



Turning negative changes into effective renewal: Improving and developing information management processes and practices.

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This thesis aims to address the negative changes that have occurred in the department of Information Management in the municipality of Kirkkonummi within its past 5 years of operation; what are the main causes for the change, what courses of action the department has gone through to adapt to the change, how mending of the rising issues has begun to affect the department, and what further methods and actions can be used to bring forth more positive change. The results of the thesis are the situation analysis, the implemented changes, and the proposed future courses of action for the department.

To accurately reflect on the experiences of the workers and the reality of the situation, opinions and data have been gathered from individual workers in the department to reach mutual conclusions on the existing negative changes that have occurred over the past years, as well as the currently implemented changes and positive changes proposed to implement in the future. The data that has been gathered forms a qualitative approach, in the form of conversation with colleagues, experiential learning, and a written work diary where a topic of improvement was chosen weekly to be documented and analysed to develop solutions that create a more sustainable and functioning work environment for the department and customer service team members.

Keywords: renewal, negative to positive, information management, work sustainability, diary,

Contents

1	Situation Analysis.....	7
2	Diary.....	8
2.1	Week 1 Self-sufficient work	8
2.2	Week 2 Customer Service	11
2.3	Week 3 Work Environment Efficiency	14
2.4	Week 4 Documenting processes	16
2.5	Week 5 Team Coordination and Task Delegation	19
2.6	Week 6 Leasing	21
2.7	Week 7 Stress management and work motivation	24
2.8	Week 8 Self Management	27
3	Implemented Solutions	30
4	Proposed Future Solutions	31
	References.....	32

1 Situation Analysis

The Information Management department of the municipality of Kirkkonummi is responsible for the internal information technology services which support the work of all the other departments in the municipality. Being a socially funded service, the department has no profit motive or monetary incentive other than keeping to a modest budget. Towards that end, the practices of the department leaned towards the most affordable solutions in the past, such as the continuous recycling of part-time employees through government unemployment services, which resulted in the loss of talented and valuable employees as well as all the experience and knowledge accumulated by the employees as the cycle went on.

Team management had been largely undefined, with the collective leadership style leaving more to be desired in modern leadership skills. A notable discrepancy on the freedom of work existed between the permanent and temporary workers, prevalent in the freedom of choosing working hours and how remote work was set as a standard condition for the permanent employees and practically forbidden for the temporary employees. The standard of leadership deteriorated and grew uncoordinated due to permanent employees being busy with their own areas of delegated responsibilities and years of fatigue from the responsibility of teaching the cycled employees, so temporary employees for at least the past two years were largely left to learn the job and complete their responsibilities independently with partial supervision.

In recent years due to changes in Finnish law and governmental structure, the department had to change their hiring practices, since the same temporary employee rotating cycle was no longer viable. Government wage-subsidized work would no longer count towards employment requirements for unemployment benefits, and subsequently the nationwide operations of assisting unemployed people find work that qualifies the employment requirements changed from the responsibility of the state to the responsibility of the municipalities. This had led to hasty and undefined hiring philosophies that overtime deteriorated the operational function and processes of the department. After some time, the retirement of two experienced workers and the firing of three within a couple of years had caused gaps and loss in experience and knowledge that hadn't been fully prepared for in time.

The Corona pandemic marks an obvious starting point for the problems that have occurred in the department, with wide range of effects on how people worked and were able to sustain their working ability. Society changed in major ways, which has unspoken effects on how its effects still linger, and many of the personal problems of the employees that are left unmentioned in this thesis can be largely attributed to greater societal problems that plague the world today.

2 Diary

2.1 Week 1 Self-sufficient work

Monday

For Monday I had a scheduled leasing-swap for Kartanonranta school, but the scheduling of the team meetings overlapped with my plans, so I informed the team leader to hold the meeting earlier so we would have time for all the work. As we held our first team meeting, we made sure the technology in the Kirkkonummi-Hall would be operational for the municipality council meeting that would be livestreamed later that evening. Weeks prior I was ordered to participate in the meeting as IT-support till around 18:30.

The leasing-swap was completed with my colleague, and we had a conversation on the requirements needed by the people responsible for the leasing-swaps, which is me. We agreed on the sluggishness of the response time and the lack of cooperation from the customers, which requires the worker to be able to juggle many jobs at once, and to be able to prioritize case by case and work while considering the whole scale of the operation.

The afternoon was spent working on figuring out the rest of the leasing list and how far we think we can get before the end of the quarter. We had a meeting with the whole team regarding the vacations and strength of the workforce during the summer breaks, and I was informed that I would be largely alone at work next week, after midsummer.

We had a free lunch as did the municipality politicians, after which we oversaw the beginning proceedings of the assembly and made sure the customers computers and accounts worked as they should.

Tuesday

For this day I had one item on my schedule, the leasing-swap for four computers at the library building in Masala. I started the morning with making sure the computers were up to date in the device registry before I left for my scheduled appointment. I had anticipated problems with the installation of the AURORA-IO program, so I called up and got the IT-appointee from the main library to install the programs. I swapped the computer in the youth-space of the library building where I was asked about old printers having to be swapped as well, but after

gathering all the information I informed the customer that the printer is working as it should, but if they want to have their printer added to the printer server, they will have to make a new ticket request for it. I was also asked to bring more of the carton containers which the computer docks come in for the summer camp children to make their own "tortoises". I scheduled a drop-off of them for the next day when I would be going past the library building.

When I got back to the office after the library visit had stretched over by almost 2 hours, I made all the necessary changes to the device registry and prepared the carton containers for tomorrow's drop-off.

Wednesday

My original plans for the day changed after trying to reach a customer for 3 hours; after finally answering, they informed me that the leasing swap would not be able to be carried out. I found another task that I could do instead of my original, so I could still take the carton tortoises to the children's summer camp. Upon arriving back at the library, I was given a lot of small tasks that they didn't want to bring up to me yesterday, so I installed a couple of IPP-printers and assessed the problems with the computers, informing what solutions would work when the sick-leaved staff returns, and fixing what I knew how.

From the library building I went to Nissniku school where I removed 3 computers and their peripherals from the teachers' lounge. I journeyed back to the office and processed all the computers and old equipment. I had a discussion with my colleagues about how the cost center (Kustannuspaikka) would handle items that come in broken by the customer, and we realized that any computer that is broken by the customer must be bought by the customers designated cost center. We also had a small discussion with the boss about the coming weeks, how many employees would be vacationing and when each of them would arrive back at work.

Thursday

This was the last day before most of the staff begin to go on their summer vacation. I was taught how to make new accounts via a tool into the active directory and briefed on tickets/cases that will likely be advancing forward next week. I had lunch together with my colleagues and for the rest of the day I prepared my ticket list by changing the leasing-cases which would not be completed this quarter into Q2 to Q3 and taking tickets for myself that would likely be advancing next week.

Friday

Midsummer's eve, Day off work

Week 1 analysis

Self-sufficiency refers to the state of being able to produce or sustain something independently, without relying on external sources or imports (ScienceDirect Topics, n.d.).

The subject of self-sufficiency is a long-debated topic that has its roots in ancient Greek philosophy, where the subject was held in high regard and developed alongside other philosophies and became incorporated into many of them, most famously stoicism. The theories and applications of self-sufficiency evolved, but only in recent history studies have been published regarding both the potential benefits and the harms of pursuing self-sufficiency at your work and home, and even politics. And there even exist arguments that claim self-sufficiency to be a myth or a misconception. Quoting Kenneth Keniston (1977); "The myth of the self-sufficient individual and of the self-sufficient, protected, and protective family tells us that those who need help are ultimately inadequate. And it tells us that for a family to need help—or at least to admit it publicly—is to confess failure. Similarly, to give help, however generously, is to acknowledge the inadequacy of the recipients and indirectly to condemn them, to stigmatize them, and even to weaken what impulse they have toward self-sufficiency."

Kenneth's theory of the myth of self-sufficiency makes a compelling argument for why a worker can sabotage themselves by striving too hard to be independently successful at their job. The theory does not argue that a worker is supposed to not strive to be self-sufficient or as competent as they can be, but instead a worker should work to broaden their knowledge and skills with the help that is available to them and not reject that help out of fear of other workers and employees acknowledging a lack of skill and knowledge of the worker.

Older studies address the topic in a broad sense, but more modern studies have begun to directly address the various and complex issues which plague different occupational fields. Focusing on modern studies in the field of IT customer service; studies, theories, and practices have been developed which address inefficiencies and provide structure to the processes of a department. The upheld improvement of Information Technology systems and Standard Operating Processes maintains the availability of data and provides ways to analyse and predict potential changes so that they can be prepared for in time to change the outcomes of the labour. (Nugroho & Fianty, 2023)

I try to keep track of how my knowledge and skills evolve as I keep learning more about my job, and I am quite confident in asking for help from others. I can be a little bit stubborn in trying to figure something unfamiliar out by myself at first, but if I admit to myself that I don't know how to proceed, I never feel shame towards myself, but gratitude for the person who helped.

2.2 Week 2 Customer Service

Monday

I began the week by preparing myself mentally to be the only customer representative at work this week since both other customer service representatives were vacationing after midsummer. I talked with the newly employed server administrator about the customer service needs this week and about how our midsummer went. He brought up that another council meeting would take place at 16:30 which needs an IT-representative to help, so I volunteered for the job. The traffic of customers was quite light, there was only one occasion where I was dealing with two customers, but I handled it well by accessing which customer could be dealt with faster and assured the waiting customer that I would return to them in a small moment.

I answered the door and phone calls through the day, completing tasks which the vacationing coworkers had left me, like surrendering computers to new workers and taking a computer to be inspected and repaired. I informed my colleagues about wireless network issues which they set out to fix. I attended the council meeting, making sure the video projection technology worked correctly and ended my day.

Tuesday

This day was very quiet; there were only 3 phone calls and 2 in person visits. I kept the ticket system open on my computer so that I would be able to immediately address any new tickets I could solve. I made sure I was following the best procedure with the tougher tickets, asking for help and getting educated by the system experts. I had talks with the postman about the Chromebook leasing-pickup, but I am not the person directly responsible for that department,

so I helped how I could and directed the postman to talk with my colleague when he arrives back from vacation.

Wednesday

Somehow this day was even quieter than the last, I had to scrape by to get any tasks for myself. I had the ticket list open and refreshing by itself, so I was quick to answer any tickets that were submitted to us. I reserved some Chromebooks for the central library, learned a little bit of troubleshooting relating to outlook add-ons, and served a customer's computer peripherals. Since I had so little work, I also told the peripheral customer to sort out any other things she may have, and to ask her co-workers to also take care of any needs they have relating to IT-support. The customer came back later with a colleague to get rid of their e-trash and to get new computer mice. I served a customer who came in to report that two computers at their workstation have lost their monitor signals and must be fixed, preferably this week. I scheduled a time for me to call them the next day at 10:00.

Thursday

The phase of work today was largely the same as the day before. Yesterday I was asked to prepare a second workstation for my colleague, so I started my morning by installing the computer. I kept my ticket list open and completed all 3 tickets which were very general and easy questions. I called the customer around 10:00 three times, only getting an answer with the third call. I got information from him that the computers might be working again, so I gave them advice on how to proceed with trying to troubleshoot the problems with the other computer which remained with a black screen.

Today the customers were largely concerned with returning their phones and computers at the end of their job contract, so I asked and got slight clarification on how the cost center would be handled in situations where the contract on the computer is shorter than a year.

Friday

The morning was somewhat busy, I had phone calls relating to VPN problems, video saving/recording issues, and Microsoft Office license issues. I delivered to my colleague the computer he ordered the day before to work as his static workstation. The day was very quiet

as usual, there were almost no customers in the afternoon, so I took liberty to research and write the analysis of this week's work.

Week 2 analysis

This week I was left as the only full-time customer service representative on the job, since most people started out their vacations after midsummer. I took this as an opportunity to focus on our customer service practices and figure out what the customer experience journey is like for the customers of the Kirkkonummi municipality IT-department.

The new customers/employees of Kirkkonummi municipality are usually introduced to the IT-services when the customer comes to pick up their work computer from the IT-department. During this interaction it is important to make the customer feel that they can rely on the IT services for any help they may need relating to information technology. The first impression affects how they deal with issues that arise while working for the municipality. Some workers do not get to visit our department at the start of their job, so it's important to maintain an active and eager customer service experience so the employer or colleagues of the new employee understand that they have good quality service at their use.

The customer service experience we try to provide at the department emphasises "post-purchase" support, though technically there is no real "purchase" point in our customer experience, so the occasion when a customer receives their work computer at the start of their job fills this role. Most of the work in the department occurs as "post-purchase" customer support, which is regarded nowadays as a very effective strategy to bolster business impact, competitive edge, and to gain an advantage with transformative and personalized support, as argued by Sheth, Jain & Ambika (2023)

Certain customers may grow attached to their customer service representatives that they have most interacted with, and they often tend to seek out their favourite representatives for support. The customer service representatives may slowly begin to learn about and get to know the different customers, which allows them to adapt their service style in many ways. A representative may learn to change from a formal tone and language to a more informal tone and language, this can make the customer support experience more comfortable and less stressful for the client.

The customers' journey ends when they leave the job and return their computer to the IT department. It is still important at the end point to ensure the customer is confident and comfortable leaving their computer with us, the customers can have a lot of concerns about deleted data and accounts being removed from their computer. It is important to clarify that

they have no responsibility over that part of the process, and that the drop-off is very simple and safe, as everything is left for us to do our job from then on.

2.3 Week 3 Work Environment Efficiency

Monday

Sick leave

Tuesday

My colleagues have started to come back to work, but the flow of customers is still very slow. I didn't get to handle a single call or physical visit from a customer. My colleague and I checked out on some of the last leasing Chromebooks that had been brought from the schools, and we realized that there were computers other than ones that were on the list, and after discussing it with the postman, it was revealed that the computers were not labelled for pickup, so the postman had taken all computers he saw in the pickup-location. We determined it was the fault of the school caretaker for not properly labelling or packaging the computers. We had to sort the computers ourselves and send the rest back. We agreed with my colleagues that we would send feedback to the school on how the job should be done at their end, so that their work doesn't fall on us.

Wednesday

I handled one customer in the morning, but the rest of the day was silent. We completed one gig at the temporary facilities of a school that is being torn down, installing a computer and delivering items for them. I had a lab and doctors' appointment later in the day, so I left early.

Thursday

To improve efficiency at our office, I took it as my job to reorganize one of the shelves where we keep our tools and electrical equipment, like batteries and stacks of computers. The shelf

was a real mess, but I categorized all the items into groups; erikoiskoneet, käytetyt koneet lyhyt leasing/pitkä leasing, isot työkalut, pienet työkalut, tietokonetyökalut, patterit, tarvikkeet, muistitikut, levyt ja levynlukijat, saapuneet postipaketit, epämääräinen materiaali

Friday

I started the morning with printing the stickers for the shelves and began emptying the shelves from the different trays and loose items. I took my time sorting the items on the table and labelled the shelf slots in an optimal manner before returning the sorted items to the shelf. I left a lot of the miscellaneous boxes alone since there wouldn't be another place to store them. A lot of items that were thought to be lost were found and put back to use.

Week 3 analysis

A work environment is often defined by its layout, the physical environment which acts as a symbolic representation that can influence employees' attitudes and behaviours (Zerella, von Treuer & Albrecht, 2017). The layout in the Municipality IT-departments office is split into two sections, with the helpdesk having a more open and less private workspaces, while the permanent employees have higher soft walls that separate the workers from each other but still allowing for communication. The difference in office layout in different parts of the office comes from the different types of work that the two sections do. Helpdesk employees benefit from the open and connective workstations, which allows for quick and efficient collaboration between helpdesk employees. The permanent employees are involved in much more work which they themselves specialize in, leaving less need for communication and connectivity between the workers, and allowing them to work in the needed privacy of their own space.

In a study conducted in the Netherlands relating to workplace cleanliness in non-profit organizations, Horrevorts, Van Ophem & Terpstra (2018) find quote; "cleanliness has an added value to the primary process by the positive impact on the perceived productivity of employees in office environments of non-profit organizations in The Netherlands".

For an organization/department to function at optimal efficiency, all workers should channel consistent effort into maintaining collective standards of the work environment in preparedness, organizing and maintenance. An organized environment can be more efficiently maintained as a collective by individuals who hold the same or similar standards. The

collective effort is achieved when each individual worker pulls their weight and maintains the collective standards, holding themselves and others accountable fairly and equally.

Things such as the sectioning of the office space as well as the use of labelling creates rules or standards which each worker should abide by. The use of such categorization creates efficiency in the workplace by minimizing confusion and chaos in both important and menial tasks.

The categorization should be logical and practical, overcategorization and labelling can create disagreeability between workers, so it is best to plan the collective standards together with the input of other workers, thus the best working methods and compromises can be found before or soon after they are implemented.

2.4 Week 4 Documenting processes

Monday

The morning was incredibly busy for the office, we had many customers physically present at the office and on the phone, thankfully this week the customer service team are all back from summer vacation, so we handled them with ease.

We started to familiarize ourselves with the wiki page for solutions that customer service deals with on a regular basis, but we realized that we only have one admin license to add and edit any of the documents, so we came up with an alternate solution so that we may continue to do the work. We will make the instructions on word documents to be copied onto the actual wiki page by the one with the admin license.

Tuesday

The phase of work was very slow again today, there was a single phone call and ticket that I handled, and for the rest of the day I planned which kinds of instructions I would start writing. I would begin with the simple instructions which would be most helpful for new customer service members, like the retrieval of PUK codes and BitLocker codes to unlock the devices of the customers.

Wednesday

I had no phone calls today, but I took care of a ticket relating to internet issues on a personal computer, I solved the problem by plugging the computer into the wired network instead of the wireless connection. I made instructions for the Chromebook borrowing system.

Thursday

Today we did the final count of the Chromebooks before the leasing pick-up, there seems to be still some improvements to be made when it comes to the processes at the school's end. The computers are packed well enough, but also computers other than those that are getting picked up by the leasing partner are sometimes in the boxes, which causes confusion and extra work for us. Instructions could be written for the schools on what things to avoid when sending leasing-related packages. I wrote instructions on how to order a warranty service for a broken computer and ordered the warranty service for a computer.

Friday

No customers came in today, but the repairman from yesterday's service request came in and repaired the computer. I contacted the broken computers customer to inform them that the computer is ready to be picked up. I helped a customer sort out their office license problems, but the day was close to over, so I explained the situation the best I could and advised them to call again next week.

Week 4 analysis

The documentation processes and projects of the IT department of the municipality of Kirkkonummi have been deteriorating over the recent years, evident in the messy outcomes and out of date documentation. Instead of cleaning out old information, all instructions and installation packets made on each topic are kept amongst each other, making identifying the up-to-date information a challenge, mostly only identifiable by the date of which the information was last changed.

This study has not found a definitive core explanation for why documentation has been neglected for years, but the reasons are very likely compounding, since many issues could explain the larger problem.

The cycle of hiring temporary employees for 8 months at a time created a consistent need for the workers to be taught the job, which relied heavily on in-person lessons and tutoring instead of having clear written instructions that the temporary workers could lean for support on. This overtime caused major fatigue in the permanent employees, which took away time and energy from the documentation processes and projects, resulting in them being barely upkept.

Documentation has been conducted in the department as an individual effort, with little communication when it comes to setting standards and practices for consistent documentation efforts. The lack of structure in the process has led to further neglect, causing a snowball effect to occur and slowly turning into a larger problem that became too evident once the department lost most of its staff due to retirement and firings.

The importance of consistent documentation in the field of Information Technology is paramount for the adequate continuing of processes and operations, especially in cases where the people who hold the knowledge are unavailable temporarily or permanently. The knowledge accumulated in the field of IT is often very specific and highly situational, and in a small department like the IT department of the municipality of Kirkkonummi, the areas of responsibility are often upkept by one employee, which leaves vulnerabilities in the efficiency of the department.

There are many methods and purposes for documenting work processes. The most crucial types of documentation that are done in the IT field are things such as network architecture and static IP listings, but many forms of documentation serve as a form of education or instruction for future system administrators, trainees, interns, and customers of the department. The procurement of detailed instructional material shortens and mainstreams the consistent issues which come up in the work environment, cutting down on duplicative work, and the instructions serve as training material which can be added into an instructional book which all system administrators and supervisors can take and add information to.

(Atlassian, 2025)

This will shorten or remove gaps in knowledge between employees, making everyone smarter, increasing the work efficiency between areas of expertise, and adding to the sufficiency of each workers' skills.

2.5 Week 5 Team Coordination and Task Delegation

Monday

The senior systems administrator came back from sick leave today, and he let us know that there'd be a lot of computers needing to be installed this week, and to have all 264 computers installed before the end of the month, in two weeks. We talked with the team about how we would handle the workload, especially considering the remote work that will be done by some workers. We came up with a goal to get 30-40 computers (three to four batches ten at a time) done each day to meet the deadline on time. We considered the remote work and assigned the remote worker to man the customer service phonenumber so we can complete out work with minimal interruption. I wrote down instructions on how to disable offline files from the Synchronization Center. We had lunch together with the customer service team.

Tuesday

I received a call from a former elected representative and handled their distress about how much more difficult and less supported the elected representatives are in the municipality's IT environment. I let her know that much of her concerns are due to security issues.

The 264 computers arrived in the morning; I took the task of going to the loading bay to receive them and to do the manual labour to unpack them and transport them to the department office. We further planned how we would complete the job of installing all 264 computers, and we came up with a process which will keep us busy and with little to no downtime. We would unpack the computers in the storage, sticker the identification number onto the computer, and update the identification number on the excel sheet. We would unpack 5 or 10 at a time and aim to complete 30-40 a day.

At the end of the day, I took away the office waste to the garbage collection as well as picking up the empty packaging from the loading bay.

Wednesday

The office had a cleaning scheduled from 15:00 onwards, so we kept the day an hour short. To prepare for the cleaning crew, we cleaned the office to the extent that they could do a

thorough cleaning of the space, and we ordered all the garbage electronic equipment to be disposed of by Kuusakoski recycling company. We had talks with the senior systems administrator about how the department is looking for new solutions which will result in some changes that could result in a decrease in required employees, such as externalizing the leasing swaps to an outside company or externalizing most customer service jobs to outside companies.

Thursday

The automated network installation of the computers was delayed for Friday at the least, so we began to get ahead of the work by unpacking the computers from the packaging and sticking the computer ID numbers on them. We calculated that by readying 45 computers a day, we would have the 264 computers ready for installation in 6 workdays. We worked out a method of unpackaging which involves two people, unboxing at a rate of 25 computers an hour, so the unpackaging every day would take less than 2 hours total. A third worker was left to man the phones as to not disrupt the unpacking process. At the end of the day one of the permanent employees briefed us on any situations which may come up which he is responsible for while he is gone.

Friday

The automated installation of the 264 computers is still troubleshooting, so we continued to unpack computers, so we'd not fall too much behind schedule. The recycling company came in and took the electronic waste away; I delegated myself for the job.

We unboxed 31 more computers to be ready for installation.

We had discussions with the senior systems administrator on how and why certain parts of the automated installation are not working or taking too long, some random programs are getting stuck somehow, even though the programs are installing themselves onto the computer.

This problem could set our schedule back severely, so we agreed to keep up the unboxing so that it won't slow us down any further. We also went through how these installations will have to be done more carefully, and in which steps.

Week 5 analysis

The leadership dynamic of the customer service team is largely independent, monitored by our peers, and overseen and supported by a team leader, the newly employed system specialist. The team leader has placed his trust in us after observing the competence of each worker and how we perform our delegated tasks, which has led to us customer service representatives being given a significant amount of self-determination with their own pace of work.

In a study regarding improving responsibility and role clarity in project teams (Koivisto, 2025), it is stated that for teamwork to work effectively, the team needs to have clear role definitions, assigned responsibilities, and effective communication between team members. In a complex work environment, efficiency issues rise quickly when the team isn't clearly defined, with unclear and incomplete delegation and responsibility, inconsistent communication, lack of coordination, and reduced accountability rising as the main problems of an unorganized team.

The customer service representatives have a shared responsibility of completing all the tasks that arrive at the helpdesk, but each customer service representative has certain areas of responsibility that are their responsibility to uphold. Most task responsibilities are shared between everyone, which leads to the team occasionally having to strategize about how they should or must be completed. Such tasks as huge batches of computers needing to be prepared before a due date, and highly collaborative efforts such as mass-contacting customers relating to specific issues.

Individual tasks such as documentation or ticket solving also have shared effort put into them but are mostly completed independently. But some processes such as user account creation and leasing-swaps are delegated to certain employees.

2.6 Week 6 Leasing

Monday

A lot of calls have been coming in from customers who are still working at home concerning problems logging into their work computer, complaining about the account not belonging to the computer's domain. I figured the solution to be in having to re-enter the login credentials. Some customers have their account passwords expire before they are coming to

work, so I extended their passwords expiration and set a demand for them to create a new password at the next logon onto a Kirkkonummi computer.

We can finally begin the installation of the prepared computers. I took the instructions from the senior systems administrator and distributed them to my colleagues. We did an initial batch of 10 computers to see that they all installed completely and without flaws. Most of the computer installations failed and locked with BitLocker.

The leasing pickup is this week's Thursday, on the 24th, so all the previous quarters leasing computers were transported to the downstairs storage for the pick-up company.

Tuesday

The automated computer installation did not work yesterday, so we informed the senior systems administrator about the problem for him to fix. The automated installation was quickly fixed, and we were able to begin the installation process. I took away the garbage that quickly accumulated when unpacking the computers so that we would have enough space to unpack the rest of the computers.

Wednesday

I helped a customer with extending their mouse and keyboard connection from the server room to the office room, via USB cable extensions that run through the walls. We didn't have all the necessary cables to help the customer fully, but I gave advice on where to buy the cables and how to complete the rest of the cable installation themselves.

I took the role of leading the installation of the computers since my other colleagues were growing frustrated by the problems and delays. I took to inform the senior systems administrator of all the oddities and problems which kept occurring with the computers and kept the pace of the work no matter the pace and failure rate. We were able to mostly fix the installation at the end of the day, we had around 5 out of every 10 computers fail their installation, but we managed to get it to 7/10 at the end of the day. We would check how many computers would go through the installation the next day.

Thursday

We expected the leasing pickup today early in the morning, so we organized our work around the necessity of having to detach a worker to help them. The pickup crew ended up calling and arriving during the latter half of the day. I helped the crew identify the computers at the scene.

We managed to get the automated installation working well enough so that we're getting up to pace with the work. I had conversations with the new systems administrator about the likely problems with the installation of programs, discussing possible problems and solutions.

Friday

The automated computer installation is still undergoing some issues; we had developed a memory stick for diagnosing the problems yesterday and ran it on all the computers that had issues occurring. We unboxed more computers to be ready to be installed for today and on Monday.

Week 6 Analysis

The benefits of companies acquiring their computers through leasing contracts are multifaceted. The regularly renewed equipment stays modern and listed in an equipment portfolio, keeping the company up to date with the semi-automated systems. The contracts spread budgeting over a long period of time, keeping costs consistent and predictable. The devices can be insured for the duration of the contract, maintaining the health of the computers, and tax deductibles can be claimed by no VAT on the lease payments.

(Tukirahoitus Oy, n.d.)

The municipality of Kirkkonummi has upwards of 2200 computers running with a Windows operating system, and around 2400 Chromebooks for the students use. The large number of computers means that the leasing-related processes are almost always operating, with an average of 140 regular computers being swapped out quarterly, and Chromebooks being swapped out less often in bigger batches, hundreds at a time. That's more than one Windows computer being swapped out a day on average.

The IT department signs computer leasing contracts for up to 4 years at a time, insuring every Windows OS computer for 3 years. The last year or months of the leasing contract usually has

no insurance since the computers are more affordable to swap out early than to keep paying for the insurance of computers that are exiting use.

Leasing contracts are signed for other devices than just computers, such as all display screens and printers being leased for around 4 years with no insurance, and at the end-of-life stage of the contracts the devices are cashed out and bought as devices owned by the organization or department that paid for the contract.

Due to the large-scale operation with multiple points of failure, many computers also get lost or misplaced in use, so in some cases the option of cashing out Windows computers or Chromebooks is also used to simplify the process and to smooth out time consuming problems.

2.7 Week 7 Stress management and work motivation

Monday

After discussing with my colleagues about one of the libraries having a pirated version of Minecraft installed on their computers, we concluded that we would not install the same illegal version of the game to new computers they are asking for. We recommended they purchase the game license and have us install the games onto the computers at a time convenient for them.

We are still experiencing significant problems and delays with the automated computer installation, so we took the logs from many of the failed installation attempts for the system administrators to analyse. We evaluated that if the problems keep continuing as they do, we might miss the deadline for the computers to be ready, but keeping up the best pace despite the ongoing issues might not set us far off from the deadline.

Tuesday

I took the initiative on Monday to leave 8 computers, 2 less than the previous 10 to install as we left the office to go home. The computers were all successful with their installations this morning, so we kept installing just 8 at a time for the rest of the day. Overall, the success rate was greater with less computers being installed, and we began to have hiccups when we had more than 8 computers installing at times.

I informed my supervisor of how the new Windows 11 installation is failing to install some applications, and I took care of monitoring and logging the failures of all the installations.

The employees of the municipality of Kirkkonummi, our customers, have begun to come back to work as the summer holidays are finishing. The frequency of calls has begun to noticeably rise, and most calls relate to password changes and of basic computer and peripheral needs.

Wednesday

Today felt more like a typical day at the office, all three of us customer service representatives were deep in our own tasks. I took care of my first leasing gig of the quarter in the morning and in the afternoon, I visited the library to check on some printer issues. Two printers had mechanical problems which we usually don't try to fix due to the time and resource allocation it requires from such a small IT team. I recommended for them to purchase 2 new printers to replace the old. I also evaluated the problem with a computer which could not print due to its software not functioning. I informed the senior systems administrator of the problem and gave me evaluation of the situation.

The computer installations were not being run very efficiently today due to all the customer service representatives being too busy with their tasks. We recognized as a group that we were too busy to have been doing more than we ended up getting done

Thursday

We were able to continue the installations of the computers at a normal pace despite the increased workload, we seem to be able to keep to the schedule of barely missing the deadline. We seem to have found that there is a bottleneck that doesn't allow for too many computers to be installed at once, with the maximum capacity seeming to be 8 computers at a time.

We had many customers visit us in person, and the phone calls were somewhat frequent. As a team we have started to get back to the usual rhythm in the office.

Friday

As the traffic of customers is getting more frequent, we discussed with the customer service team the need to regulate the flow by enforcing the policy of the open visitation to the IT department between 10-12 o'clock. The amount of work in the department varies heavily on the time of year, so we must pace our work by directing the customers to make tickets so we can prioritize and focus on our work better.

Week 7 analysis

A study conducted in India on job autonomy by Malhotra (2024, 1315) states there to be a strong positive correlation between work-life and job satisfaction in IT workers, which aligns with prior studies on the topic, but also finds there to be only a moderate correlation between job autonomy and job satisfaction. A lower emphasis on job autonomy may be due to the field having a higher emphasis on different or more specific values, such as organizational culture and career opportunities, or perhaps due to the types of people the field attracts.

A UK study (Blake, Moore & Forster, 2024) finds that 53% of employees in the tech field have self-diagnosed themselves as neurodivergent, which is in stark contrast with the 3% of employers who self-diagnose themselves as neurodivergent. Neurodivergence covers a large spectrum of preference and behavior, and symptoms often manifest due to the environment of the workplace, which includes things such as sounds, physical comfort, social stimulus, lighting, or peripheral nuisance. A neurodivergent worker may focus more on the comfortability of doing their work rather than influencing the methods, pace, and structure of the work completed.

Three out of three members of the Helpdesk team have self-diagnosed as neurodivergent, but each member's priorities differ significantly. One prefers to control the work environment for the best comfort and maximizing hours worked so they can have free days off using accumulated overtime hours. The other prefers to have greater flexibility over the arrival time at work and the pace of work, and I would prefer to work remotely in parts of the days throughout the week to increase energy and productivity during hours spent in the office. But each of the members considers job autonomy as a matter of striving for in the department.

The Helpdesk team has a collective priority to influence the organizational culture. Having an extended lunch together twice a week in the office brings social comfort to the environment and taking greater individual and collective responsibility over our work brings stability to the pace of work and provides better outcomes, which allows us to have both a better work-life

balance as well as more job autonomy. Towards this end, during the summer and fall, the members have tried to bring more work-life balance by getting permission from the department head to allow remote work for the Helpdesk team, with the condition of having the responsibility for the quality and consistency of service and work not dropping. The implementation of remote work was successful with all Helpdesk members being afforded an equivalent of a day of remote work a week, which has boosted consistency and interplay between the members (Stanford University, 2024).

2.8 Week 8 Self-Management

Monday

The pace of work is back in full action with new employees coming to pick up their computers and returning employees getting their accounts reinstated and passwords reset.

We had a new intern join us in the office, and I took it as my responsibility to find him work, cooperate with him, and introduce him to the different processes that are ongoing in the department. I had lunch with him, so he feels accommodated. I taught him tasks first by showing the full process and then letting them do the process with me, and after I grew confident that he knew how to complete the tasks properly, I let him work independently with mild supervision.

I negotiated how we will deliver 192 school computers from the 264 computers we are trying to get installed by this Thursday. I would try to complete the job in 1-2 days, between Tuesday and Wednesday this week. I am taking the intern to help and learn about the delivery process.

Tuesday

We began the delivery of the 192 computers to the school with the help of our intern. The process went smoothly, with some minor speculation and debate on how some computers could have their delivery delayed by a day for some of the computers to go through a small update which would reduce the first login time. I interacted with the school staff cordially and delivered all the computers within the same day.

I oversaw the work of the intern's computer installations and took advantage of him by letting the other customer service members continue their work while we unpacked most of the last computers. We project that we will have all the computers installed by tomorrow, a day before the deadline.

We had such a flux of customers that we didn't have time for breaks or lunch till 14:30, after which two of us kept the day 30 minutes shorter due to exhaustion and trying to preserve energy for the rest of the week.

Wednesday

With only around 20 more computers left to be installed, I took the intern to work with me to finish installing the rest of the other college's computers as quickly as possible. We finished the installations before midday, a few hours before the deadline.

I took the intern to a spontaneous gig at a school where a customer had a problem with projecting a computer screen on a classroom touch-tv. The problem turned out to be the routing of several HDMI cables through female HDMI to female HDMI adapters at a length of nearly 20 meters. I took to listening the opinion of the intern in the troubleshooting process, and we agreed that the signal would most definitely degrade from just one adapter at the length of over 5 meters. We advised the cable to be routed through the hollow ceiling space and to use high quality cable and no more than 10 meters.

The number of tickets being created for us meant that I was occupied for most of the day completing them while taking phone calls

Thursday

The delivery of the 72 computers to the other college had to be done today, so I took the intern with me and completed it early enough to get back before the office doors would be open for customers. I negotiated with the delivery recipient on how he can come pick up the rest of the things he requested, extra chargers and the identifying stickers for the students' computers. I made sure that he would receive them today by informing my colleagues about the recipient's needs.

Schools opened today, so there were a lot of calls and tickets relating to simple issues, most often relating to customer errors. As a team we made sure we would not fall behind on any of our work, especially since we have other work processes that need to be started.

Friday

The pace of work has gone back to normal as customers have had their basic issues resolved after returning to work. We expect the phase to be inconsistent in the upcoming days as more employees will make their return.

I realized a mistake in the delivery of the chargers of the college's computers, we had not emptied the last small container of chargers into the large carrying bag, so I made sure to complete the delivery with haste, luckily the computers were not distributed to the students yet, so no harm was done.

One teacher's computer at an elementary school had issues with the dock, where the computer would not project its screen onto the monitors running through the dock. This job seemed to be computer specific since the issue followed with every dock in the school. I installed a new computer for them in the morning and made sure to deliver it the same day.

Week 8 analysis

The managing methods of the municipality IT-department had been loose and partly undefined before the change in law that forced the department to alter their hiring practices. Temporary employees had little autonomy on how they could manage their own workload due to the work primarily being delegated by the permanent employees who each held different aspects of leadership responsibilities. The retirements and dishonourable departures of the workers who held responsibilities over the processes of the department had created an opportunity for changes in the methods, structure, and responsibilities of the team.

When the Helpdesk team structure was re-established in the summer of 2025, the structure of the team had shaped into something that resembles self-managed organizations, where all employees hold some say in the processes of the department. But contrary to true self-managed organizations, middle management didn't get abolished or changed much in how it affects the Helpdesk employees, this means that the change towards self-management is more superficial and can fluctuate depending on the demand of work from projects and processes. Which means at times such as when the work demand is at its lowest, the team practically has the full responsibility of managing their work at a pace which is acceptable for the demand.

A study conducted by Doblinger (2023) found that employees in self-managing organisations had increased in many functions, such as method and decision autonomy, job crafting behaviours, error management, work engagement, and job satisfaction. After surveying the Helpdesk team on how agreeable they find the improvements listed above, all 3 members find

the study's positive findings highly agreeable and true to how the changes have occurred in the municipality IT-department. The team with collective effort continues to invest in improving and expanding their areas of responsibility, and to gain more trust and hence more autonomy within the department.

3 Implemented Solutions

The internal changes and struggles experienced by the department eventually raised a major need to improve the processes, functionality, and cooperation between the employees and leaders, as well as the department's customers. It's conclusive that the issues the department faced are numerous, cumulative, and have been developing for a long time. The department head observed the issues and was called to action by employees of the department to tackle the problems that developed due to the various changes, so the search for new employees with fitting and promising backgrounds began.

This led to the hiring of two previously hired and now returning part-time workers, one for customer service and general ICT support, and another to work as a customer service representative in charge of the end-of-life leasing contracts, as well as a new permanent systems developer as team leader for the customer service team.

With the newly hired employees, the functions of the department began to run smoother and on time due to the added manpower, but a new call to action from the department head for further change to be implemented sparked the possibility to complete this thesis work as an inhouse analysis of the various changes in the department.

To address the cumulative issues with Helpdesk team management, a new approach began to be slowly implemented by the customer service members over the months, where they took more responsibility over their work and its pace. This change kickstarted partly due to the letting go of former employees and the absence of remaining employees over the summer but was further solidified by the hiring of a new system administrator who was immediately delegated the responsibility of supervising our work. The leadership style of the new team leader leans towards a passive monitoring style, trusting the team with their own responsibilities and involving himself when the workload is high or has been backed up.

The foremost changes implemented by the customer service team came in the form of more freedom in exchange for more responsibility between all Helpdesk team members. Better communication between the small team led to more opportunities opening for them. Timetables became more flexible due to effective early communication, lunchtimes were

discussed daily to avoid collision and lack of manpower but were also often held together to boost energy, comfort, and morale. Eventually remote work became a possibility, which was slowly negotiated and trialled to test the limitations of remote work and seeing the boundaries of how it could be utilized between balancing it for the best benefit of the team members while avoiding sacrificing any of the customer service team's functionality.

An order came from the head of the department to begin actively enforcing the limitations of when customers could visit the department's office for assistance and unscheduled appointments. This change turned out to be hugely beneficial to the work of the Helpdesk team members, who had much more undisturbed time to work on the normal processes and areas of responsibility, generally making the work more manageable and easier to keep track of.

4 Proposed Future Solutions

In September a presentation was held of a commissioned project to determine possible courses of action for the future of the department; the changes to be implemented within the upcoming 5 years. The presented project's outcome recommended that in the case of outsourcing the jobs of the current temporary employees were to be gone through with, then the current workers holding the responsibilities to be outsourced should be repurposed into roles that oversee the outsourced work, because even though the hands-on areas of responsibility would be minimized, there is a necessity to oversee the outsourced work, which creates a new area of responsibility in the department. This change requires investment from both parties, as the employee must make themselves valuable to the employer, and the employer must invest in teaching the employee and trusting the future of the department into the already existing employee's responsibility.

For the department to work towards improving functions and processes, it's imperative for all the department's employees to take part in the documentation of the necessary information that should be available for all the department to use. To further move towards that goal, an encyclopaedia of knowledge will be built by the current temporary workers in collaboration with the permanent workers who hold the key areas of responsibility within the department, such areas as data traffic, server administration, automation, and cyber security. Due to the loss of knowledge along with former employees, in addition to the lack of documentation performed at the time, it is a priority to gather, grow, and centralize the scattered knowledge of the department so that it is more prepared when further changes are implemented in the future.

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