

# Strategy, leadership and variables for drive forces

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**The master thesis is the one of last parts of an education to become a mechanical engineer at Lunds Tekniska Högskola. It provides both the possibility to show what the student has learned and to get deeper into subjects that the student find interesting. In this study subjects like strategy, leadership and variables for drive forces are treated. First the background will be presented, afterwards follow a presentation of the methods that were used, the results and finally a discussion.**

## 1 Background

KrAft is a project that has the overall aim to develop Competence Reflection Business-development and Growth in small and medium sized companies (The capitals in the Swedish language gives the name krAft which means power). Another aim of the project is to provide possibilities for companies and universities to cooperate and to exchange knowledge and “know-how”. A group consists of 5-7 different companies, which are represented by two participants each, together with a project-leader and a krAft-supervisor. The companies together with the supervisors form a development-theme that they find interesting and suiting. The project-leaders role is to make a program, normally consisting of 12 days in a year, where the group will have the opportunity to work with their theme and development. In the year 2000 a group in krAft was formed. The development-theme for this group was “Leadership for organizational development”. The purpose with this master thesis is to be a part of the evaluation of the participation in the project krAft and a foundation for continuous discussions within the participating companies.

Different individuals can interpret similar situations in different ways. One assumption is that people who have positive associations related to their workplace will behave more positive towards their work task. According to Brody and Erlichman the theory of Bandura means that people through observation of role models are able to

change the self-efficacy.<sup>1</sup> If it is possible to change the self-efficacy and thereby increase the efficiency at work then maybe good work conditions could make coworkers affect each other to do better? One of the questions asked in this study is how coworkers understand their situation at work. In their understanding of the situation a focus at leadership is made.

A second question asked in this study is if there have been any changes in the companies during the time that they have been a part of the krAft-program? If there have been changes in the companies, can they be related to corporate strategy and/or the krAft-program? Another question that was asked in the study was how well the knowledge of strategy is spread in the company?

The limits of this master thesis are that the understanding of a work-situation will only be investigated from the perspective of *Humanivitet*, founded by Kenneth Daun. No tests regarding to validity or reliability of the inquiry of *Humanivitet* are made. Changes in the organizations are investigated on basis of the theory of strategic management described by Johnson and Scholes in the book “Exploring Corporate Strategy”. This perspective was chosen because of the close relation between strategic management and the development theme of the krAft-group, which was “Leadership for organizational development”. One of the statements by Johnson and Scholes is that strategic management is not just a concern for the top managers.<sup>2</sup>

*Humanivitet* is a relatively new theory still under development by Kenneth Daun. The aim is to make a new way to point out directions for companies to develop based on human factors. According to Daun a lot of changes and investments are made based on technical and economic factors because it is easy to measure. If it would be possible to measure consequences in efforts made to increase the work situations, both physical and psychological, maybe more efforts would be put in that area.

## 2 Methods

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in this study and a deductive attempt was used. With deduc-

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<sup>1</sup> Brody N & Ehrlichman N, *Personality Psychology the science of individuality*, Prentice Hall, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson G och Scholes K, *Exploring Corporate Strategy*, fifth edition, Prentice Hall Europe, 1999.

tive attempt means that the reality, after the investigations, is explained through theories.

An inquiry was used to investigate how individuals in the different companies understood their work situation. The inquiry, which represented the quantitative method, consists of 60 pairs of statements where the respondent is supposed to choose the statement that best describes the situation in their company. If the respondents do not agree totally with one of the statements there are possibilities to answer more or less agreeing. But the test is formed so that they have to choose one of the statements. During the investigations the prescriptions for quantitative methods made by Kruuse<sup>3</sup> was followed. Every individual in the investigated organization were tested in order to make the results as reliable as possible.

Changes in the organizations were investigated through interviews, which is a part of the quantitative method. A semi-structured interview was chosen as a method because it could give a good opportunity to understand each individual. If there are possibilities to understand the situation of an individual there is also possibilities to understand the situation of which the individual is a part. According to Cook a lot of unstructured interviews are not as reliable as structured interview because they are more difficult to conduct without experience and the risk to lose the direction and aim of the interview is high.<sup>4</sup> A semi-structured interview gives the interviewer a good possibility to investigate interesting tracks that may appear during the interview and still have a firm plan and aim to stick to. With the available resources in this study it was decided that four individuals in every organization was enough to represent the organizations. Some factors were considered in the selection of persons to interview. Examples of these were possibilities to participate in the interview, variation of work area and sex.

All results from the inquiries and interviews were put together. The results from the inquiries were analyzed on the theoretical bases from a "paper in work" by Kenneth Daun. The results from the interview were summarized in categories, which were made before the interviews were conducted, based on theories from Johnson and Scholes<sup>5</sup>. After this an interpretation of the strategic situation was made. Out of the interpretation of the strategic situations conclusions about how well the strategy is spread was made.

### 3 Results

The analyze of the results show that the companies vary a lot in how their work situation is interpreted. Compared to other companies used as references the investigated organizations had a high degree of freedom in their work, which is positive from the perspective of *Humanivitet*. Overall the strategy was well spread in the companies, which support the statement that Johnson and Scholes

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<sup>3</sup> Kruuse, *Kvantitativa forskningsmetoder i psykologi*, Studentlitteratur, Lund, 1999.

<sup>4</sup> Cook, *Personnel Selection*, Wiley, 2001.

<sup>5</sup> Johnson G och Scholes K, *Exploring Corporate Strategy*, fifth edition, Prentice Hall Europe, 1999.

made "strategy isn't just a matter for top management". All of the investigated organization strives to develop organizations where individuals have opportunities to take a lot of responsibility in their work. That can be interpreted as the organizations have a modern view of leadership, based on strategic management. Every organization had made changes that have connections to strategic management. How much influence the project krAft has had on the processes in the companies is very difficult to make a statement about. In some cases when e.g. coworkers think of krAft as personal development or as an increase of competence, the influences of krAft are evident. Referring to the "Hawthorne effect" there sure are relations between changes and the project krAft. According to the "Hawthorne effect" an organization is influenced only by the fact that the investigation is made because the individuals in the organization observe the investigation. Even this study has probably had an effect on changes if the subjects of the inquiry and interview are reflected upon afterwards.

### 4 Discussion

Kenneth Daun states in his theory *Humanivitet* that the personal appraisal and norms affect the human drive forces.<sup>6</sup> In a doctor thesis by Jan Erik Rendahl it is found state that it is the human drive forces that affects the personal appraisals.<sup>7</sup> Whether it is one way or the other both drive forces and personal appraisal affect the behavior. One way of interpreting this is that research about work life today strives against a deeper understanding of the coworkers situation and a wider perspective than what has been done before. Earlier there has been a lot of focus on how to, in one way or another, directly manipulate or motivate coworkers' behavior. Now it is more important to understand the whole situation including why coworkers act like they do and how the work situation can be improved to stimulate people to work better. This may lead to more stimulating work situations where coworkers are more motivated. This study also shows that delegation of responsibility is common today. This is one way to motivate and engage coworkers. Maybe a manager in the future will be more of a leader that Hosking and Morley propagate who coordinates projects for the best results. They also propose that the content of a project can vary much and be everything from transporting your self to work to plan the next year's strategy.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Paper in work of Kenneth Daun, 2002-05-12.

<sup>7</sup> Rendahl, J E, *ARBETETS DRIVKRAFTER Existentiellt värde och auktoritetsorientering*, Graphic Systems, Stockholm, 1997.

<sup>8</sup> Hosking & Morley, *A social psychology of organizing*, Prentice/Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991.