

Work Satisfaction and Team Decision Power as Fundament for Development Project Success

**Can the Project Manager through conscious attitude
and direct action create this fundament?**

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ABSTRACT

Development project success is empirically a function of both “tangible” and “intangible” factors. The “tangible” are the well known project management tools, like planning, follow-up, organization, procedures, etc. Not meeting sufficient standards for these factors give large risk for failing the project goals with respect to time, cost and quality. Fully meeting these does although not necessarily give project success - there are a number of “intangible” factors that also need to be met. In this study we claim that both the “tangible” and the “intangible” factors are important for project success. We describe the state in which a “successful” project team is, as **work satisfaction** and that the decision process in such a team constitutes a **team decision power**.

In the paper we attempt to describe these “intangibles”, and have collected data in order to investigate what type of factors contribute to work satisfaction and team decision power. Specifically we ask the question if there are contributing factors that may be common to most project successes, even despite large differences in context.

In the paper we offer a theoretical model of how these “intangible” factors can be described, based on the theory of Psychosynthesis developed by Roberto Assagioli, who first presented this theory in 1934. We describe how work satisfaction and team decision power are the results of the team going through a growth process of team member integration, by this becoming a mature team. With the results of the collection of data, which was done by doing five in-depth interviews with “successful” project managers plus discussions with team members, we confirm our theoretical model. But we also conclude, in larger extent than what we first anticipated, **that the dominant factor behind the growth process of the team is a clear and mature leadership on the part of the project manager**. Other factors, like project type, length, size, organization, project tools, cultural and political context, etc, can be significant, but vary greatly from project to project. One result of our investigation singles out leadership as the “common denominator” behind project success.

As a consequence of our finding about the importance of good leadership we also pose the question if and how leadership skills within the realm of the “intangible” factors can be consciously developed. Reflecting on which personal traits of the five interviewed project managers that seemed to have been significant, and which they seemed to have in common, points at the fact that they are the result of an inner growth process, a personal psychosynthesis, that has led to an “inner leadership”, a strong inner decision process, a realistic self-knowledge, ability to “see” and acknowledge others, and an understanding and creative use of one one’s and others’ “male” and “female” qualities (in both sexes).

We conclude that **good leadership with the respect to the “intangibles” can be enhanced by training**. We base this conclusion by induction, from the experience of a psychosynthesis therapist training and work experience that one of us (Lars Gimstedt) has. There are parallels in the psychological skills needed for leadership and other human relations focused professions, like therapy, despite at different levels. We believe that leadership skills can be enhanced by formal psychological training at a proper level, above what is already the case through job experience and “learning from life”.

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1. BACKGROUND, PURPOSE

What can explain why certain projects fail and others succeed, despite clear goals, proper project management, structured organization and procedures? One author, professor Gunnar Selin has tried to answer this question by categorizing answers from hundreds of interviews with project managers and project team members (Ref. 10, “*Reasons for Project Management Success and Failure in Multiproject Environment*”), and he concludes: One gets very different answers depending on how questions are posed. On the two questions “What do you think contributed most to project *failures*?” and “What do you think contributed most to project *successes*?” following table from the answers from a large number of project managers could be compiled:

| <u>Failure contributors</u> | | <u>Success contributors</u> | |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Organisation & management | 36.2% | Relations, team spirit | 49.8% |
| Imprecise goals | 19.6 | Clear goals | 17.3 |
| Planning, follow-up | 15.0 | Planning, follow-up | 12.1 |
| External causes | 11.2 | Limited project size | 9.8 |
| Lack of resources | 10.3 | Misc. | 11.0 |
| Subcontractors | 4.0 | | |
| Technical problems | 3.7 | | |

Professor Selin pointed out the special significance of the area “Relations, team spirit” above, and substantiated it in the following way:

“The project manager inspires the team with enthusiasm.
 Strong motivation.
 Experienced project manager.
 Common set of values.
 Good co-operation between all engaged parties.
 Good teamwork”

The authors’ experience is that in development projects, especially those with a large content of new technologies, the handling of uncertainties and risks is crucial. These uncertainties are in most cases both technical, financial, and human resource related. The traditional project management tools for minimizing these uncertainties are in most cases the instruments used consciously, as proper goal setting, planning, follow-up, organisation, procedures and routines, etc. These are and will always be a prime responsibility of the project manager. This is applicable to both time, cost and quality. These areas are what we in this paper refer to as the “**tangibles**” of project management. This has extensively been described by others.

Therefore, what this study deals with, is how the project manager also has to take responsibility for the “**intangibles**” of leading a group of people in working well together, i.e. what professor Selin above calls “Relations, team spirit”. To these “intangibles” we here also add

- the collective power of decision and how the decision process works together or despite the formalized decision process,
- the collective sense of ultimate goals for the project and the company,
- the individual sense of belonging to and contributing to the whole,
- the individual sense of personal development of skills and responsibility,
- the pride and satisfaction over working with a product one believes in,
- the individual sense of trust and security.

We here postulate, without offering proof, that the result of meeting these “intangible” needs of

the team and the individual will be experienced as **work satisfaction**.

The authors have for the larger part of their careers been involved in large development projects. Our experience is that there is a substantial amount of decision responsibility the project manager (hereafter denoted PM) has to delegate to members of the project group. The PM ability to create a working atmosphere where this delegation works well, and where people experience work satisfaction, is therefore as important as his abilities to use / delegate the use of project management tools.

This is also emphasized in most project management literature, but it is here merely noted as an important prerequisite for a successful project without deeper substantiation on what specific qualities of the PM personality are important. Even more lacking in the project management literature is whether such qualities can be enhanced by training, or by a conscious learning process where the PM for himself uncovers / develops his personal qualities / abilities.

It is the authors' experience that projects of the same size and type of technology, at the same company, with the same organisation, can differ greatly with respect to meeting the original goals. One project can have met both time, cost and quality goals, whereas a second project failed to meet all three of these goals. Although external factors having been different naturally have contributed, and in any case are used afterwards as explanations for the differences, there is not seldom a feeling among the project members that the "intangibles" of how the projects had been managed really were the largest contributors. Specifically the decision process in the management of the project has been criticized for being either "over our heads" or stagnated. Last-minute improvements of goals, information channels or organization have been of insignificant avail. The focus is almost always on the PM alone, and whilst this is probably to some extent unfair, there is enough evidence for this to motivate further investigation.

It is our assumption that the "intangibles" of the decision process in project management, specifically the personal qualities of the PM but also entities like "team spirit", "work satisfaction" contribute significantly to project success, and that they

- can be described in a comprehensive way.
- can be identified by data collection.
- can be consciously developed by formal training / self-development.

It is our belief that if the above can be done, it can be used for

- improvement of the overall qualities of the decision processes.
- increasing the competence both of groups and individuals, both with respect to technical skills and social skills.
- increasing the performance of both the PM and project group.

The purpose of this thesis paper is to make an attempt to through data collection get a grip on these "intangibles" and to map them against a suitable theoretical model, and in this way make the "intangibles" tangible. Becoming tangible, the factors behind work satisfaction can in practical work be talked about and also intentionally enhanced.

A question posed in this paper is also: are there significant similarities between different project managers of successful projects, despite different project sizes, duration, context, time period? As the reader will see, one of the *results* of the data collection (interviews with project managers) is a focusing on personal leadership, despite that the interview context consciously was based on the notion of multiple factors behind work satisfaction and team decision power.

2. ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Lars Gimstedt is presently Manager of the department Flight Control Systems, Commercial Aircraft Division at SAAB AB in Linköping, Sweden. He has a Ms degree in physics from the Institute of Technology, University of Lund. He has been working with large projects since his graduation 1972, mostly at SAAB but also at United Stirling (Stirling external combustion engines) and at Boeing (the 7J7 program). In addition to his training and experience as an engineer, he also has a three-year training as a psychosynthesis therapist at the Psychosynthesis Academy in Stockholm, and has been working part-time as this since 1992.

Jan Ivarsson graduated from Chalmers Technological University 1983 as MSc. Following his graduation, he joined GVA as offshore platform designer, specialising in structure design. In 1984 he joined the Volvo Car Corporation. Jan was the team leader in developing of the crashworthiness in the 850 project phase. He is presently Project Manager for Crashworthiness New Car Development at Volvo Car Corporation.

3. THEORETICAL MODELS

In this chapter we propose a theoretical framework, on which we have based the data collection. The theoretical framework together with the gathered interview data, has been used to propose conclusions and recommendations.

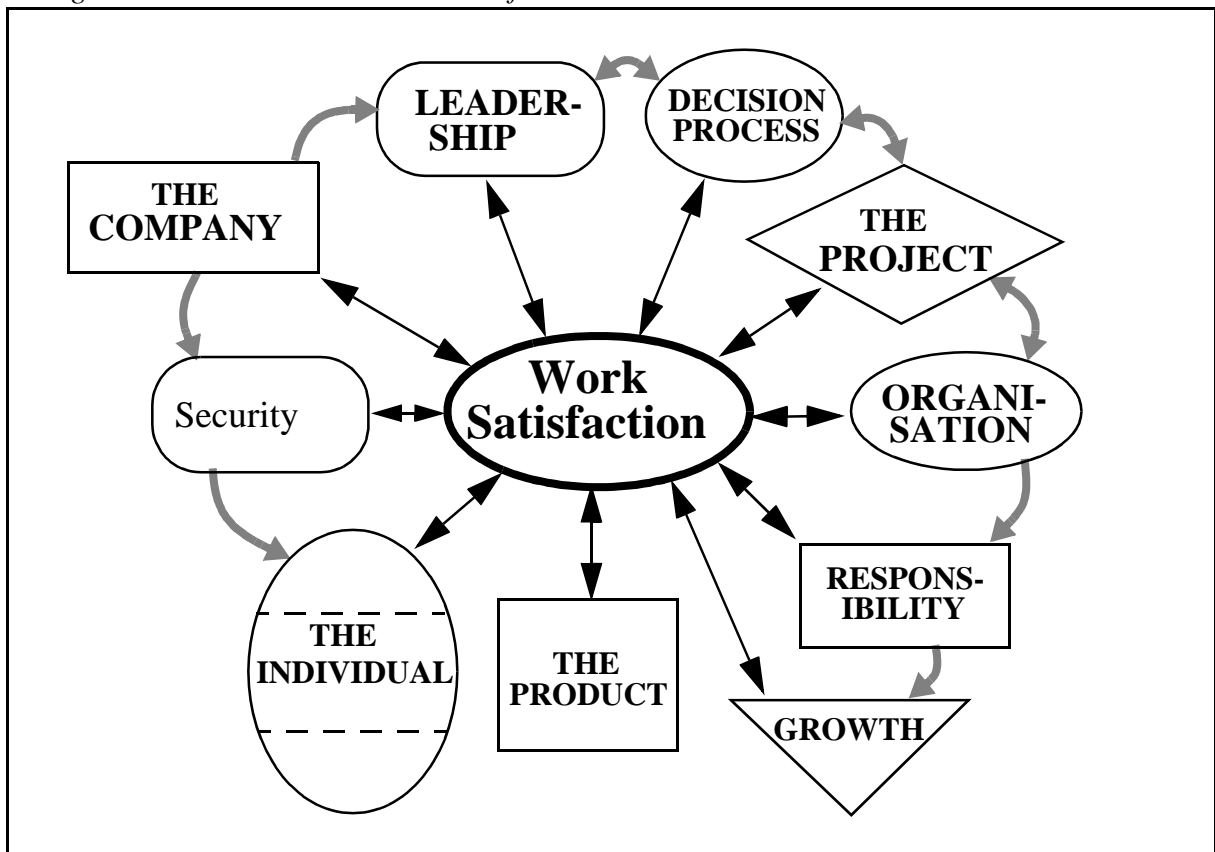
The selection of theoretical framework for a “intangible” area as the connection work satisfaction / project decision process performance can perhaps be regarded as a somewhat arbitrary undertaking. The choice of the Psychosynthesis framework, as presented below, is based on a combination of working experience (on L Gimstedt’s part), study of what has been used (or rather not used at all) in project management literature, and feedback from interviewed project managers and project team members.

3.1 Work Satisfaction

Work satisfaction, although above hypothesized as being important for good decision making and general performance of the PM and the project team, cannot be described as a factor by itself. Rather it is the *experience* of how a number of *different* factors *simultaneously* contribute to the same goal, and how this puts the person experiencing this feeling in a creative two-way interaction with everyone he / she is dealing with in connection to the work. Another term often used for this experience is having the privilege to participate in “The Flow”.

Figure 1 below is an attempt to illustrate, in the form of a “mind map”, a number of such factors, that contribute to both the individual and collective sense of work satisfaction. An elaboration of this figure was used in the beginning of the interviews (Figure 8 in part 4. ‘DATA COLLECTION METHOD’ on page 20), in order to set a generalized and unbiased framework for the discussion, such that our personal believes and ideas would not have an improper influence.

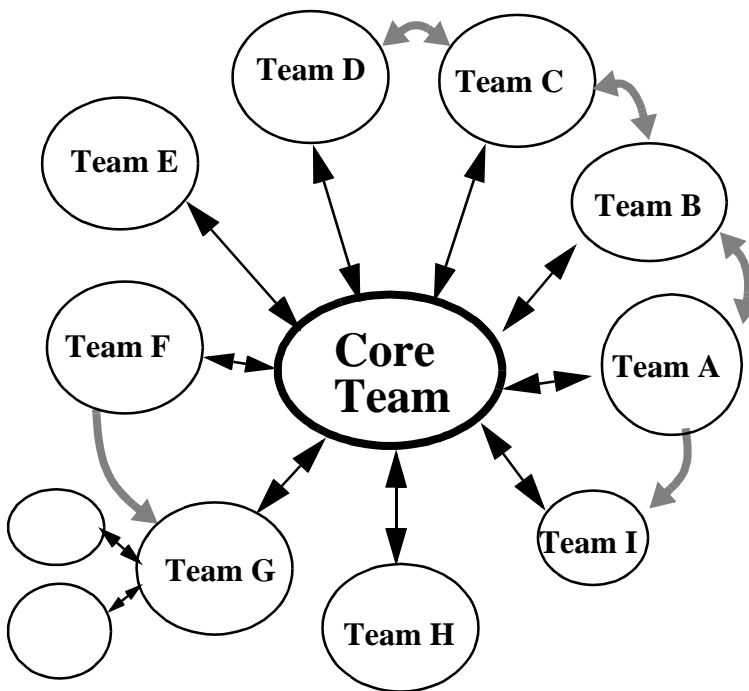
Figure 1 . Factors behind work satisfaction.



The factors dealt with in this paper will primarily be Leadership, the Decision Process, Responsibility, Growth and the Individual. One of the results of the interviews was that the information strongly pointed towards the significance of the personal leadership of the project manager, and the theoretical models have therefore been biased towards leadership and the decision process. The paper will also focus on how the company and the organization constitutes a significant context, that can be both a support and a barrier for the project manager, but how this context still is secondary in importance compared to leadership and the leader him/herself.

3.2 The Decision Process

Figure 2 . Typical project team structure, decision paths.



Project as referred to here is typically of large size. The project could be the development of a product with several interacting subsystems and components or a product with a high grade of complexity. Common for these kind of projects are that a lot of decisions must be taken to fulfil characteristics, timetable and costs. The decisions have to be taken both in parallel or in sequence. Modern projects focus on simultaneous engineering to improve performance, reduce time and investment cost. The project leader of a large project can only take decisions on major or strategic levels due to time restraint and lack of specialized knowledge (decisions within what

we call the Core Team above in Figure 2). All other decisions have to be taken locally in the subteams. In order for them to be able to take the right decisions at the proper time, it is vital that there is good communication between the Core Team and the subteams, and that the PM continuously keeps visions and goals well known, accepted, and experienced as challenging but possible. In order for the teams to be able to reach decisions without a need of excessive communication, all teams should be multi-functional, so that most of the necessary information for decisions is generated within the team.

The decision process of a project has been described in many ways in the project management literature. Most of these descriptions focus on the formal part of the decision process, and describe the process with respect to the different project management tools used.

We here are focusing on the “intangible” parts of the decision process, the “informal” parts taking place before the actual formal and open decision process. The extreme expression of when this works well is when the project group experiences how even important decisions are “taken by themselves”. This is of course is not the case literally, but due to the fact that interactions within the project team have taken place partly on a subconscious level, enhancing mutual communication and understanding. The resulting decisions are often a result of consensus.

Using a model from the theory of Psychosynthesis, the decision process can in a generalized way be described as follows. This description can be used for small or large decisions, on

different levels, for both group decisions and for individuals. (From Ref. 2, Assagioli, “*The Act of Will*”, page 135)

“The act of will consists of six sequential phases or stages. They are:

- The Purpose, Aim, or Goal, based on Evaluation, Motivation, and Intention.
- Deliberation.
- Choice and Decision.
- Affirmation: the Command, or “Fiat” of the Will.
- Planning and Working out a Program.
- Direction of the Execution.

These six stages are like the links in a chain; therefore the chain itself - that is, the act of willing - is only as strong as its weakest link. So the performance of an act of will is going to be more or less successful and effective according to how successfully and effectively each of the stages is carried out.”

Some clarification may be needed here, as Assagioli in his book directs his attention on the individual act of will, whereas we here will be focusing on *both* the individual and the team.

With respect to the setting of goals, Assagioli points on the importance of first making a thorough evaluation with respect to the **purpose** of the undertaking, such that everyone involved has a clear inner picture of “the greater whole” of the project. First after this there shall be the activation of the willing function, an alignment of each team member towards the purpose, such that there is the experience of a clear **intention**. This will then activate the “want” of the team, the organized desire towards the purpose, the individual and collective **motivation**. Not until the stages of clarifying the purpose, activating the intention and becoming wholly motivated, is one prepared to continue to the next step in the decision process. The PM has the important role of continuously keeping the purpose and the intention in the foreground, else these risk becoming obscured in the practical world of a complicated and sometimes chaotic project.

With **deliberation** is here meant

- describing the project / problem plainly, formulating alternatives, considering outcomes.
 - evaluating the possibility and the costs of achieving the goals.
 - establishing an appropriate time for action.
 - gathering of information, asking for advice, listening to one’s intuition,
- or as often expressed by experienced project managers: “*We don’t have time to hurry now!*”

Deliberation can at best constitute a creative stage of the decision process, where one investigates all possible forms of solutions or projects, where the full potential of the undertaking is uncovered.

Choice and **Decision** may sound straight-forward, but one should keep in mind that this stage contains the not always uncomplicated factors *preferences*, *sacrifices*, and the necessary *relinquishment* of alternatives. Deciding *not to do* certain things is not seldom more difficult than deciding to do something.

Choice and decision constitutes the central stage of the decision process, and should be made from the part of oneself where one is fully aware, unbiassed by inner and outer emotional pressures.

Affirmation is a stage often overlooked and can therefore be a stumbling block. With affirmation is meant the process with which the state of mind *certainty* is reached. Certainty is in most cases a combination of *faith* and *conviction*. As most non-trivial decisions have to be made in a situation of uncertainties and risks, all participants must have faith in the individuals’ and the groups’ abilities and the conviction that all the resources needed have been set in place. The project manager has the responsibility to activate and push this process, by different

techniques as “words of power” (like a football coach), as producing clear information material on “project go-ahead”, going over and repeating the goals with the team, and the like. In the affirmation state of the decision process the *emotions* should be triggered.

Planning and working out a program is in this context obvious, and the techniques for this is what most project management literature is about. The stumbling block is just that - it is so obvious that it can be tempting to go directly to this stage and skip the preceding ones, which can have disastrous results. It engages the mental and rational parts of the psyche, and it can of this reason alone be tempting to dive into prematurely for those who are very mentally oriented (like male managers).

Direction of the Execution may also sound straight-forward, but contains its own stumbling blocks. Quoting from Ref. 2 “*The Act of Will*”, page 189:

“An examination of this final stage of volitional action will reveal the fundamental error generally committed in the use of will, an error based upon a mistaken conception of its nature and way of functioning. This error consists in attempting to act by imposing the power of the will on the organs of action. Instead, the true and natural function of the will at this stage is to direct the execution, to put into operation the necessary and appropriate means for reaching the proposed objective. It does so by taking command of and directing the various psychophysical functions.”

Exchanging “the will” with “the project manager”, and “the various psychophysical functions” with “the various project team functions” makes this quote readily applicable to our present context.

If the purpose and deliberation stages of the decision process involve the “higher” psychological functions (visions, creativity, intuition), and the decision stage is the central willing function based on awareness and clearness, and the affirmation stage is emotional, and the planning stage is mental / rational, the last stage of direction and execution is more associated with the body. Bodily expression, body language, voice quality are therefore important factors at this stage.

Others describe the decision process in similar ways, for example Nils Brunsson in Ref. 4, “*The Irrationality of Action and Action Rationality: Decisions, Ideologies and Organizational Actions*”, from which following quotes are taken (with our underlinings):

“An individual has less difficulty going from decision to action than does an organization. This emphasis on individual behaviour might explain why the choosing of actions has received much more attention than the carrying out of actions.”

“What is more, the apparent irrationalities when making major decisions are not limited to insignificant decisions: people behave similarly when making major decisions on strategic issues. It can even be argued that the apparent irrationalities are largest in major decisions.”

“For decisions to initiate actions, they must incorporate cognitive, motivational and committal aspects.”

“To go from decision to action is particularly complicated and difficult when there are several decision makers and several actors and when decision makers and actors are different persons. These conditions are typical of organizations. Thus, organizations should provide motivational and social links from decisions to actions.”

3.3 The Will

The central psychological function in the decision process is of course the Will. The manner in which and how consciously the project manager uses his power of will is crucial.

According to Assagioli in Ref. 2 the qualities of the will can be described as:

1. Energy - Dynamic Power - Intensity.
2. Determination - Decisiveness - Resoluteness - Promptness.
3. Initiative - Courage - Daring.

4. Mastery - Control - Discipline.
5. Concentration - One-pointedness - Attention - Focus.
6. Persistence - Endurance - Patience.
7. Organization - Integration - Synthesis."

The will can also be described to exist of different types, with respect to inner motivation and attitudes: Strong Will, Skilful Will and Good Will. The Strong Will has predominantly the qualities 1,2 and 3 above, Skilful Will can be characterized as having the qualities 4 to 7. Good Will comes from visions, ideals, inner values, humanistic attitude, ability for empathy and understanding, trust in others.

The project manager, or any person who wants to influence others, should according to this theory strive for embodying a harmonized blend of these three types of will. Too much Strong Will can result in dictatorship, too much Skilful Will can result in a manipulative interaction with others, only Good Will can yield kind words, empathetic understanding but no action, no real results. It is important to realize that the Power of Will is in itself neutral, and can depending on *how* it is used give "good" or "bad" or even "evil" results. Hitler was probably an example of a person with very a developed strong and skilful will, but with a insanely distorted "good will".

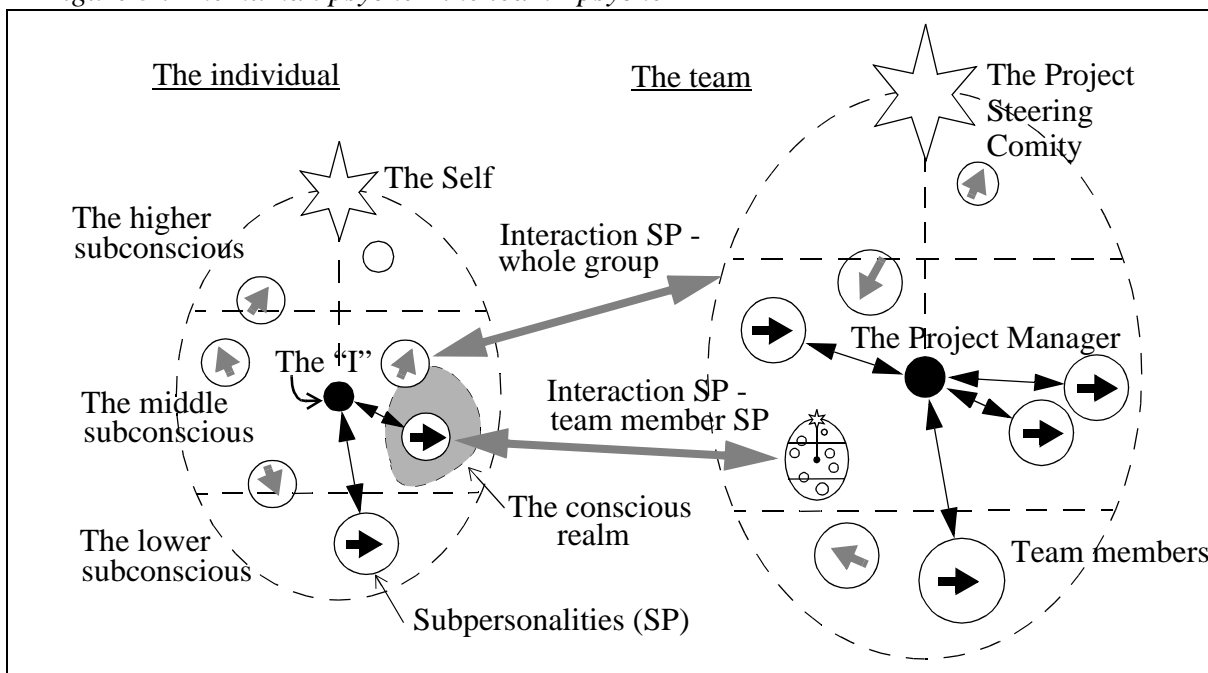
It can be fruitful to consider the Will to be a psychological function besides others, like memory, empathy, perception, rationality, etc. The latter are generally considered to be functions that can be enhanced by training, but this is generally not considered to be the case for the willing function. This is, according to Assagioli, totally incorrect. The ability to use one's willing function, and to acquire a proper balance between the strong, skilful and good will components, can be reached by increased self-knowledge and by training.

3.4 The Human Psyche - the Team “Psyche”

Both the human psyche and the “psyche” of a group can be described with a model from Assagioli’s Psychosynthesis Theory (Ref. 1), and Figure 3 below is an attempt to illustrate the interaction between a team member and the rest of the members, both individually and seen as a group. The underlying assumption is, with reference to Ref. 8 (Gimstedt: “*What is this we call the Company Spirit, really?*”):

- The psyche organizes itself hierarchically
- The psyche creates organizational structures outside itself, in a way similar to its own structure.
- The organizational organism can have psychological dysfunctions.
- The process of psychosynthesis can be applied to organizations.

Figure 3 . The human psyche - the team “psyche”



For a detailed description on this model, see Ref. 1 and Ref. 8. Here it will suffice for now just to state that the human psyche can be seen as consisting of a number of *subpersonalities* (SP). We usually think of these as the different roles we play in different situations of life (professional, friend, spouse, parent, club member, etc.), but according to the theory of Psychosynthesis they are more distinct than just roles. Subpersonalities can not seldom have large differences not only in their basic psychology, but also in their attitudes, view on the world, fears and hopes, and their individual expressions of what they want to achieve and what they need. These sometimes large differences often lead to very different outer behaviour of the individual, depending on which subpersonality he or she for the moment is identified with.

The different subpersonalities are all but one or a few at a time within the conscious realm of the psyche, the rest are within the subconscious. The subconscious realm is described by Assagioli as loosely divided in three parts - the lower, the middle and the higher. The lower contains mainly psychological material from the past, like childhood experiences, past traumas and failures, and subpersonalities emanating from this period of one’s life. The middle subconscious contains our “everyday” psychological build-up, like rational thinking, present emotional life, knowledge and skills. The higher subconscious is the psychological realm of

higher values, inspiration, intuition, creativity, visions. Subpersonalities can be “located” in any of these three realms of the psyche, and have corresponding qualities. They can be accessible with the “movable” conscious realm, or partly or unwillingly accessible, or completely inaccessible. Their influence on the person in the latter case is not seldom strong, despite being outside conscious access.

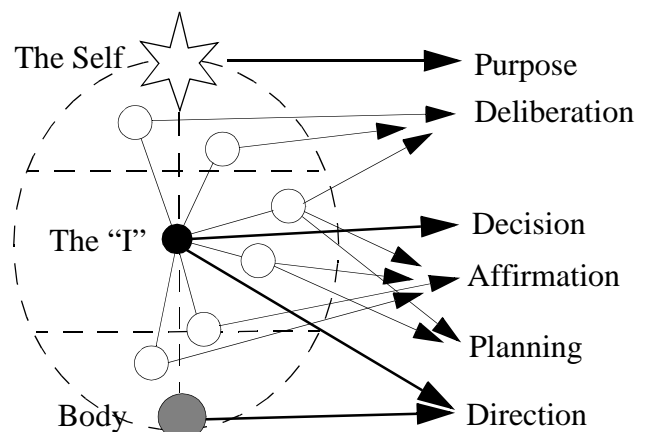
For a poorly integrated personality, the psyche is like an orchestra where the instrumentalists do not look at or don’t care to notice the conductor, with chaos and conflict as the result. Many of the subpersonalities that are hidden in the lower subconscious and have strong couplings to the past, specifically past traumas, dramatic failures, destructive family system, can act in disturbed or destructive ways. The personal psychosynthesis is a growth process, where the individual becomes aware of and becomes identified with the central function of the Will, in this model called the “I”, and then is able to accept, integrate and harmonize all the different wills of the subpersonalities, and to make all parts of the psyche to work powerfully towards a unified goal. The “I” then becomes like the conductor, who does not play the instruments himself, but by *conducting* creates music. (Non-integrated SPs are in Figure 3 denoted with a grey arrow in the ring, integrated with a black arrow. The black arrows point all in the same direction, like compass needles.) A person with an well integrated psyche and a strong sense of inner purpose and intention, we usually experience as a mature person. This does not imply that the mature person only experiences him/herself as one core personality, even if this *can* be the case, we rather say that it is the ability to be conscious of, to use in a coherent way, and to be able to “step into/step out of” one’s subpersonalities at will, that is the sign of maturity. Apart from this, mature persons come in a infinite variety regarding number of and type of subpersonalities.

Maturity also means that one is aware of the fact that one *always* communicates and interacts with other individuals and with groups via one or a couple of one’s subpersonalities, and that in this interaction the SP is *used* by the central “I”, in harmony with a central purpose and intention, and in harmony with the other SPs. (The opposite of this, where the different SPs act on their own, only triggered by the outside world, is the root of obscure or double messages, obvious inner conflicts leading to confusing and frustrating others, erratic and disturbed behaviour, etc.)

To be mature and socially skilled also means having the *non-judgemental awareness* (another ‘I’ function) that one in this interaction only communicates with a subpersonality of the other person, not the whole person, and that he or she can suffer from all kinds of inner conflicts and lack of self-knowledge. This awareness can help oneself to “see behind” the outer behaviour and to get a sense of the “true” person inside, and to be clear in one’s communication and be able to criticize the behaviour / performance without judging the person. *Responding* instead of *reacting*. Assagioli calls this ability the psychological “bi-focal vision”, where one sees *both* the other person’s subpersonalities *and* the other persons inner ‘I’ and true Self.

Figure 4 . Psyche - the decision process.

Using the model above in describing the decision process (part 3.2 ‘The Decision Process’), a crude mapping can be made according to Figure 4 here to the right. With “Body” is here meant the part of the psyche that has a strong coupling to the body and the body functions (posture, body language, voice, face expression, etc.) This mapping is valid both for the individual and the team, where the ‘I’ is the team leader.



3.5 The Team Spirit

According to Ref. 8 (Gimstedt, 1992: “*What is this we call The Company Spirit, really?*”) the same model can be used for a group of people, for example the project team. As can be seen in Figure 3, the “I” here corresponds with the Project Manager, and the subpersonalities correspond with the project team members. The role of the project manager in “forming a successful team” can in this context be described as the “psychosynthesis” of the team. Our underlying assumption is that if the PM himself has become an integrated person, he will have greater ability to integrate all the team members, although they “play different instruments”. He will then be able to, with the help of both Strong, Skilful and Good Will, and by promoting a sound decision process, conduct the team in performing masterfully.

In group psychosynthesis, as in personal psychosynthesis, the integration of the team members, the “subpersonalities”, is done with the help of building personal relations based on respect for personal differences, weaknesses and skills, and harmonizing the company’s goals and the individual’s goals in life. It is our theory that a mature group is one that has successfully gone through a process of integration and organization. It has collectively successfully gone through all the stages of the “groups’ will” (the decision process of project goals, means, costs, time plans, group rules, etc.) It will then embody what we above have called “team spirit”. It is especially important that material in the “lower subconscious” of the team, that can be unexpressed criticism, destructive “personal chemistry”, past traumas like project failures not allowed to talk about, etc., is made explicit such that it can be handled in a constructive way. Here the team leader has the important role of embodying the ‘I’ of the team.

In a group that has gone through this psychosynthesis and become a mature group, the performance will probably be at a high level, people will work with a high degree of personal responsibility, and the experience of participating in an meaningful, efficient, creative and fruitful task will give what we here call “work satisfaction”.

The prime key to work satisfaction is probably not to the larger extent based on material benefits, but rather on every persons / groups need to give, to contribute, to match the assigned responsibility, and to get positive feedback and credit for this. The larger the responsibility, and the larger the *real* contribution the person / group *knows* he / they have given from results and feed-back, the larger becomes his / their work satisfaction. So, not only the work done but also the positive feedback is crucial, and in both of these the project manager has an important role in conducting / acknowledging (indicated by the double-arrows between PM and the members in Figure 3 above).

A special case of the notions of subpersonalities has been used in theories for successful team-building, where the PM is urged to “balance” the team by consciously including team members with differently strong identifications to certain type of subpersonalities. In for example Ref. 3 R. Meredith Belbin, “*Management Teams: Why they Succeed or Fail*”, these dominant subpersonalities (or here called team roles) are called Implementer, Coordinator, Shaper, Plant, Resource Investigator, Monitor, Team Worker and Completer. Belbin’s thesis is that a powerful team is one where there is a balanced combination of these team roles, either that each team member embodies one of these roles, or, in smaller teams, that the team members can “play” more than one of these roles, depending on situation. Following table describe these subpersonalities / team roles with respect to strengths and weaknesses:

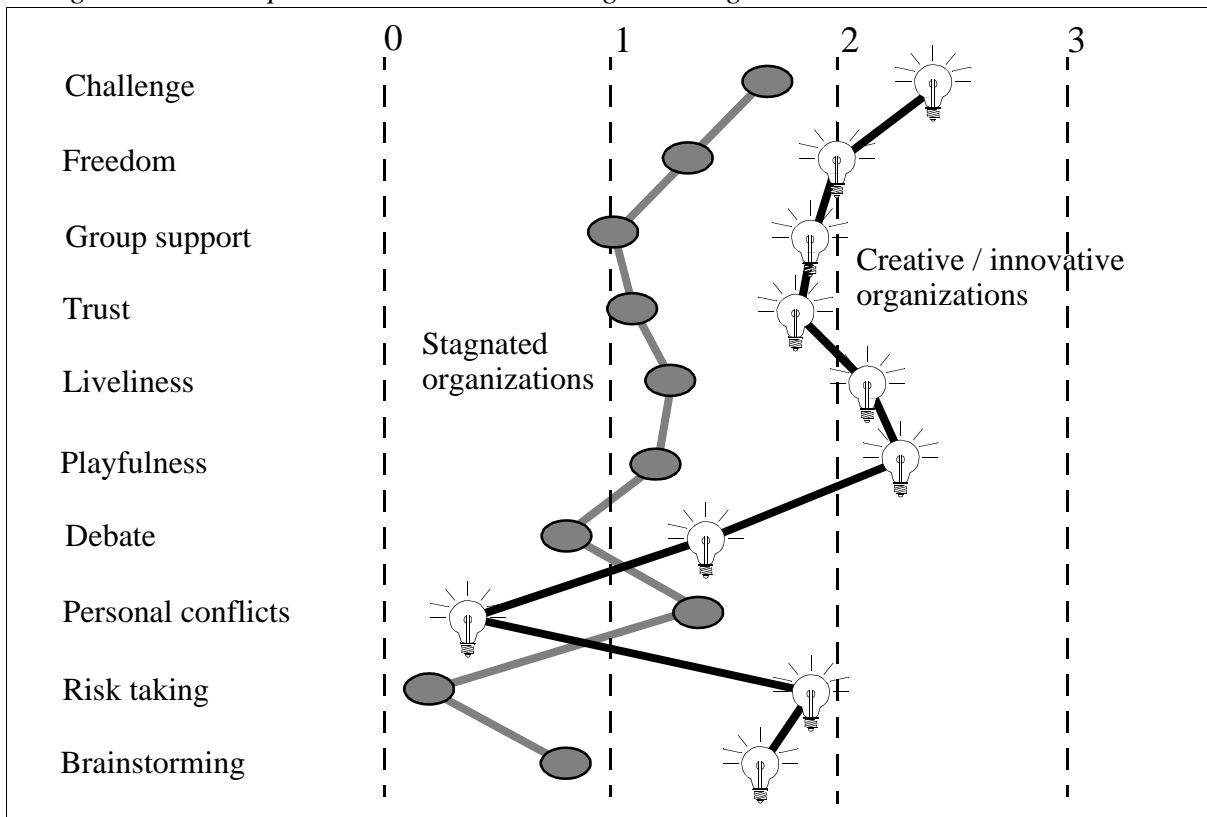
| Type | Strengths | Weaknesses |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| Implementer | Common sense, hard working, self discipline, organizational skills. | Unflexible, conservative towards new ideas. |
| Coordinator | Calm, goal oriented, non-valuing of others' contributions. | Not very creative. |
| Shaper | Dynamic, extrovert, demanding coach towards set goals. | Can be provocative, irritated, impatient. |
| Plant | Individualist, creative, deep knowledge, unortodox, inventor. | Unrealistic, unaware of practical limitations or formalism. |
| Resource Investigator | Enthusiastic, relational, triggered by challenges, curious, extrovert. | Can loose interest after first enthusiasm has levelled off. |
| Monitor / Evaluator | Discrimination, strategic thinking, non-emotional. | Can dampen others' inspiration and motivation. |
| Team Worker | Intuitive and sensitive for how others feel, socially skilled, kind. | Can be indecisive in critical situations. |
| Completer | Methodical, scrupulous, stubborn, brings work to final results. | Can worry about trifles, can over-work things, perfectionism. |

Belbin's theories have been tested, both in "practice" project teams under controlled forms, and in "real life", and have shown empirical significance. He specifically points out, that if one or more team member types are lacking in a team, the team leader or someone else in the team can embody these qualities depending on the stage of the project, if these are qualities that maybe are latent but can be "energized".

In the terms of Psychosynthesis the 'I' of a person can direct these maybe non-dominant subpersonalities to act in a coherent way together with the rest of the integrated personality. On team level, the team leader, the 'I' of the team, can bring out the necessary quality from a team member that may have this quality / skill as more secondary levels in his/her core personality. Belbin's theory can also be seen as applicable on the individual (seen as a "team" of different subpersonalities), where a balanced set of subpersonalities with different and to each other complementing qualities gives a multi-faceted and multi-gifted personality.

A confirming example of the importance of good team spirit can be found in Ref. 5, Ekvall, "*Organizational Climate and Leadership for Creativity*", where following plot has been compiled from a interview survey of approximately 30 organizations, from which 10 highly productive organizations and 5 organizations "in deep trouble" were chosen:

Figure 5 . Team spirit in creative versus stagnated organizations.



Ekvall describes the leadership models that has been investigated as “the structurer / production focused”, “the considerator / personnel focused” and the “changer”, and that the traditional project management is best done by applying a balanced combination of these three leadership types. But he also ends the report by saying:

“The best leadership style, the optimal balance of the three leadership dimensions, should vary with the stage of the project, the goals and the people involved. What my studies although have shown is that the creative climate in an organization in general is a function of a leadership style that is not described in the classical leadership models and which has not as yet been included in the training of leaders.” (Our underlinings)

Other authors have also described this in depth, like Christian Ylander and Björn Larsson-Lindman in “Power and Fear” (Ref. 11). In this book they report from their work as organization consultants in different companies, and it contains a large number of examples of how the team spirit and the creative climate has been stifled by people being afraid of each other. Their theory is that people *unconsciously* intimidate each other from a lack of self-knowledge and a lack of understanding of the basic needs for acknowledgement and support:

“We have emphasized that the most important responsibility of the manager is to create an atmosphere where people can relate in an open, trusting way, free from mutual fear. This puts a high demand on his ability to judge which persons work well together. Today’s managers all to often only take people’s professional competences into account and how to match these together, and thus people are asked to work together without considering whether their personal relationship will work. This can become devastating for the working spirit and the creative climate. The repressed fear also makes it difficult for these people to accept each other’s differences in views and values.”

3.6 The Project Manager Role

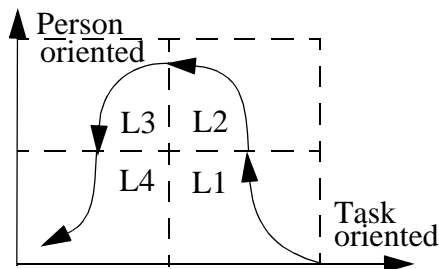
The theory described above, together with the presented empirism from others, points to that the PM should be responsible for *building the team*, which might be both selecting the members (the ideal but seldom existing situation) *and* to conduct the team through what we here have chosen to call the “Psychosynthesis process”. According to our chosen theory, the PM’s ability to perform this task is very much enhanced if he has gone through this process himself, either by himself, or with external assistance. The reason for this, we here theoreticize, is that the very same psychological mechanisms are at play within the individual’s psyche (including his own) as in the group’s “psyche”. To the extent that he can cope with the “group dynamic” within his *own inner group* of different subpersonalities, he will be able to identify and cope with the *outer group* dynamics among the project team members.

Or, using the description in the above mentioned “*Power and Fear*” (Ref. 11), only the manager that understands himself sufficiently, and thereby understands what makes others “tick”, will not unconsciously be afraid of others (few managers are *consciously* afraid of others). Repressed fear will most often unconsciously be handled by trying to control others, by intimidating them, most often in subtle ways. This is deadly for the team spirit, and the manager operating by this “hidden agenda” will soon stifle all loyalty, creativity and work satisfaction.

The project manager that on the other hand has gone through his inner psychosynthesis process, will probably act differently. He will have gained a *realistic* self-confidence based on his actual skills and be humble and open with what he does not know. He will have acquired an ability to observe and to listen without judging prematurely, and be able to make people feel seen, acknowledged and appreciated. He will be able to accept conflicts, both his own and others inner (intrapersonal) conflicts as well as interpersonal conflicts, and to handle these in a non-judgemental and creative way.

In Psychosynthesis terms, the project manager should take on the role of the ‘I’ of the project team. As this, he/she can see / make people feel seen, can clarify purpose, intention and plans, can motivate, and give constructive feed-back. He has the important role of *making explicit* what may be *implicit* in the project team or in the culture of the company, especially things that can destructively influence the team spirit: past project failures “forbidden” to talk openly about, unexpressed criticism among team members or towards management, tendencies of intimidation or mobbing, “political” prohibitions or rules from top management, cultural or racial problems. In Scandinavia special attention can be needed to handle the culturally embedded “Jante Law”, which forbids healthy self-esteem, pride over personal contributions, openly rewarding high-performers, etc.

Figure 6 . Group life stages.



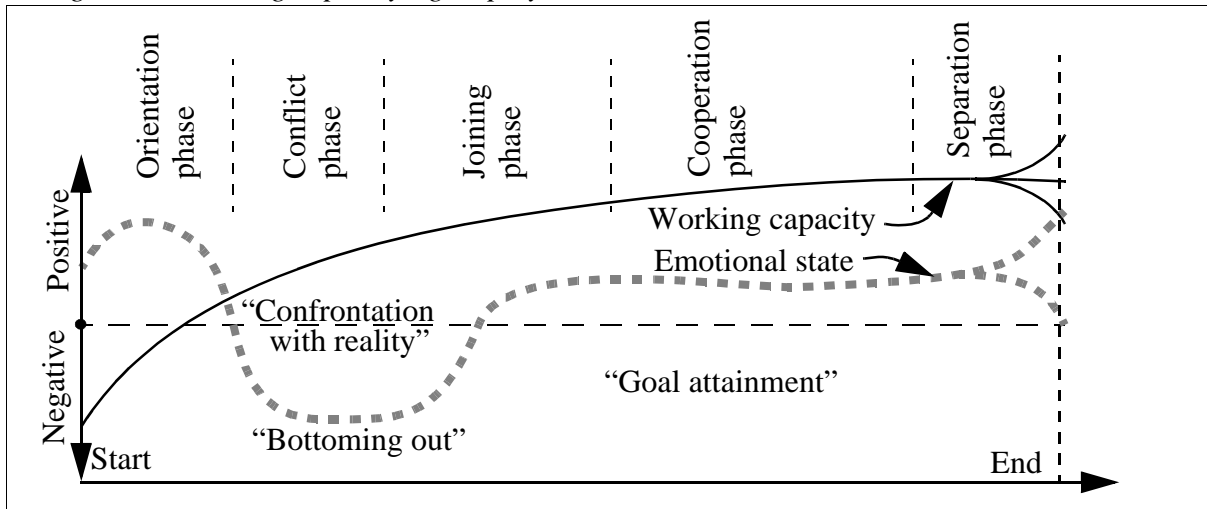
The PM should also be able to adjust his leadership style to the different phases of the project and therefore of the group dynamics. A good description of this is given in Ref. 9, “*The Management Challenge*” by Karlöf & Söderberg: The PM usually has to start out as very task oriented (L1), with not as much focus on each persons’ own abilities to work independently. After a while the PM can more “sell” his ideas for the tasks, but can now rely more on the individual’s ability to fix it by himself -

L2. At L3 the PM’s focus is in delegating most of how the task is done to the individual, but he is still concerned with the decision process. At L4, finally, the PM has reached a level of trust for the project team, such that he is able to just “conduct”, delegating most of the decision-making to the individuals. This diagram illustrates how a typical group dynamic develops, and how the PM ideally “tracks” the group by adjusting his style of leadership.

The PM should also in the team building process be acquainted with the theory and practice of

the typical dynamics of a newly formed group. Example of a description of the development stages of a group is given in Ref. 7, Granér, “*The Psychology of the Professional Group*”:

Figure 7. Working capacity / group dynamics



The “Emotional state” in this figure can also be translated to our “Work satisfaction”. The PM:s ability to cope with the “Bottoming out” period in the Conflict Phase is of course crucial, and will be instrumental in how soon and how well integrated the team will reach the Joining Phase, where the “real work” begins.

These examples of PM role areas above require acquaintance with notions like empathy, active listening, nonjudgemental feedback, the inner volition process, etc. It also requires acquaintance with how common psychological defence mechanisms appear and work: denial, repression, rationalization, projection, regression. It would go too far in this paper to go deeply into the theories for this, here it is enough to point out that these are things that can be taught and trained. (Descriptions of how these psychological mechanisms work and are expressed can be found in Ref. 8. Gimstedt: “*What is this we call the Company Spirit, really?*”)

Our hypothesis is that a properly defined training, based on experiencing *actual* emotions / psychological mechanisms (role play, live cases, peer supervision, etc.), would make it possible for any person assigned to a project management role to enhance his or her abilities to through conscious attitude and direct action build the fundament of work satisfaction in a project group.

The reason for investigating this hypothesis is that we are convinced that the experience of work satisfaction is instrumental in giving higher performance and a more efficient decision process with respect to all of the factors quality, creativity, time and cost. This conviction comes both from own experience and from talking to others in project contexts. This study is an attempt to come from a qualitative sense of this belief to a more quantitative sense, by making in depth interviews with five project managers of projects with commonly agreed good team spirit and high level of work satisfaction and where the participants thought that these factors had been instrumental in the obvious success of these projects.

3.7 Summary of Theoretical Concepts

We have above outlined a theoretical context for understanding and dealing with the factors underlying work satisfaction. Following commented list of the headlines is a brief summary:

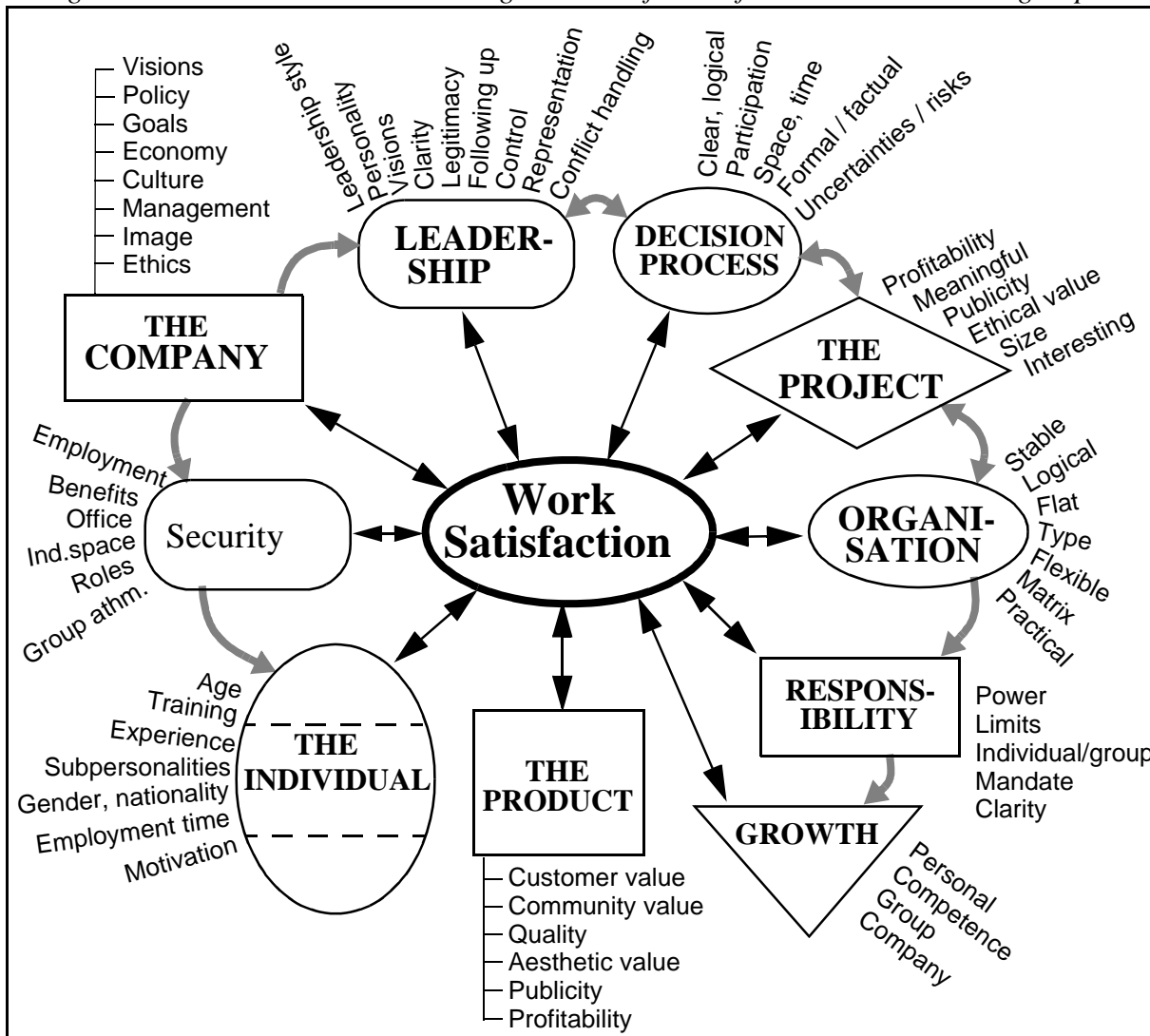
1. **Work satisfaction:** The underlying concept, that cannot be defined or broken down further, but which rather is the effect of a number of different contributing factors, like knowledge of the goals and one's own role, the team spirit, a creative decision process, the attitude and actions of the team leader.
2. **The decision process:** A process that is often dealt with without conscious focus on that it can be rather complicated, and where each step is crucial and must be finalized before taking the next: purpose, deliberation, decision, affirmation, planning and execution.
3. **The Will:** The psychological tool used in the decision process, a tool that in most cases is not viewed as something that can be enhanced by training. This is incorrect, and both the ability to use one's will and the ability to acquire a proper balance between the strong, skilful and good will components can be reached through self-knowledge and training.
4. **The human psyche - the team "psyche":** Under this headline a model for the human psyche was presented, and where the emphasis was on how it can be described as being built up by subpersonalities, in the ideal case coordinated by a central "I". We also described how many psychological problems arise due to lack of this coordination, where isolated subpersonalities can act "egoistically", without concern of the benefit of the whole person, creating stifling inner conflicts. How self-knowledge and the insight that others function the same way can make better communication possible. Finally how this model can be used also on groups of people, and how one group collectively can act in either constructive or destructive ways towards the outside world.
5. **The team spirit:** Here we described how the work satisfaction of each member of a group adds up to a good team spirit, and how this is the result of a process that we called the psychosynthesis. This process can be active both on an individual level, as on the collective level, and includes the identification / acceptance of subpersonalities / group member roles and the coordination of these towards the benefit of the whole. We also presented some recorded empirism of good and bad team spirits.
6. **The project manager role:** Here we suggested that the project manager has a considerable responsibility in building both the team and the team spirit. His / her ability to perform the latter is a function of how far the PM has come in his / her own personal psychosynthesis process, and on the PM:s knowledge of group dynamics. We suggest that these abilities and this knowledge can be enhanced by proper training.

4. DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Five project managers and five project members from equally many projects, by the participants and “customers” classed as successful, were chosen and asked to participate in personal interviews. With this choice we are not implying that skilled project managers cannot be found in less successful projects, or that projects cannot succeed without good project management. This can happen due to strong context influence. Rather, we have tried to pick five successful projects where the importance of good leadership has seemed to be more important than the context and other external factors. Different types of projects were consciously chosen, in order to get data form different work contexts: two rather large technical development projects (three to five years), two organisation development projects (six months to one year), and one very large and lengthy pharmaceutical development project (22 years).

Both authors together did the interviews with the project managers. Figure 8 below, which is an elaboration of Figure 1 in part 3.1 'Work Satisfaction' on page 7, was used as a base for a first discussion around the topic, before we went into a questionnaire presented below. The key words around each main factor have been chosen to fit with the context of the interviews and the reference frames of the interviewed persons, rather than to map the theoretical context as presented above. This has been consciously done to minimize the risk of biasing the interviewed person with our preconceptions and ideas about the subject.

Figure 8 . Factors involved in creating work satisfaction for the individual / the group



Another factor behind the choice of four of the five projects is our personal acquaintance with them: Lars Gimstedt participated personally in the two SAAB projects chosen, Jan Ivarsson in the two Volvo projects. We have here used the fact that there is a good likelihood of finding what we call a successful project in large companies like SAAB or Volvo, and we have made use of our personal acquaintance in getting relevant information about the projects and about the reactions and opinions of other project team members. This information is both from discussions with former project team members during the compilation of this paper, and from personal recollections. We have been able to stay unbiased on a personal level with the project managers in our "own" projects, as we at the time worked at an organizational level substantially below project management, and therefore had more formal contacts with our project managers.

A general framework of questions at different levels was used, as indicated below, with some examples of typical questions:

Projects:

What made you become a project manager from the beginning? Did you choose yourself?

Which project have you been most pleased with? Why?

Which phase was most satisfying? Which felt heaviest?

Which factors do you think contributed the most to the successes / failures?

The Company:

Did the organization type of the company contribute or did it work "despite" the organization? How was the company spirit, what kind of company culture was there?

Did you feel supported by top management? How? When was it most important?

The organization of the project:

How was it organized, how did the project organization interact with "staff"?

Did the type of organization stay the same over the whole project, or did it change? How?

What kind of authority did you have regarding resources, selection of team members?

How much power did you have at strategic decisions?

Do you think the project should have the same PM all the time?

The decision process:

What was your role? How, when, with whom did you interact upwards and downwards?

What was your "style" of deciding - quick and rash, or slow and deliberate?

How easy / difficult was it for you to take back decisions?

How did you handle uncertainties, risks?

How did you delegate the responsibility of decisions on lower levels? What kind of authority did you trust people with, how did you reach the necessary trust?

How would you characterize your decision process in personal matters? Balance between strong, skilful and good will?

Leadership:

How would you characterize yourself as a leader?

How do you view cooperation - own authority - delegation - trust in others?

How do you follow up, give positive and negative feedback? Do you award good performance? How?

What do you think motivates people? How, how often, to whom, what do you inform?

Do you operate mostly in group settings, or do you interact more with individuals?

Your own personality:

How would you characterize yourself - rational / emotional, introvert / extrovert, etc.?

Do you experience inner conflicts, how do you handle these?

How do you handle conflicts between people, between them and yourself?

How do you think others see you? How would you like to be seen?

Which of your personal traits are you proud of, which are you ashamed of?

If you would experiment with the notion of subpersonalities, which do you believe you have? In which situations are they active? Can you "step out" of them at will?

How is your inner "decision process" at personal decisions?

What do you do to relax?

5. FIVE SUCCESSFUL PROJECT MANAGERS

Following project managers were interviewed:

- Dec. 2 1996 Page 22 : Olle Esping, The SAAB 340 project.
Dec. 12 1996 Page 27 : Rune Gustafsson, The Volvo 850 project.
March 3 1997 Page 30 : Håkan Segerborg, the SAAB Aircraft reorganization project.
April 18 1997 Page 35 : Anna Nilsson-Ehle, the Volvo restructuring project of the 240 car.
April 21 1997 Page 38 : Ivan Östholm, the Astra Losec project.

In the interviews references to the theory have been made, where we have felt that certain properties can be described within the context of the theory. This has not been done to assess the theory in itself, as this already been done by others, but to point out certain properties as described in the language of the chosen theory that seem central and unique in the persons we have chosen to interview.

5.1 Olle Esping, The SAAB 340 project.

Olle Esping is now retired, but has still at the age of 78 a keen interest in aerospace development, and specifically in what happens at his old company, SAAB in Linköping, Sweden. This was very evident at the interview, where Olle despite the 12 years that has passed since he retired from the company, still was extremely well informed about the present situation at SAAB.

The main reason for this is probably his old interest in aeroplanes, and his subsequent career in the field of aeroplane development, a career probably unique in Swedish aerospace industry:

- 1933: Member of the first club for private aviation in Sweden, Jönköpings Flygklubb.
- 1934-35: Together with a small number of other 14-year old boys, building a small glider aeroplane "Loppan". A number of rubber rope start flights of distance up to 250 m, max 30 m altitude, not all successful, but thanks to for the time period advanced thinking in elastic safety belts, never with fatal consequences.
- 1938: Certificate for motor aeroplane (Avro, Klemm 35).
- 1941: Start of job career as design engineer at Svenska Aeroplan AB.
- 1944-49: Project engineer SAAB Safir.
- 1949-52: Project engineer SAAB 35 Draken.
- 1952-62: Deputy design manager SAAB 35 Draken.
- 1957: Finalizes MS in aeronautical engineering.
- 1962-81: Project manager SAAB 37 Viggen.
- 1981-84: Vice President SAAB Aerospace Division, Project Manager SAAB-Fairchild 340 (Later SAAB 340).
- 1984-: Retired, consultant to SAAB.

So, naturally, at the start of the SAAB 340 project, which was the one we focused on in the interview with Olle, he had a flying start: he was at this point already an extremely well known and highly respected project manager. But, on the other hand, if he had not continued to demonstrate the same leadership as in his former projects, his reputation would surely have changed. As it turned out, the reputation Olle enjoys after the SAAB 340 project, has almost reached mythical proportions: people in the company still, 12 years after his retirement, talk about "the Esping era". In a booklet issued by the company at it's 60:eth anniversary Sept. 6

1997 a whole chapter has been dedicated to “*Olle Esping - SAAB’s ‘most’ project manager*”. People often make comparisons of how present perceived problems with organizational rigidity, bureaucratic follow-up and control, etc., were “so much easier and smoother at that time”.

In the interview we therefore tried to focus on what in Olle’s leadership style could explain the extremely high regard he enjoyed, and whether this could have been one of the important factors behind the success of the project (it was originally planned to be finalized within three years, and was delayed only *six weeks* compared to the original plans. The SAAB 340 soon after introduction dominated the market for regional aeroplanes, taking 30% of the world market, 70% of the European market.)

The project:

The SAAB 340 was the second commercial aeroplane from SAAB, the first being the SAAB SCANDIA from 1944. The 340 represented though a huge step for SAAB toward the goal of going from a 100% military supplier at 1981, to a 50/50 situation. The goal was set to 1990, but was reached a couple of years earlier than anticipated. Within ten years of the project start SAAB had become the world’s single largest manufacturer of regional aircraft in the 30-50 seat size.

The SAAB 340 is a turbo-prop low wing aeroplane, with 35 seats, superior takeoff and landing performance, low external noise and very good operational economy. The product also includes a very sophisticated Product Support program, with AOG guarantees (AOG = Aircraft On Ground), where SAAB is committed to get a 340 with any type of maintenance-related problem in air again within 24 hours, wherever on the earth it has landed.

The project started as a 50/50 joint venture together with Fairchild Industries, Long Island, NY, USA, but SAAB took over the whole project after two years due to the partner’s economical problems. The taking over included the building-up of a new wing production at SAAB, and a conversion of all drawings and production documentation to SAAB standard - a formidable task in the middle of a time pressed program.

Technical problems are of course present in all advanced projects like this, but some were major: the flight control in yaw was during flight test discovered to be insufficient and had to be completely redesigned. The engines, after having worked perfectly well during the entire flight test, after first delivery to customer suffered from in-flight flame-outs, leading to grounding of the whole fleet by the airworthiness authorities (this problem was successfully solved within two weeks).

The interview:

The interview was more in the form of a discussion around the topic of leadership, the decision process, team spirit and work satisfaction, and didn’t strictly follow the “questionnaire” above in part 4. ‘DATA COLLECTION METHOD’ on page 20. In order to bring some order to Olles responses in our discussions, we have sorted them according the questionnaire (the same applies for the other interview summaries as well). We have also interviewed one or more persons that were involved in the project. We have not summarized these responses in one place, but have rather included them into the interview questionnaires below.

The project:

“The project felt like a tremendous challenge, even after the huge SAAB 35 and 37 projects: It was the most fun I’d had in all my years... and when I come to think of this I realize I was 62 when I took this on...”

It was obvious that Olle quite soon *was* the project, that his solid background, his deep knowledge and his own keen interest and enthusiasm made him *as a person* represent the vision, the mission and the goals (= the Self of the project team, using the language of our theory, in

part 3.4 'The Human Psyche - the Team "Psyche"'). Despite his deep knowledge of details (which he often discussed with team members at all levels), he always when this was called for, communicated the "top perspective", helped everyone involved to keep the ultimate goal conscious: a satisfied customer who got his aeroplane in time, and who should make money operating it. SAAB getting the reputation of building the world's finest aeroplane in its class. This "top perspective" penetrated the whole organization, all the way down to the shop floor, and explains the very obvious "pioneer spirit" that made everyone involved put many overtime hours and weekends into the project when dark clouds gathered.

Olle also pointed out, that the limited time span, together with the very concrete outcome, also made it easy for everyone involved to keep the "top perspective"-attitude alive. It had been much more difficult with the military projects, often having project times of 10 to 15 years. He also pointed out that the fact that the project had attracted comparatively young and "easily formed" engineers, also contributed to the "pioneer spirit".

The Company:

Due to the fact that Olle had been specifically appointed the 340 project, after a "slow start" under other management, he said he from the beginning and during the whole project experienced a very solid support from the top management of the company.

His close contact with the top management also kept them well informed, at critical times even on a day-to-day basis, and gave the whole management level the "public image" of being well in charge of the project (even when this might not have been the case). This also promoted the good "company spirit", so good that the interviewed project members even used the name "The SAAB Spirit" (Swedish: SAAB-andan).

The Organization:

The company was organized in the traditional way, with functional departments (analysis, design, stress, etc.). Olle having the good knowledge of almost everyone involved, directed much of the work "despite the organization". In critical situations he could with short notice form what he called "Task Force Groups", where he assigned work to a designated hand-picked group of people, disregarding the formal responsibilities of the functional departments.

The more "standard" work was meanwhile pursued in a well organized and "burnt in" organization, where people had done the job in the same manner for a long time. It seems like Olle used the organization as a well of resources and knowledge. He allowed the departments to work by themselves without interference from top management with what the knew well. He also at times put together special teams using specific specialists for tasks that spanned over many departments or was time critical. Project members: *"It felt like he always trusted we would do our best, but he also always in an uncanny way knew where we were, what had worked OK and what was uncertain."*

The Decision Process:

Olle "was in a hurry very slowly", very much in accordance to our model of The Act of Will from part 3.2 'The Decision Process' on page 8. He said he never took a decision without hearing almost everyone involved, all the way down to group supervisor level. This often caused irritation among department managers. On the question *"did you often run people over at critical times?"* Olle spontaneously responded *"yes, very often... but never anyone below myself in the organization."*

Another relevant quotation from Olle: *"Nothing works by itself, without follow-up, in proportion to how much I trust them..."*. He had individual monthly follow-ups with key persons, which he felt they regarded not as criticism but as an expression of technical interest from his side, and that seemed to be increasing their motivation. Project member: *"It wasn't that I was afraid of Olle, but I always knew that when he asked about something, it was best in the*

long run to be completely honest and open with him, even if it could be rather embarrassing at the moment.”

Olle openly declared that the project coordination meetings were mainly for *his own* benefit, where he demanded to get updated, specific but condensed verbal information from each department manager and each key person. This way he could, by “gut feeling”, sense if there was signs of emerging problems, and could react to these before they grew to “real problems”. Getting grip on project risks or uncertainties, according to Olle, could never be achieved by reading reports or reviewing measured “key factors” only. The actual verbal reporting from the persons directly involved with the work can never be omitted, being the prime source for assessing risks and uncertainties. “We will do our best” was not good enough for Olle as a response on his question “Will you fix this?”.

Olle’s priority was time and quality, before cost. He stated as an axiom that delays and mistakes will always cost more than the money saved by taking technical chances by not pursuing parallel development tracks when outcomes are uncertain, trying to save on resources, etc. Everything needed in order to keep the defined time plan is worth it’s cost. Olle had often to confront top management in time planning issues, especially at the project partner Fairchild, and was because of this sometimes by them nicknamed “Mr. Schedule”.

Leadership:

Olle pointed out that he came into the project after the definition phase. (This took place 1980-1981 at Fairchild, by a joint SAAB-Fairchild team placed together during the whole year the pre-project took.) His opinion was that the program manager for this phase should be different than how Olle regarded himself - more of an inventor type.

Olle’s leadership style is very well illustrated by the model in Figure 3 on page 12, with connecting arrows to both individual persons, departments, and top management. Olle placed himself, as is indicated in the figure, as “the spider in the net”, sensing everything going on, and at the same time giving everyone the feeling of being seen and appreciated for work well done. He never gave negative criticism via the person’s manager, he always confronted the person himself.

He didn’t remember that he missed walking around the factory work shop *every day* more than at a few occasions during the whole project.

He never used intimidation or authority as a tool for directing the work. Getting people to understand, to appreciate the need for an effort, and to become highly motivated, was very important to him. At the same time he never coddled people, if a person failed to do what he expected despite direct discussions, he could and had the authority to cancel the person’s responsibility and pick some else to do the job. The only thing that could make Olle really angry was dishonesty, trying to make things look better than they were by suppressing or filtering information, or trying to blame others or “bad luck”.

After jobs exceptionally well done, Olle could quickly arrange a beer-drinking party with the ones involved. Yearly crayfish parties with spouses were another motivation increasing factor.

Trying to place Olle’s leadership style within the models mentioned above, it seems that Olle was able to adapt his leadership according to the situation. Using Belbin’s team role models (Ref. 3, described in part 3.4 ‘The Human Psyche - the Team “Psyche”’ on page 12), Olle could be either one of the Implementer, the Shaper, the Monitor, the Team Worker or the Completer, when needed, and he was able to switch between these roles at will. For the team roles the Plant and the Resource Investigator Olle didn’t take on these roles himself, but rather used others to take on these. Using Ekvall’s model (Ref. 5, described in the same chapter), Olle’s leadership style includes all three aspects, the Structurer, the Considerator, and the Changer, in that order of dominance. All in all it seems like Olle’s leadership style is a situation adapted balance

between different types, disregarding how one chooses to model these. The underlying principle seems to be a combination of clear goals, commitment and will power balanced against active personal relations, consideration of details, and continuous two-way communication.

Olles as a person:

Olle is a very “low key” person, doesn’t seem to need the image of personal power or to be Manager with capital M. Private acquaintances would probably not be able to guess, from Olle’s way of being with people, that he has been in positions of very high rank for most of his life.

Asked about his “personal decision process”, he reported that he decides the same way in his personal matters as he did in his job: by conscious purpose, thorough deliberation, decision, affirmation, a good plan, and then execution. He said regarding decisions, both privately and work related, that he always “slept well in the night”, after taking a decision he seldom worried.

In other roles, like chairman of the local aeroplane club, he managed the club activities in exactly the same way as he managed an aeroplane project, according to himself.

Asked about which personal qualities he thought had helped him the most in his job as a project manager, Olle responded “*commitment and persistency*”. These are, not surprisingly, two of the qualities defining Skilful Will in part 3.3 ‘The Will’ on page 11. The definition of Strong Will - dynamic power, resoluteness, and daring - are not as obvious in Olle’s personal style, although these qualities exist behind his facade to be used when needed, which Lars Gimstedt experienced himself during the 340 project. Olle’s Good Will is although obvious in how he related to people on all levels in the project.

In discussing Olle’s own personal roles at work as contrasted to his different roles, or subpersonalities, in his private life, Olle after long thought concluded that he had never experienced any large differences within himself in different situations, work or private. He experienced that his way of reacting or relating to people was essentially the same all the time. He was never surprised over how he reacted. Olle describes himself as a somewhat introvert person, but with active and honest relations to the persons *he had chosen* to relate to.

Using Assagioli’s model of the psyche (Figure 3 on page 12), Olle describes himself (in other words but here reformulated in the terms of our theory) as having such well integrated subpersonalities, that they collectively form a “Core personality” that is very stable, where individual subpersonalities do not “take over” due to external stimuli. The subpersonalities instead act together directed by a central personal will (The “I”), with very little ambivalence or internal conflicts. There doesn’t seem to be any “hidden” or cut of subpersonalities either. Olle truly represents, in all aspects of his way of being, in all situations, what one usually describes as a mature person with good self-knowledge and self-confidence. This is probably also the main factor behind his natural authority in his role as a project manager.

5.2 Rune Gustafsson, The Volvo 850 project.

Rune Gustafsson was the project manager of the 850-project 1980-1992. He lead the concept and prestudy phases as project manager and the project phase as senior project manager. Since 1992 Rune Gustafsson is retired from Volvo and now works as a consultant within the Swedish car supplier network. The reason Rune and the 850 project was chosen is the challenge in strategic importance for the company as well as the large size of the project.

The Project:

The 850 was one of the cars in the “Galaxy project”, a new line of front wheel driven and efficient cars for the 80- and 90-ies. The Galaxy represents a large step in technical development for Volvo. The first set of car characteristics were developed during the energy crises: it was stated that the future Volvo car must be much more efficient than previous cars, i.e. less exterior size, larger interior size, less fuel consumption, less weight etc. The car should also have a new high grade of performance in safety. This led to a front wheel driven car with the drive train mounted east-west, a lot of weight effective solutions and new structure systems on safety. Since many of the planned systems were completely new on Volvo, a special organisation was developed to focus on the new areas. The following areas took special attention:

- a new engine family, a modular system 4,5 and 6 cylinder engines in aluminium
- gearboxes for front wheel drive
- front wheel drive mechanism
- lightweight body and interior structure design
- passive safety structure design
- active safety design

The leader of this new organisation, called the UKV, became Rune Gustafsson.

As a first step UKV performed a concept and prestudy on the 400 car. This project was exported to the “DAF-organisation” in the Holland Volvo company and became the 480 car as a first step and then followed by the 440 and 460 cars in the early 80ies.

In parallel and after the 400-project the 850-concept was developed. The main characteristics were more or less changed since the market didn't focus any longer on fuel consumption, environment and weight efficiency. The characteristics changed to efficiency, quality, pleasure to drive, comfort, performance and safety. This meant a tough revision performed by the UKV on all system solutions to fulfil the changed characteristics on the car but still within the same concept!

In 1986 the concept and prestudy were completed and the job was transferred to the line organisation.

The organization:

In the concept and prestudy the project had been organised in a special department. It did not take long time until the project management realized that the transfer to the line organisation did not work.

There was a continuous lack of progress and focus. A new larger project organisation was created by splitting the old line organisation. Rune Gustafsson became both “line manager” and senior project leader in the new 850-organisation.

Leadership:

Rune: *“To work together in a team with a good team spirit is the driving force in a project. It is vital that the team members feel that their contribution in the team and product development is of importance”.*

A good example is how Rune handled the pilot project together with the dutch engineers. A concept prestudy was performed in Gothenburg on the 400 series car. To get a good understanding and an effective transfer to the Dutch office some of the dutch engineers came to Gothenburg to take part and perform engineering work in the project office. After some weeks the dutch engineers worked together with the Swedish as a team on all levels in the project, and technical solutions and decisions where shared and performed together.

“One important project leader role is to work with top-down targeting and to give guidance and create project goals”. Rune’s position is that this should come out of the his vision and holistic view of the project. He must be able to manage to translate this view to the team members. In this project Rune had a view of the 850 car already from the start, though it was not clear view from the beginning (= the Self of the project team).

“I found a large stimulation in seeing the new product being developed as well as feeling the engagement from the project team members”.

Rune also emphasized the importance of team members being allowed to feel proud over the product and the own performance, and how easily this can be either promoted or destroyed by the project manager.

Says Rune: *“Successful leadership is based on that you honestly act from the one you are, straight forward without any mysterious manners. The leader should be easy to read and be predictable. He should be able to relate on a person-to-person level with the project team and respect the team members, making clear that all are equally important for the project”.*

What Rune says here corresponds to the description of the ‘I’ function in part 3.4 ‘The Human Psyche - the Team “Psyche”’ on page 12, specifically the non-judgemental awareness and the I’s ability to integrate and coordinate the inner subpersonalities.

The leader must have a high level of humanistic values and must at all times defend and support high ethics and a good set of common values in the project. (= good contact with one’s Self, again according to part 3.4 ‘The Human Psyche - the Team “Psyche”’)

The Decision Process:

Rune wanted clear roles to be given to the team members with responsibilities and empowerment. A large degree of responsibility was also put out on the team members, and to do so is a matter of having the knowledge and experience as a leader. The skilled people were given more or less free hands in the project. In practice most decisions were taken down in the team. An example was the unique rear axle, where Rune gave the total responsibility to the department leader to design the whole system from scratch. The decisions Rune took never became controversial, he experienced them as already established in the team.

The result of not taking decisions could be very negative for the product. Consequences could be lost direction and focus, frustration, decreased energy and momentum in the project team and in the end risk for the introduction of the product. With the well defined project decision structure both project speed, precision and cost goals could be achieved. This was performed through taking decisions locally within the different project teams and subteams. As they were cross-functional, the teams themselves generated the necessary information to take their decisions, they felt the urge to take them and they had the best competence to make the right

choice. Rune's role was to contribute with the product vision and the holistic perspective. He was also the judge in the end and took the full responsibility of the decisions taken.

Rune remembered: *"With the locally taken decisions within the project the line management sometimes got a feeling of being one step behind. Successful local decisions were often seen as coming from the skill of the subproject team leader or local line manager, while the bad decisions were blamed on the program manager alone. This should be seen as challenge rather than an injustice and is a natural part of the company hierarchical structure."*

A lot of conflicts appeared, often the result of earlier decisions that later conflicted with new decisions. Rune acted as early as possible on things "not on track" in the project, *"you have to be sensible on the signals that indicate that something is on the wrong way and act immediately"*. In this case the project leader has to have the strength to make decisions out from the holistic view but at the same time acknowledge the unique contribution from the different designers.

Volvo has a good project planning support in doing this using the "gate system", a quality tool describing performance that has to be fulfilled at certain checkpoints during the different project phases.

"In this decision process I have to trust my team members, I was spontaneous in my way of judging technical solutions and used a lot of common sense". In this way of reaching decisions a very open climate was created between management and designers. Most decisions were made on scheduled meetings with the involved managers and designers.

In some cases Rune had to follow decisions taken on a higher management level, decisions he himself did not support. In these cases he explained to the team that this was something they all had to do the best out of.

Mapping the decision process of the team to our theories, it seems that Rune himself embodied Purpose and Goal, but that he trusted the team to collectively and masterfully go through the stages of Choice and Decision, Affirmation, Planning. For the Direction stage, Rune represents an ideal model of using one's will to direct others without bullying, overcontrolling or other Strong will aspects.

Rune as a person:

Rune personifies the "we-feeling". He knew most of the team members by name and their tasks though they were over 200 people plus external resources. (= Rune represents a strong 'I' function in the team, and was by this instrumental in the Psychosynthesis of the team.)

Tough decisions, which were they, how did he treat them?

"It was a painful task to move people around in the organization. You have to have the holistic perspective and take the decision regarding people out from that view. In most cases we could do this successfully without creating dissatisfaction". (= Identification with the Self)

Rune thinks he is too much of a coward regarding tough decisions, he doesn't dare to leave them without an immediate action! *"With that as a base I think it was easier for me to make decisions than other leaders."*

Rune is well aware of his different Subpersonalities. Rune is not the same kind of personality at work as at home. When he is relaxing with his family he uses a less authoritarian side of himself.

Rune seems to have a good balance of the three different volition skills in his management profile. He although does not seem to use the same amount of strong will as senior manager in the project as his predecessors.

5.3 Håkan Segerborg, the SAAB Aircraft reorganization project.

Håkan Segerborg was chosen to be interviewed for this thesis work due to his accomplishments in connection to a major reorganization project that he led 1994 at SAAB Aircraft AB. He was at the time production manager for the SAAB 340 and SAAB 2000 aircraft production. The reason that this latter (and major) part of his work was not the focus of the interview is not that he pursued this differently than the specific task of the reorganization, on the contrary it very well could have constituted a chapter by itself, as Håkan also within the production department was responsible for major achievements. Under Håkan's time, the production time for the SAAB 340 aeroplane was reduced by 40%, at the same time as the quality of the product increased significantly.

Håkan is in his fifties, and has a long background in production engineering. He has a MSc exam in mechanical engineering. He is now not longer with the SAAB company, as he a couple of years ago accepted the position of president of NAF, a company producing fluid control equipment.

The Project:

One of the reasons of choosing the SAAB Aircraft reorganization project, apart from the successful execution of the project, is that it constitutes a contrast to the more technological projects described above, being an *organization* development project.

It is also pertinent to here define what we in this context mean by "successful". The reorganization project has been viewed by us as successful within the scope of

- identification of what needed to be done.
- acquiring the necessary power and funding.
- defining and planning the task.
- informing and motivating all involved.
- executing the reorganization with corresponding physical relocation of staff and equipment.
- starting up of the new organization, initiating the development of new procedures.

Within another scope, for example if more factors were to be included like if the timing for the reorganization was beneficial or detrimental for the ongoing SAAB 2000 project, or whether appropriate follow-ups of the changes were made after the new organization had been in place for a while, the reorganization project may not be viewed as all together successful. As this judgement is difficult and also too early to make at this date, the question of how the scope of the description of a project should be limited is an important one. (This distinction has been clarified in depth by Mats Engvall 1995 in "*Looking for the Efficient Project*", Ref. 6)

Another reason behind the choice of just this organization development project is the unusual and radical change of the whole SAAB Aircraft it led to, and the unusually radical way it was implemented. For the organization structure, it meant going from a rather conventional hierarchic functional organization to a full-blown "flow organization", where each major part of an aircraft got its own project organization, with fewer hierarchic levels. The reorganization itself was also performed in a quite radical (by many viewed as rather cruel) way: in two quick steps the two uppermost levels of management were appointed, comprising approximately twenty people. After this the rest of the employed were "sacked" (not formally, but all job descriptions and formal positions ceased to exist), and a catalogue of new job types was issued. The new managers were asked to define the number and sort of positions they wanted to have

in their new departments. The number of available jobs were approximately 300 less than the number of employees (~1600), which was one of the driving forces behind the need of reorganizing, and which had been directed by the owners of the company. The whole process of interviewing job candidates, and manning the new departments was planned in detail, such that the new organisation was in place, including the physical relocation of people and equipment, within *three months* after the first announcement of the coming reorganization had been officially issued.

This unusually radical way of going about such a large change of the whole company structure actually proved to be the opposite of cruel: the people that were “left over” got a guarantee of one year’s employment plus massive assistance in looking for a new job within or outside the company. These persons didn’t have to “suspect” what could / might be happening for a long time (half a year and more is otherwise not unusual in cases of reorganizations and reductions), but could now quickly concentrate on reorienting their lives. The persons that got a “new job” could also quickly reorient, without becoming burdened with feelings of guilt and awkwardness towards their less lucky colleagues. The end result was a new organization characterized by understanding of the reasons for the change, optimism, determination and good spirits.

Interviews with many of the employees now three years after, have indicated that this reorganization project had not become the success it is regarded as (within the scope of the reorganization per se), had it not been for the qualities and competence of the brain and muscle behind it, which everybody knew was Håkan Segerborg. This is by the way all the more surprising when one takes into account that Håkan’s responsibility never was openly declared, and that he never had any official title in his role of project manager of this quite formidable project, as it in hindsight surely can be called.

As the interviews with people subjected to the reorganization were made before the interview with Håkan took place, it was with a certain curiosity we looked forward to it: are there certain personal traits and skills embodied by this PM that could explain the success of this project?

The interview:

As with the others interviewed above, it of course again proved impossible to follow an agenda, and the interview had more the form of a discussion around the topic. To keep the reporting consistent, the responses have been roughly gathered under the “questionnaire” order as given above in part 4. ‘DATA COLLECTION METHOD’ on page 20.

The company:

The original ideas for the reorganization project had come up already 1991, when Håkan as a member of the company management group had discussed more efficient ways of organizing the engineering departments. As Håkan at time already had done quite a bit of development of the production organization (material flow management, “just-in-time” philosophy, minimizing the number of “hand-overs”, etc.), his ideas were already at this time the main base of the model for a new engineering organization.

When the SAAB 2000 project suffered from a one-year delay due to technical problems, and by this missed the “opportunity window” of maximum market impact, the owners of SAAB agreed to fund the necessary extra development effort and the delay payments to customers that had been promised deliveries. They although did this on the condition that the company did it’s utmost to minimize the loss by increasing efficiency and by reducing personnel by ~25%.

It soon became obvious to the SAAB 2000 project management that the number of persons in the existing organization was at its practical minimum. Just reducing this number without taking

any other measures would be very detrimental to the organization's ability to perform. The remaining task, the market introduction of the SAAB 2000 with all the airworthiness authority and customer contact and support this would take, was of large strategic importance. In order to be able to reduce personnel significantly, it soon became clear that this would only be possible by reorganizing the work in such a way that certain tasks could be done more efficiently or be eliminated.

The organization of the reorganization project:

Håkan was assigned the task of leading the reorganization project, as a direct assignment from the president of SAAB Aircraft, at that time Christer Skogborg (shortly after the reorganization, a new president came in, Hans Krüger). Benchmarking on recent reorganizations made at SAAB Automobile, initiated by the president David Herman, gave the idea of multifunctional teams, where the central idea was to eliminate as many inter-departmental "hand-overs" as possible, by keeping as much of the work within the group as possible. Subproject teams were formed, that made initial experiments in Håkan's own organization, production, with certain areas as the design change implementation process (= the deliberation stage of the decision process for launching the project). It soon became clear that the resistance from the existing "line" organization became an obstacle, and making multifunctional teams to work within the existing functional organization would be difficult.

After the first tentative investigations of the concept, Håkan together with the SAAB 2000 project manager Johan Öster launched the program by appointing the second level managers. This was done only by internal recruiting, in order to keep the competence intact. The new managers were then assigned to define their respective organization, within the general concept of multifunctional teams.

The first round of this definition phase did not at all match Håkan's vision of the "flow organization", and he together with the personnel manager Thomas Nygren now "tightened the project control". A action / time plan for the recruiting of third level managers was issued, together with quite specified rules for how the "flow organization" should look like (= clarifying Purpose and Intention). After this the implementation of the plan continued in a more continuous pace, as the possibility of having discussions about alternate ideas, "territory struggles" and the like had been minimized.

The decision process:

The priority number one on the implementation of the new organization was the time plan. Håkan knew that in order to keep this time plan, he could not take into account the individual needs of everyone involved, for example managers in the previous organization that no longer would be managers at all. The decision process was therefore consciously chosen to be top-down, with little room for discussions on the level of the involved individuals.

Håkan was very aware of that this inevitably would create hard feelings in many places, and therefore very openly declared the decision process with its pros and cons, especially to the employee representatives within the unions. (=part 3.2 'The Decision Process' : "*The Purpose, Aim, or Goal, based on Evaluation, Motivation, and Intention.*")

An important factor in making it all together possible to have such an undemocratic decision process in this "culture revolution", was the "sense of urgency" at all levels of the company - people *knew* that something like this was necessary in order to survive. Håkan reinforced this knowledge by having several large meetings with all managers, where he rather emotionally *affirmed* the importance of the project and the necessity of a rapid execution (an important stage, as described in part 3.2 'The Decision Process').

The above described decision process has the properties of what above was called the Strong Will. Håkan said that had he not at all times tried to be completely honest and open, had it not been for his interest of others, and had he not valued his personal prestige lowly, then his role would have been the dictator's, with large risk for project failure. (Our comment: even if the component of the Strong Will obviously was large here, Håkan's Good Will and Skilful Will were able to compensate enough, assessed much due to the personal experiences of Lars Gimstedt during the time of the project.)

Leadership:

Håkan's leadership style seems to be based on having a very clear vision for what he wants to accomplish, together with a very large need of knowing that everyone involved at all times has a thorough understanding of his vision and intentions. Håkan reported to become very uncomfortable if he got a feeling of inconsistencies within the organization of how people looked on goals and visions, and reacts by informing on all levels until this feeling of his subdues. During the reorganization project, he said he used approximately 50% of his working hours for informal discussions with people on all levels.

He also said that his own views and intentions did not change much during all these discussions, their purpose was more to "sell" his ideas and to make others perfectly aware of what he wanted. Very little of the communication between Håkan and others was done in written form. Håkan had formal meetings only to formalize and document already taken decisions. Håkan bases his decisions on (mostly verbal) information from a number of "key persons", were this "title" is not based on formal position, but on Håkan's own knowledge of the person, including personality, values, skills, and "track record".

Comment heard from lower down in the organization: "*Håkan really knows what he wants, and he won't let anyone stop him. But he also knows what we do here, so he is never bullshitting, he is not up in the blue, like many others...*"

(Good description of an strong and obvious 'I' function of the team, who sees and make people feel seen and understood.)

Having support from above is important for Håkan, he strongly pressed the importance of not accepting responsibility without having the appropriate support and power. As with all change projects like this one, there needs to be follow-ups and refinements after the new organization has settled somewhat. Having become very personally engaged in the new organization, and wanting to make what he believed to be necessary refinements, he at this stage met with lack of understanding and support from top management. As a consequence of this, he ultimately left the company.

Citing Håkan: "*If you are not prepared to take the consequences of what you want and feel, and if you are afraid of losing your job, then you really can't do anything real at this level. If you on the other hand always know exactly what you want and need, then there will always be a good job somewhere...*"

Håkan as a person:

Håkan is aware of his "bad temper", regards it as negative himself. He although agreed that his anger never makes him try to insult or humiliate others. His anger is mostly an expression of frustration over unclear information, improper understanding, different views on priority. The end result of his open expression of anger is in most cases *increased clarity*, whether about agreeing on common goals or not agreeing and having to work more on the issue.

In using the for Håkan new notion of subpersonalities, he reported that he immediately could think of a number of different subpersonalities that he “went into” depending on situation, and that he mostly did this consciously. The exception was when he got angry, but he felt that even here he was in control of the situation and himself, and that he ‘used’ the anger as an energy source for getting things done, not to push anyone down.

When talking about life outside work, Håkan commented that difficulties he has encountered have taught him that there are no simple solutions to problems involving people, relations and conflicts. Håkan’s combination of being very determined, having a very strong will but at the same time never trying to “rise above” others, seems to make people around him respect him both as a person and as manager. He is both as a person and as a manager very visible, and he also gives others the feeling of being seen, both as persons and as professionals.

5.4 Anna Nilsson-Ehle, the Volvo restructuring project of the 240 car.

Anna Nilsson-Ehle was the project manager of the Volvo 240 project between 1989 and 1992. She led the end phase of the project first as technical manager and later as business manager. Anna is now managing the change process within the Volvo technical division. (This project is unique and quite formidable by itself, and could in itself have been worth an interview as well)

The reason Anna and the Volvo 240 restructuring project was chosen is the fact she represents a female leader and also the challenge this type of “dead” project gives, “mission impossible”.

The project:

In the end of 80ies the Volvo management came to the conclusion that the 240 car had to be improved in a number of the characteristics to keep up with customer expectations. During a large portion of the 80ies only minor changes had been done and at several occasions the management thought the car should be stopped in production. Still the car was very popular especially on the US market and contributed significantly to the Volvo economical result. Limited capacity in the factories finally put an end date for the car in the Torslanda factory. In summer 1993 the 240 production was stopped and replaced by another model.

The organization:

The 240 job had up to 1989 been part of the responsibility of the line organisation. To create the right priority, flexibility and focus a special organisation was created, the “240 company”. It was a group of 35 persons ordering and designing the changes necessary for the existence of the car.

The people picked out for the job were given in-depth information about the task which also included the planned termination of the model as such since this was already known from the start. The management openly gave the people a unique opportunity to increase their competence within a wider range and also made clear that there was a management commitment for creating attractive new assignments for everyone involved after finishing the 240-project.

The project group was located close to the Torslanda factory. Since this was a unique organization with what generally was considered a “dead product”, a lot of the management time was used making internal marketing for the project within the rest of Volvo in order to prepare for maximum support of the program.

Regarding the type of project organization, it was established a bit loosely, and was developed according to the stage of the project, rather than following a predefined model. Anna emphasized that you should be aware that any project model you chose will eventually become inefficient. *“A good project organization model will work efficiently only for 2-3 years, to keep up with the stage of the project you have to change your organization model. It seems that with the parts of the organization that have drawbacks already at the start, these negative properties tend to grow even larger over the years”*

Leadership:

One of the most important things in completion of the 240 was to create the right feeling for the product, to take care of the product. The people involved should also feel that they were doing a very meaningful job. Therefore the management made the following slogan in the project:

“The last produced 240 car shall be the best car ever produced”. (= Clear Purpose and Goal)

Anna’s opinion is that the project team is shaped out from the leader as a model (which sounds much like what we in part 3.6 ‘The Project Manager Role’ said about how the psychosynthesis of the team is a function of how the PM has gone through his/her own). The project leader has to embody the project vision (=the Self function) but needs also to have solutions presented at the same time. She should be visible and recognized as a unique cog together with all the others

in the “project team machinery” (= the ‘I’ function).

The leader shall be the person who is building the rail not being the conductor. She shall focus on the change process in the project and monitor the competence and method needs.

(= direction of “*the organs of action*” from the quote in part 3.2 ‘The Decision Process’, instead of imposing raw will power.)

Anna emphasized that conflicts should be allowed to live open in the organization. The project leader shall not act as judge in the conflict, she/he shall support the creative process of the conflict, open it up and give the possibility for the involved people to solve their problems by themselves. Being a female, there is always a risk of becoming the “mummy” for people, which has to be strongly avoided (our comment: the Mother is a dominant subpersonality in many women). She also recognized that she being a woman in contrast to many men probably has larger tolerance for letting conflicts “live”, and trust the built-in process towards a solution coming from the involved persons themselves, instead of intervening prematurely. Anna pointed out the importance of treating people as the grown up people they are, and to trust them as such.

Quoting a team leader: “*I felt that Anna always was very close to us in the project but at the same time gave us the possibility to work without interference within my team. She represented the project with her leadership, I think this was a very motivating part of her leadership. The vision and direction she showed together with top management gave us a security already from the start.*”

Another voice about Anna: “*Her leadership was target driven, we followed a certain quality process in the team. Most of the decisions were taken within my team. When we couldn’t solve our task Anna and I had a meeting handling the deviations, we used a reporting system. I always felt Anna trusted me in my role. I felt very comfortable with our relationship, she knew I solved my task and generated the necessary information to make decision within the team. A project manager not trusting the team leader will generate a lot of frustration and bad vibrations within the team.*”

Another consideration Anna saw as important for women to remember is that female leaders are often perceived as pushy and confused. To show power as a woman is considered ill-mannered in Sweden, though men are allowed and even expected to show power. The female leader therefore has to be very clear and communicative about why and how her decisions are to be implemented.

Another point Anna made was the importance of that the team members feel work satisfaction and are given the opportunity to show their result. One way of showing management care was our weekly “cleaning trip” through the factory. The management group consciously did this in order to give a frequent opportunity for the factory people to have an informal dialogue.

The decision process:

Anna emphasized the importance of the project leader having real power. She must be given the full mandate in a clear way from the top management to take all necessary decisions in the project. On the other hand the project leader shall not go in to details in the decision hierarchy, you should give the right people the full mandate to take the decisions. Sometimes this could be tough and feel risky!

From the start there was a clear top-down breakdown of the tasks in the project. It was no question about who would take the responsibility in the different areas. In the project it was clearly stated which persons that were expected to make the technical decisions. The designers were told: “*There is no safety net, what you decide and perform is what we get*”.

More quotes from Anna around this topic:

"I think it's good to be understaffed sometimes, it clarifies the tasks and the responsibilities. It's no time for added decision patterns".

"The designer should feel that he/she is empowered, there should be no fuzzying around with responsibilities!"

Anna emphasizes about herself: *"When I make decisions I trust my gut feeling."*

Male vs female has importance in the decision process. Female is good sometimes, sometimes not good. The female characteristics (listening, involving people, empathy) are generally appreciated but in some cases a woman being herself is not taken seriously in a dominantly male surrounding.

Sometimes in the decision process she gets a feeling that she is outside a mens' normative system, *"it's like they have some invisible norms regarding leadership, some sort of silent resistance towards a woman"*. She suspects this is something men maybe unconsciously learn in the military service.

Anna as a person:

Anna is very aware of her different subpersonalities (professional, mother, friend, partner etc.), and does not experience herself as becoming 'victim' of any of these in confused or pressed situations.

At home, in her family, she uses a more low key side of herself, the role of the wife and the mother. She recognizes that it is vital for her not to go into these sides of herself in her position as manager.

She feels its tougher for women to use authority than for men in the same position. It is important for a woman to understand in which of her subpersonalities she can use her "real" authority, Anna thinks this especially important when you are involved in personal conflicts at work. At times though, she can get the feeling that she is triggered into a less known part of herself, in situations where she cannot keep her professional distance, but instead becomes personally offended or feels a bit hurt. She is although aware of this, and then holds back.

Anna emphasizes the importance of being committed to your task: *"If you yourself don't give a 100% to the task, it will be tough for the team to do it."*

Anna as a manger and person is very visible at her work - the 240 organization was a fairly small organization, everyone knew each other. In her new job she thinks that everyone in the change project knows her and she knows at least half of them by their first names (150-200 people).

Anna experiences herself having a good balance of strong, skilful and good will. To become a successful woman and leader this is a must in the Volvo company climate, especially in large project teams with few hierarchy levels. A woman exercising her strong will more than her skilful and good will risks becoming viewed as trying to "be like a man", which can make it difficult for her to get respect for herself as a person.

This is also magnified by the answer on the following question: What do you think is your most important characteristic as a successful leader? she answers:

"I trust people"

5.5 Ivan Östholm, the Astra Losec project.

Ivan Östholm was manager research & development at Hässle, an Astra company, during the years 1954 - 1983. The last years at Hässle he also had the position of vice president. He led the development of the ulcer medicine Losec (from "Low Secretion") during the first seventeen years of the twenty-two it took to develop the drug. The reason Ivan Östholm and the Losec project was chosen is the combination of the formidable size of the project, the unique way Ivan Östholm led the project through many difficulties and threats, and the fact that the Losec represents one of the few major successes of Swedish industry in modern time. Losec has to date been used world-wide in 200 million treatments in 90 countries, it sold for 21 billion swedish crowns 1995, 27 billion 1996, and is presently the best selling drug in the world. No serious negative by-effects have as yet been found.

Ivan Östholm is now 79 years old, but still active in private enterprises for promotion of newly invented drugs. He retired from Astra 1987, the year before Losec was approved for marketing. During the last five years of the Losec project, which then was in the stage of verification and approval process, Ivan Östholm did not participate, as he had the assignment of building up a biochemical research centre in Bangalore, India.

The interview:

The interview with Ivan had no chance of following the interview agenda defined above, at any time. Questions triggered him to go into long, vivid and very interesting descriptions of technical problems, relations within and outside the project team, top management "politics", et cetera, enough to fill a book. We have despite this tried to sort the information under the interview questionnaire agenda, and have combined what Ivan talked about and what he in fact *has* written books about (two 1991 and 1995 about Hässle projects, including Losec, one 1996 specifically about Losec, and one 1988 about Ivan's experiences from building up the research centre in India). The last one about Losec, "New Creations" from 1996, Ivan used frequently during the interview, and quotations from it have been used in the text below (Ref. 12, written together with others).

Interviews with team members were not possible to do at the time, but the above referenced book contains statements from others, collected by others than Ivan Östholm, and these statements have been used to back up the information we got from the interview.

The project:

The Losec project started from an interest in Hässle for drugs against gastric ulcer. Hässle already produced Novalucol on license, and was recommended by contacts in the university world to look more into more active repression of the stomach acid production. Development at Hässle of the new product Novalucol Suspension, became Hässle's largest product during the sixties, and made it possible to finance more basic research. More and more PhDs were employed by Ivan Östholm (often against resistance from top management). The "gastrine project" officially started 1966.

Research facilities for animal tests on rats was set up. Successful research on the acid production mechanisms of rats led to the first tests on humans 1969, as the 250:th synthesized molecule had proved to reduce acid secretion on rats. The new drug however proved to be completely without effect on humans, the first serious backlash. Top management closed the project down, but Ivan Östholm had now a clear vision about the way to go, and managed to get approval to continue, now not as a project but as an exploratory research with a very limited budget. Ivan later managed to arrange new funding and resource backing from a company in the US, and the Losec project could now continue with this funding for three years.

Previously ignored warnings from outside researchers against using rats were now investigated, and the continued work was made on dogs. The following three years gave new results, but no

real breakthroughs. Ivan then looked into the factors coupled to project management and team building: he had himself chosen and employed the project managers on basis of scientific competence. Negative results had forced him to change project managers three times, but *it was not until he made the choice primarily from social competence*, that project management and team performance started to improve.

Thanks to Ivan's very broad personal network within international medical industry and the international research community, the gastrine project could despite recurring difficulties continue with the combination of internal and external funding. Another 650 new molecules were successively synthesized. New ideas and clues came from continuous contacts with international research, *which was made possible due to the fact that Ivan consciously broke one of the company rules*: publication of "secret" company research results in scientific dissertation papers had traditionally not been allowed. Ivan violated this rule, as he was convinced that scientific breakthrough can only be made if it is based on free exchange of information and ideas through the scientific community.

1972 Ivan hired his fourth project manager, Sven-Erik Sjöstrand, veterinary and PhD in pharmacology. Sven-Erik proved to be the optimal combination of scientist and skilled team worker (= Plant and Team Worker, using Belbin's terminology as described in part 3.5 'The Team Spirit'), and the project now progressed rapidly. Sven-Erik contributed with a new screening method for sorting out suitable molecules, was the driving force behind finding the final molecule, and was finally skilled enough to be able to explain the toxicological side effects of successive drugs that preceded Losec, and that several times threatened to close the project down.

January 4 1979 the 800:th molecule was synthesized, and passed all safety tests. It got the chemical name Omeprazole. It had the unique property of suppressing the acid production in the stomach, without having any effect at all in any other organs in the body. It took further development for containing the new drug in a tablet where the active molecule could survive light, heat, water in storage, and that could pass the stomach without dissolving, in order to be absorbed to the blood in the intestines. This development took another six years, and the clinical tests for world wide approval took another three years. Omeprazole, with the Astra trade mark Losec was approved and registered as a medicine 1988, 22 years after the start of the project.

It was very obvious from the interview, and from the book "New Creations" (Ref. 12), that this formidable project had never survived all the difficulties it encountered, had it not been for Ivan Östholm and his clear and steady vision of the goal, his calm and intelligent persistence, his large personal network, and maybe most important, his keen interest in and engagement with people.

The company and the organization:

Hässle was at the start of the gastrine project not a big company. The research lab had about forty employees. During the years of the project both the company and the research group grew, and the latter had about 350 employees when Ivan retired 1987. Despite this growth it seems that the question of company structure or type of organization never was an issue - Ivan's management of the research activities seemed to have been based entirely on his personal knowledge of each person in the department. The project was organized in subprojects with their own subproject managers, but the day-to-day activities were never the less supervised in detail by Ivan himself.

As Ivan was a member of the top management (one of the vice presidents) in addition of being manager of the research department and the top project manager of the gastrine project, support or resistance from top management were within the area of Ivan's personal network. He never had to "fight" organizational or bureaucratic blocks, as his connection with the top decision area was on a personal and day-to-day level, and communication was mostly open and honest

(although not always harmonious).

Ivan had himself decision power over the whole operation, and he had the sole responsibility over the budget on a yearly basis. Only when it came to extensions of the budget, or when having to defend the continuation of the project due to backlashes and failures, Ivan had to work together with the top management of the company to reach financing solutions.

Ivan had also the sole responsibility of employing people, including subproject managers, and transferring people to other positions within Hässle when they did not perform. In the latter cases, he did this by the principle that every person has useful resources and a large potential of growth, and that poor performance is probably in most cases due to that the person has been put on the wrong type of work.

The decision process:

The decision process in the project, as long as it is here limited to the internal decision process, was at all times based on consensus within the research team. Ivan's role, as he himself was not a trained scientist with an academic degree, was to act as a catalyst, encouraging key persons to investigate and work with what Ivan intuitively felt was important. Ivan's intuition seemed to have been based on a combination of technical experience and of a capacity to judge people's creative powers.

Once a decision was made, everyone worked according to the agreements. But at the same time a critical discussion was always encouraged by Ivan, this way letting all pertinent information flow freely, so that if new paths could be followed in good time before becoming trapped in dead-ends (= thorough Deliberation in our description of the Decision Process).

The few times this happened anyhow, the atmosphere was such that prestige and personal pride never became an obstacle, on the contrary the dead-ends triggered an even higher level of critical investigation and creative re-processing of existing research data.

The decision processes in the project, had to be pursued in a strict scientific and methodical way due to the large risks involved (long project, risk for toxic by-effects, etc.), and can therefore be well described by the terms proposed in part 3.2 'The Decision Process' on page 8: purpose - deliberation - choice - affirmation - planning - execution.

On the question on what he believed to be the major factor behind project failures / project successes, Ivan responded

- Failure criteria: Insufficient information and knowledge. Leaders with poor social skills.
- Success criteria: That you as the project manager have a clear picture of what you want, and that you make it clear to everyone involved, *continuously*. That people are continuously acknowledged *and rewarded* for their achievements, and that they have fun. Strategic alliances in the area you are working in. That the project manager has a large personal / professional network inside and outside the company.

Leadership:

Ivan regularly walked around the labs and offices to "check the atmosphere" by having informal discussions with different people, depending on if they looked concerned or in other ways caught his attention. In the beginning of the project, when the number of people was limited to 30-40, he did this every day, but still over time when the number of people in Ivan's organisation reached 350, he made a point of "managing by walking around" at least a couple of times every week.

Ivan regarded the main task of a leader to keep the vision (=representing the Self function of the team) and to motivate people. An illustrating example of this is once when he was making his "morning walk" through the labs, he observed a newly hired woman that he felt looked

unhappy. Her work consisted of cleaning the test tubes, and was of course not one of the highest ranking jobs at the lab, most of the other employees being PhDs and the like. Ivan despite this treated her in the same way as anybody else: he invited her to his office for a chat. Here it became clear to him that it was the very fact that the academic level at the lab was so high, that caused the problem: she felt very unimportant and “simple”, and didn’t think that anyone else at the lab even noticed her. Ivan took good time, and explained to her in terms that she could understand, why cleaning of the test tubes was a very important task at the laboratory. Many misleading or erroneous test results have occurred because of contaminated test tubes. He assured her that he had observed how well she had performed in her work and that others also appreciated this, although they might not have expressed this, due to high work load.

The woman walked out of Ivan’s office with an entirely new posture and self confidence. She stayed with them a long time, and made friends with many of the other, at all levels of the internal organization.

Other relevant things Ivan said about leadership:

- You get power from two places: from above and from below. From above you get responsibility and mandate to decide, authority to follow up. From below you get the visions, the ideas, important information, trust and loyalty. Leadership is to never forget the latter, to always stay humble.
- *“I got one good piece of advice from my father when I left home: always choose partners that are more skilled than yourself”*. I have followed this advice all my life, and always been open with what I know and what I don’t. Need of prestige is poisonous.
- Scared people don’t create anything! The leader must always himself take the full responsibility for mishaps and failures, and be prepared to support his people against the outside world. People must have the right to make mistakes and to get opportunities to learn from them.
- Always assign people a little more than they believe themselves that they can handle, and let them enjoy the full pleasure of succeeding. If there are no good official ways of rewarding people, invent unofficial ways...
- People are motivated by the combination of several things: a meaningful task, preferably a task which constitutes a challenge, to be acknowledged for their achievements, to get material benefits in proportion to their skills and responsibility *and* in proportion to the good they have contributed.
- In order to motivate ambitious and high performing young professionals, a good salary and other positive factors around the work is not enough. There is also a need for positive role models, people who are known for having made important contributions in their field. As it often happens in large organizations, these people are not properly recognized and rewarded, and “disappear” in the anonymity of a large development group. Good leadership is therefore to bring extraordinary performance forward to be known for its true worth, and to reward the contributors properly, in proportion to the contribution.
- There is no “perfect” model for how to organize R&D. The essential is that the organization is flexible enough, so it can be adjusted to work well for the creative and innovative persons in the group.

From Ivan's book "New Creations" (Ref. 12), following was selected as typical for Ivan's view on leadership - Ivan's Ten Commandments for the project manager:

1. You shall let the visions and the quality goals at all times remain central.
2. You shall develop unique knowledge, preferably together with the academic world.
3. You shall create a working climate suited for radical innovations.
4. You shall execute a creative leadership.
5. You shall value flexibility more than large resources and "the right" organization.
6. You shall prioritize your goals rather than get more resources.
7. You shall decentralize and this way free creative powers.
8. You shall diversify within your core competence and then exercise perseverance.
9. Remember that the new is created by individuals: the innovator and the entrepreneur.
10. You shall reward the innovators and the entrepreneurs and you will prosper and live long in your company."

Ivan as a person:

Ivan never had organizational position as a personal goal, on the contrary he a number of times declined offers for higher ranking positions within Astra, in order to remain with what he considered to give him the most personal satisfaction: research, challenge, coaching innovative people. He always saw his position as top manager for R&D as *one of the means* for making it possible for the skilled researchers to reach the goals.

Ivan's focus on establishing personal relationships with everyone he dealt with, privately or professionally, made him over time establish a very large personal network, within and outside the company. The real power that this network represented was considerably larger than Ivan's formal power, although he was not consciously aware of this, neither at the time, nor at the interview when it was pointed out to him.

In terms of subpersonalities, Ivan did not experience himself as being, thinking or feeling different depending on context or surrounding. He felt like "myself" always, and treated everyone with the same respect and openness, expecting and (from most people) getting the same in return. This did not mean that Ivan was "nice" all the time, on the contrary he never avoided conflicts if he deemed it necessary, but he was very strict on discriminating between the actual disagreement and the persons involved. "*Conflicts coming out of personal prestige are deadly*" (for the working climate).

The impression is that Ivan operated by means of a small number of definite subpersonalities (as described above in part 3.4 'The Human Psyche - the Team "Psyche"'), that the focus on which to use depending on situation was not conscious, but that these subpersonalities formed a well integrated "core personality". It seems that Ivan treated others *as if* he knew about the concept of subpersonalities, intuitively differentiating between the external behaviour of others and their inner motivation and needs. (Responding instead of reacting.)

In terms of will power, Ivan has large amounts of strong (and obvious) will, well balanced by both skilful will and good will. Example of his good will is his view on the purpose of a company: profit should never be the number one priority, even if important. Number one priority should be possibility for personal and professional growth of individuals and groups. This together with a good bonus system, will lead to work satisfaction, which according to Ivan is the most important factor in making a company profitable.

It seems that everyone around Ivan sensed this constant and unwavering good will, which probably explains a large part of the very strong loyalty people felt towards him as a person, even at times when their loyalty for the company could be shaken.

6. THE IDEAL LEADER

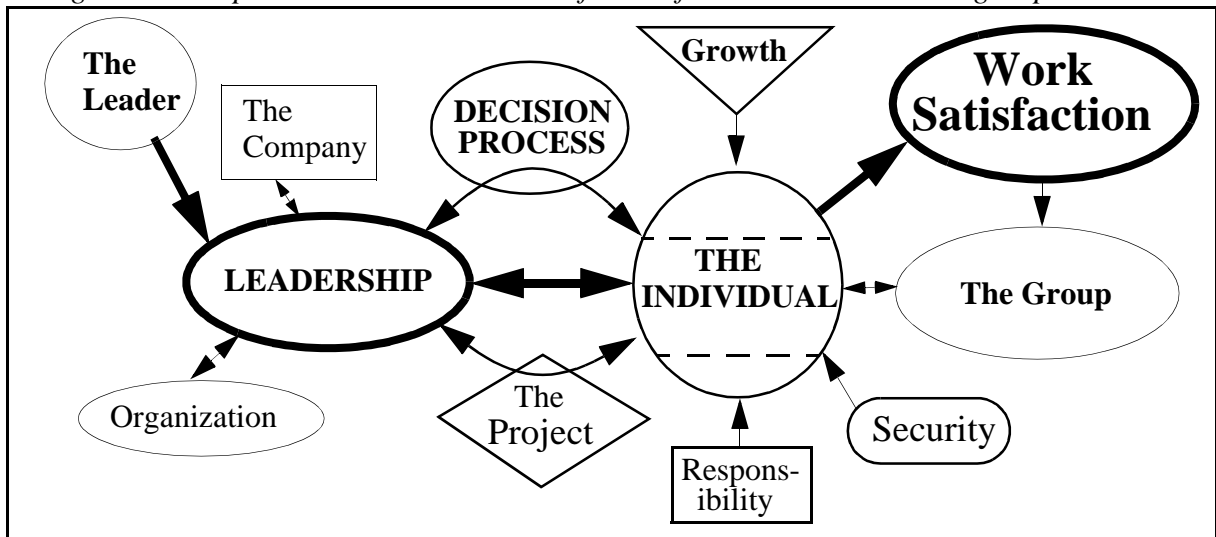
Before going into the interview phase of compiling this paper, we naturally had expectations and ideas about what we would find, much due to our personal acquaintance with two of the project managers on each part of us. We were although surprised about some of our findings. The similarities in certain aspects between the five project managers were larger than we expected, despite the large differences in context, i.e. technical field, length of the projects, different companies, different gender of the project manager. These similarities are all around the factors of leadership, and social skills of the project manager as a person. This does not imply that other factors, like company culture, project type, context, etc, cannot have significant influence, on the contrary they in most cases have. It does imply, though, that a mature and clear leadership *always* seems to have a significant influence on if and how a project develops towards success (defined within the context of the project itself).

As many of these factors are in the area of what we in part 1. 'BACKGROUND, PURPOSE' called the "intangibles" of project management, we have not chosen to summarize our findings with the aid of tables or graphs or other comparative methods. Rather, in order to attempt a conclusion from the interviews, with the suggested theoretical framework as the context, we have below tried to make a synthesis of the interviews, by describing an "invented" project manager (in order to simplify the text, female gender has been chosen, for reasons given below in part 7.1 'The Importance of "Female" Qualities on the "Intangibles"'). The properties of this "synthesized" project manager are the "common denominators" of significant positive factors from both the interview material and the theory, as applied to the observations.

The assessment of which factors could be judged as positive with regard to creating work satisfaction has thus been made from a combination of the expressed view of the interviewed project managers and the theoretical framework used. We have after some parts of this constructed interview inserted a coupling to the theoretical framework, with references to applicable parts of part 3. 'THEORETICAL MODELS'.

Using the concepts used in the beginning of our work, as illustrated in Figure 1 on page 7, one way of graphically illustrating our findings can be a reorganized variant of the figure:

Figure 9. The process towards work satisfaction for the Individual / the group



NN, the XX project.

NN had been project manager for a number of projects in the company, before she became project manager for project XX. She was chosen by the company to lead this very large project on the basis of a number of personal and professional traits, documented through the outstanding track record from the previous projects. These personal traits naturally included technical, administrative, economical and commercial skills, but emphasis had been put on her social skills, personal authority as well as a large and well established personal network within and outside the company, on all levels. Actually, the latter traits were thought to be the ones that compensated NN's relative lack of personal interest in formalized project steering tools, especially as she was known to have good judgement in choosing personal assistants, skilled at the formal parts of project administration.

The project:

The project was, as most projects in the company, of a size such that a failure would have jeopardized the company's ability to survive. NN said about this, that this had been one of the driving factors when she accepted the responsibility. The challenge, the sense of having to use her maximum level of performance in order to "pull it through", and the potential good it would do for the company. With "good for the company" NN meant not only profit, but equally much public goodwill, an enhanced company spirit, increased security for the employees, the possibility for rewarding the key contributors. NN talked a lot about the company spirit, and always talked about the different major accomplishments during the project in "we"-form.

On the question on which phase she had been most pleased with, NN first denied that there had been any difference - she had felt that one of her important responsibilities had been to at all times hold and make known the vision, the ultimate goal of this project. After a while, though, she admitted that two phases had been more fun than the others. The first one had been the definition phase, when she had been appointed to put together the best people the company had, and when they as a team had brainstormed, tossed wild ideas back and fourth during late evenings and even nights. Later in the project she sometimes missed the sense of pioneer spirit, the feeling of belonging to "the Iron Gang". The other phase she enjoyed was when the product was introduced on the market: the moment of truth. Meeting with the customers, building the necessary trust. Not trust in that the product would function perfectly, an unrealistic illusion, but trust in that the project team could and would respond to complaints quickly and efficiently.

On the question of which factors NN thought contributed most to the success of the project, NN answered without hesitation "*the team spirit. Hadn't we liked and respected each other the way we did, and had we not dared to deal with our conflicts the way we did, we would never have pulled it through.*"

On the question of which factors had created the most problems, NN wasn't as firm on any major factor, as the success factor above, but listed a number of things that had caused them problems: lack of openness from some individuals with important information, both going top-down and bottom-up. Even if NN exercises "managing by walking around" and this way stays on top of what was happening in the project, now and then both managers and individual employees could try to "cover up" some mistake. This always proved detrimental and sometimes disastrous, and at some instances caused considerable delays. Other negative factors NN mentioned was when individual managers, often in top management, tried to put unrealistic short-term economical restraints on the project, by introducing different procedures for forcing in information. "*If you don't dare to trust people, at the same time as following up on a person-to-person basis, people are not going to take the full responsibility for what they have been asked to accomplish. If you try to do your follow-up only with some idiotic centralized computer tool, you are really not treating people like grown-ups, and they will act correspondingly - with defiance and disloyalty.*"

The company:

The company has a balanced matrix organization, where the centres of competence are responsible for keeping and developing resources, both in form of people and machines, computer tools, methodology, handbooks, process / procedure and routine systems, etc. Almost everything produced, whether in material form or in the form of development of new services, is made in project and sub-project form, using resources from one or several of the centres of competence. These centres of competence are organized both in the areas of technology and in the areas of market research and promotion / sale. This way there is a good balance between the necessary “technology push” and the equally necessary “market pull”.

Project managers are chosen from the competence centres, with the exception for the project managers for large projects like XX. These project managers are generally members of the top management of the company - NN is vice president and technical director, at the same time as being project manager of XX. Other project managers for larger projects are organized in a special top management staff office.

NN said that this way of organizing project management had been one of the important conditions when she agreed to take on XX. *“Without the power of decision I had as technical director, I would never have accepted the huge responsibility of leading the XX project, which was of strategic importance for the company, and also constituted a major risk.”*

The organization of the project:

The project was broken down into a number of sub-projects, each with it's own sub-project manager, selected personally by NN. These reported directly to NN, and together with her reported on a regular basis to the Project Steering Comity. The Comity consisted of members from top management and from the owners of the company.

The actual organization of each sub-project team was the responsibility of the individual sub-project manager, and the teams were thereby not organized identically. Rather their forms of organizations depended much on the type of work they were doing, and also changed over the different phases of the project. All in all, the notion of organizing didn't seem crucial to NN: *“If you know your people, the way I do, you can trust them with organizing their daily work themselves.”* It seems that this for the untrained eye “sloppy” way of organizing was possible thanks to very well established and well functioning administrative systems for planning, spreading information, documentation, configuration control, etc. All of these systems were supported by a very active IS/IT department, where members of this department were physically placed in the different sub-projects, at least during the initial building-up phase. This way it seems like the development of these systems had been done in close conjunction with the “end users”, and thus well suited for the work.

Another important factor for the success of the project despite the seeming lack of strict project organization, was the good cooperation between NN, the sub-project managers, and the different managers of the “line organization”. The latter had the full responsibility for that people had the required competence and training, and for selecting and developing suitable development tools. They also had not only the right to object to what they thought was incorrect ways of pursuing the sub-projects, they had the officially pronounced *duty* to do this. This of course led to recurring conflicts between “project” and “staff”, but NN said *“had it not been for all these conflicts, we would have made a number of awful mistakes. Nothing like a good conflict to boil up a really creative soup!”*

The decision process:

“I was never uncertain about that it was I myself that had to take the strategically important or otherwise critical decisions during the project. But at the same time I never felt doubtful whether the decision I made would be accepted - somehow it felt like I was only confirming the

collective will of the whole team in pronouncing my formal decision.”

When interviewing NN about the decision process, she said that there of course was a formal process for making critical decisions, defined in the project steering procedure book. But that when coming to the toll gates and mile stones defined in this procedure, it always had felt like the decision had been taken informally way ahead of these predefined points.

Looking into the informal decision process, it became clear that a lot of thing happened seemingly chaotic but with a certain logic:

First, NN always at all times made sure that everyone, at all levels of the organization, was informed *personally* of the project goals, both the final and the intermediate. She naturally did this by using the formal information channels, but also by spending a large portion (she estimated it to at times be up to 30 to 40%) of her working time walking around the working area, stopping here and there for a chat. On the surface, these informal discussions were about what the person was doing at the moment, and how it progressed, but at the same time NN always put what they were talking about into the larger context of the goals of the project, including how things would affect the end customer. NN pointed out that these “chats” also gave her more valuable information about where the project was, than any of the formal sub-project reports she of course also required her sub-project managers to issue on a regular basis.

(This is described in part 3.2 'The Decision Process', 'The Act of Will' from Assagioli: “The purpose, Aim, or Goal, based on Evaluation, Motivation and Intention”)

Secondly, NN before critical decisions always gathered the involved key persons for one or several brainstorming meetings. With “key persons” NN did not necessarily mean the sub-project managers, line managers or technical experts only, although these were in most cases also included in the meetings. Key persons could also be an individual design engineer, test engineer, logistics planner, vendor representative, or whoever that in the specific phase they were in of the project, just at that moment had some kind of key role. A key role that, even if the responsibility of this person in the hierarchy of the organization could be formally low, would in the case of a failure in this area cause severe disturbances to the whole project. It was also clear that NN, by the personal network she through her “walking around” had established, always knew who these key persons were.

(This is, although NN didn't have a name for it, what in part 3.2 'The Decision Process' constitutes the second phase of “The Act of Will” - deliberation.)

First after this, NN was ready to formally take the critical decision. She often did this by in short notice calling together the parts of the project team involved in the decision, or in the case of “larger” decisions, the whole team, and informed about the background, the alternatives, and which alternative she now had decided upon. She also at this meeting always had a group discussion, to check that everybody had understood the decision and what was expected from them, and finally reminded them of the importance of sticking to the goal. Team member: *“We always felt like hockey players after these meetings. Sometimes exhausted by the hard game so far, but with new fighting spirit after a short brake, discussions about the match so far, changes in the strategy, and the friendly but clearly demanding Go for it! from our coach NN.”*

(=third and fourth phase of the Act of Will: Decision and Affirmation.)

After the decision had been taken by NN, she expected her sub-project managers to break it down into a concrete plan for each subproject, or to revise the existing plans to reflect the new decision, and to present this at a joint project meeting soon after. The sub-plans were at this meeting, with the help of an on-line computer driven large screen presentation system in the conference room, built together into the project master plan.

These type of meetings were held on a regular basis, even when there were no critical decisions to be made. Depending on the criticality, extra meetings were held in conjunction to the

planning meetings, in order to at all times keep the project master plan current. *“If my plan did not at every moment reflect the present situation, and the future as I wanted it, how could I expect people to trust it and respect it as a valid planning tool? Without good information people cannot take responsibility, with good information they cannot avoid taking it!”*

(=fourth phase of the Act of Will: Planning and Working out a Program.)

On the question of how she managed so well in making people really follow the plan, NN answered almost a little surprised over the question *“I never made them follow the plan, they followed the plan because they all had participated in making it, and did this because everyone knew that it was the logical thing for them to do. Diverting from the plan, or delaying without proper replanning, would only cause them themselves a lot of extra trouble, as everything we did in the different departments was so interconnected.”* It was obvious though, that even if everyone respected the plan, NN knew from personal knowledge of people, which departments and which individuals needed more following-up than others. As she did this in her typical informal manner, this follow-up was not experienced by people as criticism, but rather as a personal interest and engagement from their project manager. *“It felt like she always trusts us to do our best, but she also always in an uncanny way knows where we are, what is working out OK and what is as yet uncertain.”*

(=fifth phase of the Act of Will: the Direction of the Execution.)

Leadership:

Much of what has been described above under the Decision Process illustrates NN’s style of leadership, and why it seems so effective. NN does not place herself “above” all the others, she never forces anyone to oblige to what she wants. Rather, she places herself in the middle of the team, like a conductor of an orchestra. In this position, she is regarded by the team members *both* like “one of us” *and* the Project Manager with capital P and M.

The explanation of this seeming paradox can probably be sought in how NN regards herself: she clearly differentiates between her position in the organization and herself as a person. As the Project Manager she has been given the authority and the responsibility to lead the others, as the person NN she considers herself to be *“a common person like everyone else here”*. At the same time NN paradoxically does not regard herself *acting* differently in her role of PM, compared with how she acts towards others privately. In both situations, it seems like she relates with others on a personal plane, a little more intimate maybe in her private life, but in essence no real difference in the quality of the relationships she has.

It seems that this ability to be *both* personal and professional, the absence of the usual split between “work” and “private life” that is more common among managers in general, that makes people around NN to respect her the way they obviously do. Even during tough times in the company when people’s loyalty towards the company was shaken, the loyalty for NN as a person never decreased - it seemed like people never really saw her as a representative of the company, which again is paradoxical as she actually was this as a technical director.

“I always felt that NN knew what I was doing, even if she of course not always knew the details. I have never before experienced someone in her position so openly praise someone who had done something maybe extraordinary, or who had managed against all odds to keep a time plan despite external disturbances. When this happened, it made us all feel proud of how we were pursuing the project.”

Even if NN in her position as PM was not formally involved in the salary and bonus system of the company, she took time at least once yearly to discuss the professional and social performance of the team members with their “home organization” line managers. In the case of extraordinary performance of individuals or groups of individuals, she would actively work for

that the company recognized this by extra benefits, most often in the form of subsidized parties or picnic trips with spouses, or in some cases extra salary bonuses.

In the case of poor performance from someone in the team, NN would never refer this as a problem to be solved by the line manager or the personnel department. Rather, she would always take the first step herself, and interview the person herself first, to get a picture of what could be behind the lack of expected performance. *“In a big company like this, a problem is in most cases never because the person is ‘wrong’, but because he or she can have been assigned the wrong job.”* NN could spend good time discussing with the individual him/herself in cases like this, and then together with the person’s manager try to find a job more stimulating to this person, more fitted to the person’s talents and personal goals.

Instead of the usually bitter and angry person one can encounter when someone has been removed from a certain job and assigned another, due to poor performance, we had an entirely different experience from talking to a couple of people that had changed job during the project. They were without exception even *more* loyal to NN and the company after this change than they had been before, and could talk about the “failure” in a very matter-of-fact way, not as a personal failure, but as a case of ending up in the wrong job for them, and the subsequent necessary change for something better suited for their specific skills.

NN as a person:

On the question of how NN regarded herself as a person, and how this was connected to her role as project manager, NN said:

“If I would try to ‘act’ the program manager as a role, it would never work. People would soon see through that, and I would end up defending the role as if it was a fortress. I can not act as anyone else than myself, and when I do that I think everyone around me gets the courage to do the same. I think that when I show others that I don’t have to hide myself, including my weak sides, then others can be equally open. This way I feel that we after the necessary trust has been built, and this may take some time depending on person, I can enter a personal relationship. This relationship doesn’t need to be private, even if it some cases also becomes that, but it can always be personal, free from role-acting and pretending from either of us.”

It became clear during the interview that the natural self-confidence and natural personal authority NN exposes is partly the result of conscious work from NN’s side. She told about how it was in the beginning of her career, when she despite high academic degrees often felt inferior and unsure of herself. She had for example an upbringing where conflicts were regarded as uncivilized, and she had developed very subtle ways of avoiding conflicts, or when unavoidable, ways of concealing conflicts or covering them up. This had caused her problems in her work, where she found herself repeatedly compromising herself between her personal values and believes and what she thought others expected from her.

She also told about how when she started to be appointed to management roles, due to her professional skills, she started to feel more and more “split”, as if there was a different persons inside herself, “NN the boss” and “myself”. Also in other parts of life, like in a sports club she together with her husband had joined, she felt like she there was again “another person”.

Thanks to the very progressive personnel and management policy at the company, NN was early in her career invited to a mentor program, connected to a program of courses including both professional skills training and personal development training. During this mentor program, that went on for a number of years, she soon felt she could trust her mentor with her “private” problems in her work. Together, they set up a training program for her that included both some more ordinary training courses in project management and business economy, but also a long-term training course in personal development. This latter course was spread out over three years, and a small group of people in similar positions at the company as NN’s participated the whole time. The training included two one-week intensives per year, and a small number of two-day

seminars in between.

During this training, called the Self-Cognition Training (our comment: which does not exist in real life, but which has been suggested and described in Ref. 8), NN through experiential methods in combination with lectures in basic psychology (common psychological defences, conflict handling, group dynamics, etc.), could see how she actually had internal “splits” between parts of her psyche, and how she was acting these out in the different situations of her life. She could see how this acting out not only had been subconscious, but also in some cases detrimental for her ability to always relate to others in a constructive way. NN told how she during the training soon could see how she had been trying to hide what she considered to be her weaknesses, instead of accepting them as part of her personality, and to become able to compensate for them. *“I learned that I am not my weaknesses, I have them.”*

In the group setting of the Self-Cognition training, NN said she dared to experiment with new and more constructive ways of relating to others, even if it at times had led to quite severe conflicts in the group. The training was led by a professional in the field of group psychology, and these conflicts could all the time be contained and solved inside the training group.

“I would probably have reached the knowledge about myself I have today without this training, but it would have taken me more time, and for sure more pain! Besides this, it was the most fun I’ve had in all my life, I really wish everybody could get the opportunity to do this, not only us managers.”

7. REFLECTIONS

7.1 The Importance of “Female” Qualities on the “Intangibles”

When writing the above hypothetical example of the “ideal” project manager, we first wrote the example using male gender, by pure habit. Reflecting on what really is behind a “pure habit” like this, we then changed all references to “he” and “him” to “she” and “her”, and were surprised by the different “feel” the text got by this change. (The reader is encouraged to do this experiment for him/herself.) This difference is probably due to a number of things:

- women in the corporate world are very seldom selected to positions like this, even if they have the formal competence. The quote “*Without the power of decision I had as technical director...*” has an unfamiliar sound when coming from a woman.
- many of the personal properties within the area of social skills, described as important for the project manager, are generally attributed to be more natural for women, compared to men.
- some of the other properties, like strong will and clarity, are more seldom attributed as natural for women. On the contrary, they are called something else when coming from a woman, like manipulation and nagging.

This leads to our first recommendation: actively promote women to accept positions of higher rank in the organization. Do this by a combination of things: make work training programs and academic education in fields applicable for future project managers more attractive for *both* men and women. Actively delegate more responsibility to women at all levels in the organization. Counter resistance from the “hidden agenda” of the company culture.

We think that doing this will by itself constitute a good training for *both* men and women in becoming better managers, and specifically in this context, project managers. One of the strong reasons for this is that the “personal psychosynthesis”, which we think is necessary for becoming a good leader of any kind, includes the integration of traditional “male” properties like strong will, clarity, logical thinking with traditional “female” properties like skilful and good will, empathy and holistic thinking.

Roberto Assagioli (Ref. 1) and Carl Gustaf Jung have in their theories of the human psyche strongly pointed out that we all, men and women alike, have all of these qualities as potentialities, but that men by their upbringing repress their “female” side, and women their “male” side. By creating a better balance between the sexes in working places with gross imbalance in the proportion of men / women, the “personal psychosynthesis” of both men and women will be strongly facilitated. (This is applicable not only to the traditionally male world of development project and other industry ventures, but also to traditionally female working places like social care offices, daycare centres, some types of hospital clinics, etc.)

So, a conscious promotion of balancing the present domination of male qualities with female qualities is strongly recommended. This balancing can be done in several ways, best in combination, as increasing men’s knowledge of women, increasing men’s contact with their own feminine qualities, as well as increasing the number of women in positions of higher responsibility. In order to make the latter point happen more, it is probably fruitful to also educate women about how men function and communicate, as well as help women get into better contact with their inner male qualities.

7.2 Training for Work Satisfaction Promotion

As we tried to make obvious in the “ideal” interview above, we believe from the gathered material that the ability of the program manager (or of any manager for that part) to create an atmosphere of work satisfaction, is closely coupled to the degree of self-knowledge and psychological integration of the manager him/herself. There are a number of factors, that have come out from the interviews above, and that also are backed up by both the selected theory and by the literature references, that contribute to this:

- the ability to be conscious of inner, different parts of one’s psyche.
- the acceptance of all these parts, with strengths and weaknesses, without hiding them.
- the integration of these parts into a unified whole, without deleting the different properties.
- the ability to consciously use the power of personal will, both strong, skilful and good will.
- a set of values, that include both pride and humbleness for oneself, and respect for others.
- the ability to “see through” other’s acting out, and to see the true person behind.
- the ability to engage in a true dialogue with another person, or with a group.
- the ability and courage to persevere, to keep a vision, to think independently of others
- the knowledge of male / female qualities (in both sexes) and the ability to use these personally and in team building.

These skills, which are included in what we have called the “intangibles” of project management, spring partly from the basic personality of the project manager, but are also to large extent acquired. They are similar to the skills needed by human relations oriented professions. In these professions, the necessary skills are mostly acquired by formal training. This training is based on a combination of psychological theory, experiential learning, and supervised practice (one of the authors, Lars Gimstedt, has experience from this)

Such a training, at a level suited for the project management role, would speed up the proficiency with regards to the “intangibles”. A conceptual form for this, the Self-Cognition Training, was suggested in the “synthesized” interview in part 6. ‘THE IDEAL LEADER’ above.

Therefore, we claim that the answer to our original question, “**Can the Project Manager through conscious attitude and direct action create this fundament?**” will be YES. Every potential project manager with a sound personality and proper technical skills, can by proper training acquire social skills faster than without any training.

We are aware that this conclusion is made by induction, using other trainings for human relation professions as “proof”. A deductive conclusion can only be made by assessing the results of management training programs including training in self-knowledge, social skills and group dynamics. We are looking forward to see whether the signs of that this is actually happening here and there in the corporate world is an actual trend. We believe it is, and conclusive evidence will without doubt be brought forward. More and more of what today is called the “**intangibles**” of leadership will become “**tangible**”, and therefore possible to talk about, to take into account and to actively work with.

A recommendation therefore is to recognize this trend, realize that it is not “another management theory fad”, and initiate and support the inclusion of human resource training for managers. Such a training is of course useful for managers on all levels, but top level project managers and project managers should be prioritized, due to the larger impact these persons have on people and outcome.

7.3 Concluding Comments

We have above outlined a theoretical context for understanding and dealing with the factors underlying work satisfaction. The chosen theory has been focused towards the leader as a person, as a result of our findings in the interviews made with five “successful” project managers. As a summary, following comments can be made on each of the main concepts used:

1. **Work satisfaction:** The underlying concept, that cannot be defined or broken down further, but which rather is the effect and the experience of a number of different contributing factors. We have found that although factors like the company culture, the work situation, the type of project, etc, can be important, the strongest common factor has been found to be good, clear and mature leadership.
2. **The decision process:** A process where each step is crucial and must be finalized before taking the next: purpose, deliberation, decision, affirmation, planning and execution. We have seen how good leadership includes a conscious and firm inner decision process on the part of the project manager, and how by empowering the project teams (core plus subteams) actively in this process, the experience among all involved, including the project manager, has been that decisions have “taken themselves”, when the time was right.
3. **The Will:** The central function of the ‘I’, together with non-judgemental awareness. A function that in the mature leader includes both strong will, skilful will and good will, balanced towards each other. We have concluded that this central function of any leader both is a function of the leader’s basic personality, but that it also can be greatly developed, either by oneself, by reflecting on one’s experience or with the help of more formalized training.
4. **The human psyche - the team “psyche”:** A model for the human psyche has been presented, and where the emphasis was on how it can be described as being built up by subpersonalities, in the ideal case coordinated by a central ‘I’. We concluded that a necessary condition for what we called the “psychosynthesis” of the team, where each team member becomes an integrated and effective tool for the benefit of the whole, is that the team leader has gone through his or her personal psychosynthesis. Being able to lead others requires a good self-knowledge and a sound self-esteem, such that one can truly take on the ‘I’ function of the team.
5. **The team spirit:** Here we described how the work satisfaction of each member of a group adds up to a good team spirit, and how this is the result of the group psychosynthesis. We concluded that the responsibility for that the group psychosynthesis progresses is mainly the team leader’s, although this responsibility also is based on the view that he/she is dealing with grown-up people, responsible for themselves.
6. **The project manager role:** Here we suggested that the project manager has a considerable responsibility in building both the team and the team spirit. We described with the help of our chosen theory how this can be done by the project manager ‘being’ both a clear Self of the project group (holding and making clear the Purpose and Goal of the project), and a clear ‘I’ of the project group (seeing, making team members feel seen and appreciated, directing the project without over-controlling). We have concluded that the ability of the project manager to do this can be enhanced by training, and that this training comes from conscious reflection on one’s experiences, from reflections on ideal models, and that it also can be done in formal ways, included in the management training programs of the company.



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