. In the last year 38.5% of

personnel had been in a current work relationship one to three years, 23.1% of them less than one year and 16.9% four to six years.

ABC Vaasa can be divided into three different units; grocery store, fast food restaurant and a 'la carte restaurant. The restaurant unit consists of the personnel in the kitchen and waiter-clerks. Working in ABC Vaasa requires a wide knowledge of each unit and section, and working over the boarder-lines is typical and often necessary. Each employee has its' own home unit, but can be placed to other units as well.

Customers are served in their own native language and therefore language skills are required. Spoken languages are Finnish, Swedish and English. ABC Vaasa is located near the airport in the Swedish speaking area, where one can say almost 50% of the customers are Swedish speaking, and also many foreign tourists visit. Many employees are bilingual and in a 'la carte kitchen even different nationalities are represented; this is why English is needed to communicate with other workers.

3 ORIENTATION TO WORK

The new work task and atmosphere challenge a new employee, therefore training and tutoring plays a huge role in the beginning of one's work career. This teaching period is called orientation; it means getting familiar with the environment and the social community and their daily duties. When young people start working life their orientation is more practical. It is useful to present the rules, regulations and behavior models of the company, not to forget instructing one's behavior at the work place and co-operation. Actually nowadays orientation is much more than getting to know the co-workers, on larger scale it means understanding the goals and visions of the organization. (Kupias & Peltola 2009, 9; 13-15.)

Orientation means all the operations which may help the new employee to get familiar with new working environment and duties. Orientation can be separated into two parts; the *introduction* of the organization and co-workers, and the actual *work training*. The introduction includes explanation of functions at the work unit, familiarizing administrative arrangements, rules of the company and various policies they may have. (Strömmer 1999, 259-26). Orientation is a learning experience and a channel to transfer knowledge as it helps to understand one's own duties and responsibilities. The core idea is to give the required information so that the employees can create their own behavior models to accomplish the given tasks, and to understand the organization's targets. Orientation includes planning and implementing the actual orientation plan and concurrently monitoring it. If orientation has been successful, it can be an inspiring, motivating and unifying experience for the entire work society. (Rissanen, Sääsäski, Vornanen 1996; Kupias & Peltola. 2009; Honkaniemi, Junnila, Ollila, Poskiparta, Rintala-Rasmus, Sandberg 2007.)

New employees are mostly motivated and full of positive energy. When a person is enthusiastic about the work, also orientation is efficient and learning will be easier. (Kjelin, Kuusisto. 2003, 172). Work safety and well-being overall will increase after successful orientation; these are important aspects considering the future of the company. Also the level of motivation stays high and co-operation with each other becomes efficient. The ones involved in orientation are not only the new employees, but also the managers and the other employees, since also they are responsible for the orientation experience to succeed. (Työturvallisuuskeskus.Lepistö 2004, 56). Orientation takes place when new employee starts working, but also when work unit or position changes. Orientation is also needed when working tools, equipment and working methods are renewed. If danger situation occurs at the work place, orientation is needed as well. Successful orientation creates solid base for safety environment in the company. (Työturvallisuuskeskus. Penttinen & Mäntynen. 2009, 4).

At its best the orientation helps new employees to utilize already existing knowledge and skills in their new work tasks. Because the level of experience varies massively, therefore orientation should be tailored for each trainee according to their level of knowledge. Orientation is an important part of the world economics since with careful implementation the personnel will stay healthy, satisfied and they will be more efficient in their productivity. (Kupias & Peltola 2009, 19-20). Because the new employees should absorb massive amounts of new information, it is important to take enough time for orientation. In a short period of time the new employees should adopt the role of being an active learner instead of being a trainee, thus they will independently start to search and gain information according to their work. (Honkaniemi etc. 2007, 159). Well succeeded orientation reduces personnel's absences and sick-leaves, positive first impressions encourage and stimulate the new employee. On the other hand, if the trainee experiences that he is only a disturbance for the other employees, this can have negative effects such as increased absenteeism. Orientation takes time and resources of the company, but it can be seen also as a money saving operation, with poor quality comes extra costs, like increasing amount of wastage and in case of drawback it needs to be repaired, which may be a time taking process. (Työturvallisuuskeskus, Kangas 2000, 6).

As mentioned earlier the managers and foremen are ultimately responsible for orientation, but in addition to these; companies are having the trained personnel and HR specialist who are also responsible and involved in this process. In general mentors have long experiences in the company, and usually they are specialists in their own field. (Räsänen etc. 1996; Kupias & Peltola 2009, Strömmer 1999, Risänen etc. 1996). It varies by company who executes the orientation, in some organizations orientation is done or coordinated by the HR specialist, in other cases by managers, or it can be delegated to specific mentors or co-workers.(Kupias & Peltola 2009,47).

3.1 Steps of orientation

The orientation plan will be made before the actual induction is implemented. The plan should contain the targets and aims of orientation. By this plan the company can create coherence and effectiveness in to the orientation. (Työturvallisuuskeskus 2000,7). By sources regarding orientation, steps are tolerably the same: orientation starts already when interviewing and hiring new employees by giving vital information of the company and hopefully a positive impression. The work community should be informed and prepared to welcome the new employee to be part of the working community. The actual orientation process starts by introducing the new employee to other co-workers. General information will be given by the human resource specialist, the manager or other representative of the company. General information includes, for instance, going through the employment contract and issues related to safety at work. An orientation plan will be done according to experience and knowledge of the new employee, and it will be executed together with manager.

The actual work training will start after getting familiar with the organization overall, this training includes becoming familiar with duties, machines and general directives of the work unit. Monitoring the orientation is done concurrently with other steps of orientation, monitoring means to evaluate and measure the orientation and the outcome of it. By interviewing co-workers and following the new employee's work it is possible to create a conclusion whether the orientation was successful or not. Evaluation of the orientation will be done together with the manager and the new employee, this can be done through a questionnaire or a meeting where the targets achievements and how the execution of the orientation can be summarized. (Työturvallisuuskeskus, Lepistö 2004, Työturvallisuuskeskus, Kangas 2000, Strömmer 1999.)

3.2 Steps of training

The training process starts by conversation between the mentor and the new employee. It is important to clarify the starting point and the previous skills the trainee might have, also they have to set the targets and learning objectives of the orientation. Learning styles vary from human to human, some may learn by watching, other by hearing, third by doing and the fourth by observing. Therefore the mentor should recognize and notice the differences between different learning styles. Identical patterns are not suitable for all orientation processes, as mentioned learning methods and styles vary. The mentor should become familiar with the new employee before the actual work training begins, if they do not have previous work history. (Työturvallisuuskeskus, Kangas 2000, 13-15.)

The second step is to give an overview of the work tasks and to go through the rules and regulations according to the work. After these procedures the actual work begins. The third step of training is to practice one's inner behavior models by visualization practices, after learning these inner models, working will become more effortless. The trainee has to explain step by step how certain working processes proceed, which tools and equipment are needed as well as what are the most important issues at each point. The fourth step is the practice; the trainee executes work tasks individually, after finishing the task, the work performance will be first self-evaluated and later evaluated together with the mentor. In the final step; both the trainee and the mentor will measure the learning process. The trainee will continue working individually, although his work can be reviewed occasionally. It is important to make sure that the trainee has enough information and skills to execute the given tasks in the future as well. (Työturvallisuuskeskus, Kangas 2000, 13-15.)

3.3 Laws according to orientation

Orientation, learning and working are protected by three laws; these laws involve and obligate the employer to familiarize the personnel with their work.

The Employment Contract Act ensures that there will be enough knowledge and training given to a new employee so that one is able to carry out the given tasks. Also the employer should provide such conditions that career planning is possible for every employee. (Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Finland. 2014, 1-33).

According to *Occupational Safety and Health Act* the employer must provide a safe environment for the employees, by minimizing or if possible by eliminating possible dangers and threats which may cause risks for employees to get injured mentally or physically. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, 2002.1) The employee must be informed and trained how to use all the equipment and machines at the workplace, and law enforces the employer to guarantee the good condition of the machinery. In addition physical threats are common and an increasing problem in the service business. (Kupias & Peltola 2009, 23-24). Accidents often occur for new employees, since although they have suitable knowledge and skills for their occupation, they may still not know what the occupational dangers and hazards are. The trainee should get specific information of occupation risks and hazards, in order to be able to avoid unsafe situations. They should also acquire the knowledge how to act in dangerous situations, for example in case of fire. (Työturvallisuuskeskus, Kangas 2000, 6). The reason why one should focus on safety laws is to prevent possible accidents and injuries, which may occur at work. As mentioned earlier the employer has duties regarding the law, but also the employee is responsible to inform to employer if accidents occur. Also the employee is required to follow the

given safety instructions and to work carefully and cautiously. (Rissanen, Sääsäki, Vornanen, 1996, 149).

By the *Law on Co-operation* the employer is obligated to give current information to the personnel of the company's undertakings and project. It provides possibilities to employees to be involved in decision making, negotiation with management when changes and arrangements take place, as well as developing interaction and public relations between all parties. (Ministry of Employment and Economy, 2013).

3.4 Forms of orientation

According to Kupias & Peltola, 2009 five different forms of orientation can be found; all of them are having both advantages and disadvantages which are shortly presented;

In *Mentor orientation* the new employee will learn by following and working together with a specific mentor, manager or colleague. Orientation is personalized and offers possibilities to learn at one's own pace. Mentor orientation can be both an opportunity and a threat. If the mentor is putting a lot of effort and has enough time to teach and train the new employee, the orientation can be a positive experience. If the mentor is lacking in knowledge or has an uncaring attitude towards the new employee, the orientation can be a failure and a disappointment. The advantage of this orientation method is personal tutoring which the new employee receives; on the other hand the disadvantage of mentor orientation is that the quality of the orientation relies only on the one specific mentor's personal knowledge and motivation to tutor. (Kupias & Peltola 2009, 36-41, 49-51.)

In *Model orientation* the aim is to standardize and optimize the orientation by creating certain orientation models and patterns to support the orientation. The work

and the responsibilities are explicitly divided in this orientation model. The orientation can be divided through the entire organization: the manager's role is to welcome the new employee and give general information about the goals and the expectations, and delegate executing the orientation to other members of the organization. General information will be given by HR while work training will be executed by co-workers and supervisors. Orientation materials are comprehensive and numerous. This model ensures a homogenous orientation according to the minimum standards, and the mentor can also use existing operating models. Orientation can focus too much on general matters inside the organization instead of concentrating on the employee's own specific work tasks. (Kupias & Peltola 2009, 36-41, 49-51.)

In *Quality orientation* the basic idea is to improve the quality of orientation continuously. The manager's role is important as he/she delegates the orientation to other members of the work society. The ideal situation is that every team member is involved in the process and any member of the work society can be selected to be a mentor. The decisive factor in who is chosen to be a mentor is that he/she has to have knowledge, time and motivation to develop the orientation process. The mentor is responsible for the progress of the project which needs to be followed precisely, so it can be constantly improved. In this model the new employee integrates to the work society well and his/her previous knowledge can be an advantage. If the responsibility of orientation is directed to teams, it can become an issue where the responsibility is prevaricated and no one takes charge. (Kupias & Peltola 2009, 36-41, 49-51.)

In *Tailored orientation*, each product and service will be divided into modules. Needed modules will be selected according to the needs and knowledge of the trainee. One coordinator will be selected to be responsible for choosing the right modules for each trainee, and he/she will also try to determine the needs of trainee regarding his/her orientation. Each module has its own mentor, and the coordina-

tor's task is to connect new employees with mentors. This orientation socializes the employees with each other. Beneficial is that the new employee will be heard, which may strengthen the commitment towards the company. In order to this orientation to succeed the new employee must make the effort of developing one's own orientation plan and implementing it. (Kupias & Peltola 2009, 36-41, 49-51.)

In *Dialogue orientation* the work community sets up the operations in joint development. This form of orientation requires concurrent teamwork and each employee's contribution is necessary. The trainee's achievements need to be noticed and used for the advantage of the organization. This model can be seen as an interactive learning between the new employee and the company, it is also an opportunity for progression. The role of the new employee in orientation is vital, but also the members of the work community need to be willing to develop the orientation and the entire organization. (Kupias & Peltola 2009, 36-41, 49-51.)

4 BENEFITS OF THE ORIENTATION

Benefits of orientation can be viewed from many angles; by the employee, employer and the company, but actually these benefits are shared and support each other. Benefits can be financial, emotional or social, and after all by putting time and effort in orientation all the parties will end up in a win-win situation.

4.1 Benefits of the employee

When the employee is aware of work tasks and knows how to execute them, he/she will have more courage and will be able to act more decisively. The person who feels confident in his/her own work performances also integrates better into the work society than a hesitant person with poor performances. When work patterns, rules, regulations and policies are correct, work will be fluent already in the beginning. Learning about the right patterns is also a money and time saving operation. When the work is fluent the employee finds it more interesting, thus the loyalty towards the employer and to the work will increase simultaneously. After a successful orientation one's professional skills will be developed, quality standards reached and the normal level of earnings achieved faster. (Lepistö, 2004. 56-57.)

4.2 Benefits of the employer

When orientation is done with special care, the occurring problems are few, minor and easy to solve. Also the manager's precious time will be saved later on. The new member of staff will become familiar to the co-workers better and faster when orientation is personal and the new employee is guided thoroughly. Orienta-

tion is also an opportunity to create a solid base for a functional co-working and for a good working environment. (Lepistö, 2004. 57.)

4.3 Benefits of the company

Succeeded orientation guarantees good work quality and results; mistakes and accidents occur seldom and the amount of wastage stays low. When the person is motivated and pleased with his/her work, the attitude towards the company stays positive and loyal. Employees pleased with their employer, are often having long work careers and their absenteeism from the work is low. By understanding the expenses of the company, employee can improve the outcome and achieve cost savings. Orientation at its best can improve the corporate image and be a money saving operation. (Lepistö, 2004. 57.)

5 ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

The idea of developing the organization is to maintain the reached level of knowledge and even increase it. This development can be implemented by training the skills and the attitudes of the personnel. The basic education of the work will be gathered before starting the actual work career. The aim of basic education is to prepare students for their professions. Orientation and training is the first performance for the new employees to show their own skills and knowledge in practice. Other development activities are as follows: postgraduate education for more demanding tasks, updating education where all the existing information will be updated as well as new skills will be learned in order to operate effectively. Re-education takes place if a person is transferred to another position or occupation. (Rissanen, Sääsäki, Vornanen 1996, 130-131.)

The current situation at the organization can be followed by various measuring methods such as questionnaires, surveys and performance reviews. By abovementioned methods it can be clarified how the personnel experiences and evaluates the management, possibilities for career development, atmosphere and functions in the entire organization. Surveys will give general overviews of the main problems and issues which need to be dealt with and reorganized inside the organization. (Järvinen. 2001. 131-136).

Also personal know-how must be improved when developing the organization. When the vision of strategy and aims are clear for the personnel developing the organization in the right direction becomes easier. A combination of these three: vision, personal know-how and organization development itself guarantee a successful development experience. Hagemann, 1991. 11).

6 ORIENTATION FOLLOW-UP AND FEEDBACK

When orientation takes place also the monitoring of the work performances should be started immediately. By monitoring, a successful orientation can be guaranteed. Also the new employee gets support from the organization, and the organization itself will gain useful information about the work performances. They will find out if mistakes are done, and those can be avoided later on when hiring new employees. (Honkaniemi etc.2007. 162-163.)

After a couple of months the manager should have a discussion meeting with the new employee to find out what the feelings of the employee are, how he/she evaluates his/her own work performance and whether the expectations are fulfilled. Also the manager has a chance to clarify expectations from the company's point of view, and the possible unclear issues. The manager has to evaluate if the chosen person is suitable for the work or not. Even though the hiring process is carefully executed, sometimes during the period-time the manager or the new employee notices, that the occupation is too easy or difficult for the employee and the employment contract can be terminated. Conversation should include feedback from manager to employee and vice versa. The manager should give honest feedback and instructions if there are matters which need to be done in another way, and encourage the new employee to give feedback also to the organization, since the new employee may be innovative and willing to develop the company. (Honkaniemi etc.2007. 162-163.)

In some organizations follow-up questionnaires are done. Through these questionnaires the satisfactory level of the manager and the new employee can be sorted out. One can also find out if the orientation has been successful or not. If the respondents are dissatisfied, the reasons for un-satisfaction must be immediately solved. (Honkaniemi etc.2007. 162-163.)

New employees are often willing to receive feedback and ready for being under evaluation. When more knowledge has been gathered self-regulation increases and need for external feedback will decrease. By receiving feedback the trainee will know if the work performance has been a success or not. Feedback is often given when something is done incorrectly, although comments should be given also after a well succeeded work task. Feedback leads the new employee to the right direction; it can be seen as a supportive aspect towards a continuing learning process. (Kupias, Peltola, Saloranta. 2011. 177-179.)

7 ORIENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP IN THE CASE COMPANY

The current situation at ABC Vaasa was explored in a discussion with the first-line manager. (Interview with Koivisto 12.06.2014) ABC Vaasa provides orientation for each employee, when they embark on their work-career in the company. When selecting and hiring new employees, they are briefly given information about work place. The manager will arrange an introduction day for the new employees, where the organization and the company will be presented. It is important to give an overview about the visions and the goals of the organization. The manager and the new employees will also have a tour in the building; the idea of which is to get familiar with the location of first aid items, evacuation routes, restrooms and other facilities.

All the new employees will get orientation materials: a welcome letter including general information related to the employment contract, information about orientation and safety at work, as well as important contact information. It consists of also simple objectives and guidelines. These guidelines include customer service, which is the most important aspect, being honest and co-operation, which are both required. In addition to the welcome letter, a training card will be given. This card will be filled when new work tasks are executed. Each work task will be approved and followed by a mentor. On this card, the employee can find most of the work processes and tasks, which exist at different work shifts in each unit.

The mentor tutors the new employee with simple work tasks and follows the new employee the first two days at work. The new employee begins by learning the processes which are typical for the certain unit, for instance how to work as a cashier and serve the clients. The ideal situation is that there will be enough time to internalize the work and learn step by step.

ABC Vaasa does not have an actual orientation follow-up pattern in use nor ways of measuring it. Follow-up is conducted more through everyday communication, where information is transferred. They may have small discussions about issues which have been challenging or created problems.

8 RESEARCH METHODS

A qualitative research method is suitable for this thesis: the aim is to gain information by interviewing the personnel; about their feelings, experiences, beliefs and innovative ideas. The qualitative method works well when things are described and understood subjectively. (Wisker, 2007). The purpose is not to draw a conclusion and to generalize issues based on statistics, but rather the aim is to understand the research objects and to create an overview about the negative objects and issues which affect most of the personnel's work and their emotional conditions. (Saukkonen, 2011).

As mentioned, research is done by interviewing the personnel. This in-depth interview has a certain question frame, but the interviewee is involved in discussion and thus able to describe his/her own thoughts and experiences as well. Preparing for the interview starts by analyzing the research problem: what the main objectives is, what information is relevant and who is able to provide an answer. Duration of the interview should be estimated and also how to collect and save the gained data (Räsänen).

Interviews with the new employees mostly concentrated on questions about the orientation day and its materials, overall organization and their expectations versus the experiences about the orientation. Interviews with the mentors concentrated more on their own behavior, the motivating methods they use to inspire new employees, how to improve their own teaching methods and how to develop the orientation process in the organization.

8.1 Validity and reliability

The first part; interviewing the new employees, could have been done differently, for example by asking more detailed questions and laying them out in a clearer manner. Also the amount of participants should have been wider, but in this research the answers were lacking information and therefore the number of them was very limited, so this research cannot be seen as valid or reliable in that sense.

In the other section; interviewing the mentors, research could be done in any circumstances, not depending on time, place or other conditions. Six mentors were interviewed and their similarities and correspondences were significant, but these answers are judgments and based on their experiences, which varies from person to person, and therefore the conclusions cannot be viewed as totally reliable. More interviews could have been conducted with the mentors, to confirm the conclusions, but having so many similar answers contributed to assuming comments to be the general opinion about the current situation of the orientation in this organization. The answers can be seen as partly reliable, because those persons who are involved in and responsible for the orientation process must know the current situation, practices and ways of conducting the orientation to perform their work tasks as mentors.

It can be said that the interview results of the second section may vary and they may not be fully reliable, but yet they are valid because the wanted information was gathered by these research questions and frames.

9 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERVIEWS

The survey for the new employees contains 14 questions and the survey for the mentors contains 9 questions. The interviewed were able to add their own comments and thoughts despite the fact that there was readymade question frames. The first group, the new employees included only three answerers; the number was so small because the nature of the answers was lacking information. The other survey with the mentors contains six interviews, and all the answers had significant similarities and correspondences.

The new employees were selected to be interviewed at random; the only requirement was one month work experience in the company. The mentors were selected by random as well, through who happened to be on duty at the day the interviews were held. The only requirements were two years' work experience in the company and to be involved in the orientation process as a mentor. Interviews were held between 12th of June and 8th of October. One interview lasted approximately 20-40 minutes.

10 RESEARCH RESULTS

The aim of this survey was to find out the problems and challenges of the orientation process. The two surveys do not correspond or are not measurable, to one another. The information gained from new employees was pointedly that the interviewees were pleased to have a work place and they could not really say many negative things or problems in the orientation process, nor could they say anything about how to improve the process. Maybe the orientation process for them was still at the very beginning, so it would be impossible for them to look back and say what could have been done differently. The interviews with the mentors instead made them to think about their own behavior and how to improve the entire organization and the orientation process. The answers of the mentors and the new employees are separated from each other, but the developing ideas are gathered from all the participants.

10.1 Mentors

The mentors were pleased to answer the questions about the orientation and they had a great deal of opinions and improvement suggestions for it. The answers had many similarities and the attitudes towards orientation were mostly positive.

10.1.1 Orientation plan and follow-up

According to the interviews, ABC Vaasa has an orientation form and a pattern, but they are not in use. Participants said that the way of orientation varies by age, education and the work-history of each new employee individually. Most of the respondents said that the use of orientation forms would be necessary and the way to ensure the high quality orientation. ABC Vaasa is part of the chain, which has

its own rules and regulations of the procedures, so the usage of the certain patterns would guarantee homogeneous and high-quality orientation to each individual.

All participants agreed that neither the orientation plan nor follow-up are not made with new employees. When work starts only small discussions are held about earlier work-experience and education, and after first days they are having small follow-up conversations about how the work is going, what are their feelings and their possible questions.

In this case the orientation plan is not made before the work starts or after it. This was a discussion topic when the interviews were conducted; the personnel were advocating this to be a necessary thing to do before starting a work-career in a new organization. Without this plan, the new employees may not know which the goals and targets they should try to reach.

The participants commented that the orientation should start even before the actual work starts, to get the maximum advantage out of the new employee. This means that the first orientation days would be more effective and practical, as mentioned earlier. New workers will get familiar with the work environment, work tasks and other co-workers, but monitoring is not as efficient as it should be. The entire work community should be monitoring and helping the new employee more, this helps the new employee to get into the society more easily and faster. Summarizing the work performance together with the mentor and the new employee is necessary, before the decision about the future is made. This decision concerns the continuing or terminating the work contract after the trial time.

10.1.2 Being involved in orientation

Everybody, except for one participant said that the being responsible/ involved in the orientation is a positive issue, which needs to be done with patience and good motivation each time. The one, who disagreed, said that it is better to have a manager to be responsible for orientation, so the quality of the orientation would be

always the same. In addition to this, if there are several persons involved in the orientation, standardizing it would be almost impossible.

10.1.3 How to prepare for orientation

The participants said that being prepared for the new employees means practical things, e.g. to collect the orientation materials and look for suitable work clothes for the new employee. In some interviews it turned out that the information about the beginning of the orientation process, does not always reach the mentor. The mentor might not know about it even a day before the new employee starts working. This thus may cause stressful situations and negative attitudes towards orientation since it would be necessary to have enough time to prepare for mentoring.

10.1.4 Difficulties and challenges of orientation

Numerous difficulties and challenges of orientation were mentioned, but one shared opinion was the **lack of time**, which creates pressure for the mentor and for the new employee. The mentor needs to handle his/her own work tasks concurrently with the orientation tasks, and after a short period of time the new employee should adopt a role of being an independent worker among others.

Another commonly mentioned challenge was the **language issue**, because some of the new workers are promoting themselves to be bilingual, but in real work situations with the co-workers or with the customers, the person's language skills are not reaching the required level. **Co-operation** was also mentioned as a one difficulty in orientation. The communication inside the unit should be active and the co-operation fluent.

Also some comments were made concerning **motivation**; the new employee gives the frames for orientation, if the person is willing to learn and is self-motivated, the orientation is effective and the new employee will be a part of the work com-

munity faster. Also the motivation stays high, when the work performances are inspiring but not too difficult to handle.

10.2 New employees

New workers seemed to know a great deal of the organization's visions and goals, but in this kind of huge organization all the small details were not clear. Mostly the new employees seemed to be satisfied in the company and their work itself, but of course there were some small drawbacks under discussion. Comments about the first day and how they experienced the first day to succeed were positive and concentrated on small details, instead of describing the orientation methods in a bigger scale or not to mention improvement suggestion of orientation. In this kind of research those improvement suggestions and ideas for developing the organization play a vital role.

10.2.1 Experiences and expectations of the orientation day

The expectations of the new employees were mostly full-filled. They commented that it was comprehensive day with much information. The employees were able to ask questions from the manager and to get direct answers. The length of the orientation day was also long enough to have time to internalize the functions of the organization.

10.2.2 Orientation materials

The comments about orientation materials were only positive, although one participant commented that the materials could have been given already at the orientation day, but others got the materials at their first day at work. But overall the employees felt that the amount and the content of the orientation material were comprehensive. More important they felt discussions with the mentor and practical guidance to be important. It is vital to have somebody to ask while working at new tasks.

10.2.3 Orientation plan

The conversations between the mentor/manager and the new employee are rather short. Participants said that small discussions are held, but only briefly about the employee's back-ground and upcoming work tasks, but not about future's duties, learning styles or the wishes the new employee may have. One participant said that the orientation plan has been made together with the manager, but obviously this is not a practice, because no one else has given similar statement for this to be done. Some of the employees felt that the practicing time is too short and being a full-member of the work society takes place almost straight after couple of working days. Measuring the performances is not functioning as it should; the management, the mentors and the new employees are not having discussions about how the work tasks are executed. They may have small chats about what the feelings are concerning the tasks, but actual measuring is not done.

All the participants described and understood that orientation is a process, not just a bunch of papers and that the duration of it is much longer than those two first days when the mentor is following them, which are called "orientation days". Also they said that the new employee's willingness, attitude and own initiative towards the work are the only ways to guarantee a successful orientation. If the new employee does not have the motivation or it is not responsive, it is impossible even for a great mentor to guarantee a successful orientation process.

10.3 Developing the orientation

There were many ideas for developing the orientation process. One mentioned was co-operation with schools, where students could do their training at ABC Vaasa and after four weeks of training, if the work performances have been accepted the person would be able to enter into employment with KPO and ABC

Vaasa. The orientation period for a new employee would be long enough to get adjusted to the work, and for the employer it would be a cost-saving operation.

Also under discussion were the frames for orientation. There should be a certain plan, which needs to be followed every single time when orientation is implemented. The person who is mentoring brings one's own character in orientation, but the approach for work stays similar each time and the work performances stay stable. An old idea came up to use appointed mentors again, which would be a good way to guarantee highquality in orientation process. Those educated appointed mentors, would be trained in how to be involved and responsible for the orientation.

Many comments were made about starting the orientation even before the actual work performances begin. The orientation process should start already when hiring a new employee, and the self-study orientation materials and instructions for the work should be given before the work begins. Because the time for orientation is so limited, self-study is vital. The two first orientation days at the work, would be much more effective and the new employee could put the knowledge straight into the practice.

11 CONCLUSION

ABC Vaasa's form of orientation is a mixture of several forms of orientation, which have been explained in the theory. The entire work community is part of the orientation, but named mentors are still given. The new employee will learn by following a mentor while the role of the new employee is a vital: being motivated the learning process will be more fluent and easier. Based on the answers of mentors; Model orientation would be the best orientation form in this organization, the aim of which is to standardize the orientation with certain patterns. The entire organization would be involved and responsible for the orientation to succeed. Also the orientation materials should be broad and comprehensive.

Many times orientation is done under pressure, and expectations towards the new employee may be too high. Often the learning process has not even begun when the trainee is left alone in the unit, which may cause distress for the new employee and interfere with the learning.

As mentioned ABC Vaasa does not have an actual orientation follow-up pattern in use. Manager or other members of the work community may ask about the work and overall feelings, but management/mentors do not have a meeting with the new employee after orientation, this is caused by the lack of time and HR resources. Also it is possible that the work society is not committed to the orientation and unwilling to develop it. This has been experienced for instance with task cards, which are not followed by the co-workers and they have not been encouraging the trainees to active learning. The general thought among the personnel has been that the one, who is able to perform according to the standards at the beginning of the work life, is a suitable employee. If the work performance has been poor, they have not even tried to teach the trainee.

Only with good mentors or enthusiastic new employees a successful orientation cannot be guaranteed. The entire organization needs to be involved in orientation process and try to increase the motivation of others. A successful company needs people to support and help other co-workers to do their best every day. This should be a guide-line for the company and for the personnel, regardless of a person's role in the company.

11.1 Improvement suggestions

As the research indicates; taking on students for internships in the organization allows an opportunity for a student to develop, and teaches the real practices in working life. Educational institutions can be useful also when developing the organization's functions. Co-operation with schools would decrease the personnel costs, the company would save money and get free work-force for the training period. The given effort would be paid back when it is possible to recruit the student after the training period. After this training period can be evaluated if the person is suitable for certain work tasks. Students are able to show their talent and possible work relation can be committed. Orientation process with student has already begun and the strengths and the weaknesses are shown and the working will be fluent. As mentioned, orientation process needs constant development and students can give useful feedback and innovative ideas on how to improve the orientation itself.

In addition appointed mentors were mentioned in a research, but actually there are not mentors who are specifically chosen and who have been trained. Orientation processes should be carefully described and followed with good patience; the person responsible for orientation should be committed to the orientation process and should have wide knowledge. Therefore mentors should be able to participate in

the education and training aimed at mentors, thus they would know how to teach and motivate the new employees.

The third development idea was to start the orientation process before the actual work performances begin. As mentioned earlier, self-study and motivation are vital, and giving an opportunity and encouraging the new employee to be an active learner, the orientation process will be smoother. For example, it would be possible to give the hand-outs for new employees to study some simple work tasks and details at home. This means that there should be somebody responsible for the orientation materials, updating them and having them available for disposal. Nowadays information should be available around the clock so maybe in the future it would be possible to have a web based program where to search information online about the work tasks and details about the organization overall. Also maybe for example video clips about some simple work performances would be possible to have.

The importance of doing the orientation plan and the orientation follow-up with every work member was also under discussion. There are matters which could be improved for example by making the orientation plan carefully it would clarify the aims and targets which need to be reached. Also by following and measuring the orientation process a successful recruitment after the training can be guaranteed.

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