

Anni Mäntylä

THE INTERACTION BETWEEN THE SUPERIOR AND THE  
EMPLOYEE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF IT IN WELL-BEING AT  
WORKPLACE

Degree Programme of International Business

2017

# TYÖNTEKIJÄN JA ESIMIEHEN VÄLINEN VUOROVAIKUTUS JA SEN MERKITYS TYÖHYVINVOINNISSA TYÖPAIKALLA

Mäntylä, Anni  
Satakunnan ammattikorkeakoulu  
Degree Programme in International Business  
Toukokuu, 2017  
Sivumäärä: 36  
Liitteitä: 1

Asiasanat: työntekijä, esimies, vuorovaikutus, työhyvinvointi

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Työhyvinvointi on erittäin ajankohtainen aihe alati muuttuvassa yhteiskunnassa. Esimies on suuressa merkityksessä, kun ajatellaan työhyvinvointia. Sekä esimiesten että työntekijöiden jaksaminen on tärkeää, kuin myös viihtyminen töissä ja molemmat näistä näyttelevät suurta osaa yrityksissä. Kun henkilöstö voi hyvin ja osaa kommunikoida keskenään, he pystyvät antamaan täyden työpanoksensa omaan työhönsä.

Tässä opinnäytetyössä pohdin sitä, miten esimiesten ja työntekijöiden välinen vuorovaikutus toimii ja miten se vaikuttaa työhyvinvointiin. Opinnäytetyön tavoitteena on selvittää millaisena sekä työntekijät että esimiehet kokevat vuorovaikutuksen ja miten se vaikuttaa työhyvinvointiin. Opinnäytetyö tehtiin sekä esimiesten että työntekijöiden näkökulmasta ja molempien vastaukset käsitellään lopussa.

Lähteinä opinnäytetyössäni käytin erilaisia työhyvinvointiin ja vuorovaikutukseen liittyviä kirja- ja internetlähteitä, mutta pääasiassa kirjalähteitä. Opinnäytetyössäni käytin kvalitatiivista eli laadullista tutkimusmenetelmää ja tutkimus toteutettiin haastatteluna. Haastateltavia oli yhteensä 8, joista 4 oli neljä esimiestä ja 4 työntekijää. Haastattelussa oli 10 kysymystä, jotka liittyivät työhyvinvointiin, motivaatioon, vuorovaikutukseen ja palautteen antamiseen ja saamiseen.

Opinnäytetyössä havaittiin, että esimiehen ja työntekijän välisellä vuorovaikutuksella on suuri merkitys työhyvinvoinnissa. Esimies toimii esimerkkinä omalla käytöksellään ja toiminnallaan ja hänen vastuullaan on huolehtia työhyvinvoinnin toimivuudesta. Esimiehen vastuulla on myös huolehtia motivoinnista ja palautteenantamisesta, mutta on tärkeää, että myös työntekijät motivoivat toisiaan ja antavat palautetta. Esimiehen ja työntekijän välillä tulee olla avoin, läsnä oleva ja luottamuksellinen suhde, jotta vuorovaikutuksella ja sitä kautta työhyvinvoinnilla on mahdollisuus onnistua.

# THE INTERACTION BETWEEN THE SUPERIOR AND THE EMPLOYEE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF IT IN WELL-BEING AT WORKPLACE

Mäntylä, Anni

Satakunnan ammattikorkeakoulu, Satakunta University of Applied Sciences

Degree Programme in International Business

May 2017

Number of pages: 36

Appendices: 1

Keywords: employee, superior, interaction, work well-being

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Work well-being is a current topic in the constantly changing society. Superior has a big role when one is thinking about work well-being. Both superiors and employee's ability to manage is important and amusement in work and both are playing a big role in companies. When the personnel are well-being and can communicate between each other, they can give their full contribution to their own work.

In this thesis, I will consider how the interaction between superiors and employees works and how it affects work well-being. The aim of the thesis is to discover how both superiors and employees experience the interaction and how it affects work well-being. Thesis was made from both employees and superiors point of view and these answers will be presented in the end of thesis.

As sources, I used different books and websites, mostly books, concerning interaction and work well-being. In this thesis, I used qualitative research method and the method was carried out in interviews. There were altogether 8 interviewees, 4 superiors and 4 employees. In the interview form, there were 10 questions which were concerning work well-being, motivation, interaction and giving and getting feedback.

In the thesis were noticed that the interaction between the employee and the superior has a huge impact in work well-being. Superior acts like an example with his or her own behaviour and actions and it's his or her responsibility to make sure that work well-being is sufficient. It's also superior's responsibility to motivate and give feedback but it's also important that the employees motivate each other and give feedback. There should be an open, present and trustworthy relationship between employee and superior so that interaction and work well-being has a chance to be sufficient.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

My thesis's purpose is to find out how interaction between employees and managers affect well-being at workplace. I have limited the subject to work well-being and interaction because the subject is interesting and work well-being is one of the most important item to improve.

I invented the subject myself but I have been talking with my colleagues about this subject and how well-being can be improved. I have been working in the case company almost 5 years now. I'm a part of management team which includes me and 6 other managers. We are responsible for effective working environment and well-being at workplace.

If interaction, openness, giving and getting feedback don't work at workplace, that influences essentially on employee's well-being at work and they go hand on hand in the working community. Interaction doesn't work if both employees and managers cannot receive and give feedback.

All the employee's, including the managers, own values, attitudes and needs effect how they act in the workplace. Of course, the organizations own behavior models which are learnt since the first day effect the actions.

The research group consists of company x's employees and managers who are all together 24. This number includes permanent and fixed-term employees, however not the summer employees. The material is collected via interviews with 5 randomly selected employees and 5 randomly selected managers.

I started to plan the thesis in December 2016. The work started in the early spring 2017. The theory part I wrote in March 2017. The interviews were held on April 2017. I introduced the subject to our management team on January 2017. The results will be introduced to the management again after the thesis is finished.

The case company wishes to stay anonymous and I will use the term company x in the text.

### 1.1 Purpose and objectives of the study

The purpose of this study is to find out how the case company's, company x's, well-being at workplace depends on the interaction between the superiors and the employees. The main goal is to develop a solution which will expedite the well-being at the workplace in the future.

The objective of this project is to improve the well-being at workplace which leads to satisfied employees and that leads to customer satisfaction which then leads to the fact that the business is profitable and that leads to satisfied higher management which then in the end leads to well-being at workplace. It's very important that the employees are satisfied and they want to stay in the company. If the turnover of employees is high, it doesn't look good for the public.

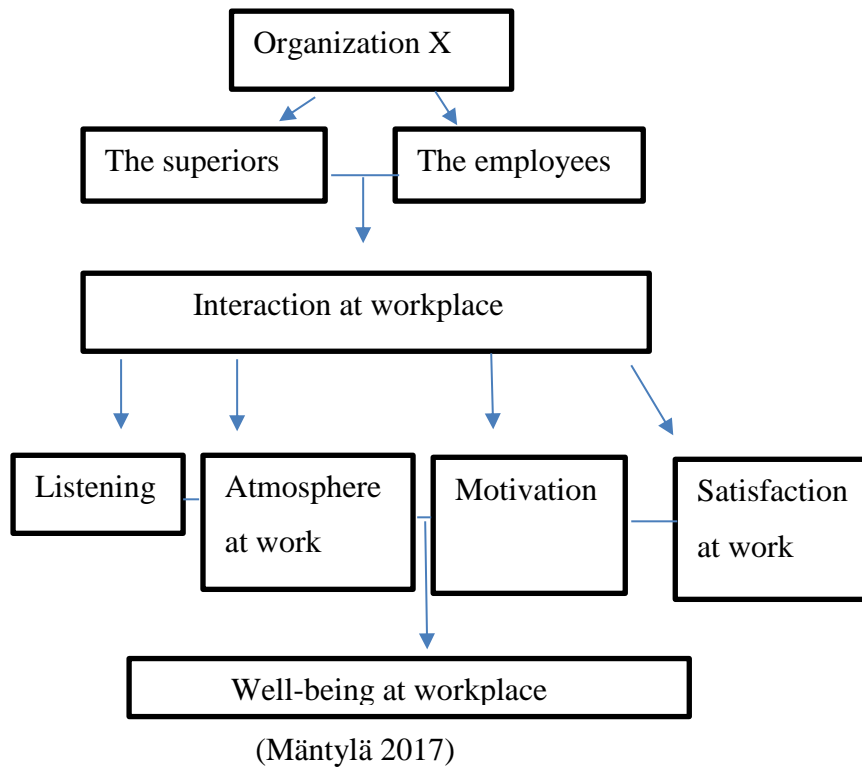
### 1.2 Boundaries of the thesis

In this thesis, the research focuses merely on reasons why well-being lacks at a company in general to find out special reasons in the case company and how it can be improved. The most major problems will be addressed and focus is to solve them.

### 1.3 Conceptual framework

This research's conceptual framework starts with the superiors and the employees. The problem will follow and then I will show what are the probable main reasons for those problems. Finding the root causes for the problems and possibly solving them are the

main aim for this project. I need to analyze the results which I will gather during the project to create a functional solution. The best result for this project would be effective work community where everyone would be equal because in this way we could eliminate all possible problems.



## 2 WORK WELL-BEING

### 2.1 Definition of work well-being

Work well-being means that work should be safe, healthy, and pleasant. Work well-being stimulates good and motivated management, atmosphere at workplace and professionalism between employees. Well-being also impacts on coping at work. Well-being at work increases productivity, effectivity, and commitment to the job. It also increases the employee's motivation, trust towards the work community, stress control and growing work satisfaction. Work community's well-being and effectiveness depend on how good is the we-spirit. Transfer of knowledge and interaction needs to be open and problems need to be faced together.

The management's job is to ensure the safety of the work environment. Fair treatment towards all the employees is necessary in order that the employees feel that they are needed and wanted in the workplace. Management and the employees are both responsible for creating a good working atmosphere. Work-wellbeing can be improved easily by just developing the working conditions and the skills of the employees and the management.

Work well-being is important for the work organizations effectiveness. To have work well-being, there needs to be common values and trust towards employees. Justice and diversity create the base for well-being. Good atmosphere, communality and we-spirit creates trust in the workplace. Co-operation between the employees and management and attendance in the work missions shows the we-spirit. Clear leadership and good management has a big influence on well-being at work. It's important for both employees and management that the atmosphere is fair and supportive. Both employees and management need to support each other to work in good spirit. (Suonsivu 2014, 58-62).



Picture 1. The effective workplace. (Ramsay 2014)



## 2.2 Measuring work well-being

Measuring work well-being can be used to evaluate and guide the actions of the work community. Work community's measure and save statistics from many different processes. The background of measurement is the desire to develop processes and get the biggest possible benefit out of it. One of the focus of measurement of well-being is to bring to the surface the possible critical problems which need to be developed.

The main focus of the measurement is to find out how the employees are getting along at the workplace and how they are functioning. The measurements are important to do precautionary so that the information about working conditions, employees and the workplace's atmosphere are discovered and possible improvement actions can be made. Measurements and monitoring them are important, so faults can be intervened and actions can be performed before the faults become into real problems.

Work well-being measurement should be preventing so that possible strengths and problems could be faced in the early stages. Good ways to measure work well-being could be:

- danger and close shave situation announcement
- development discussions
- safety audits
- monitoring education
- maintenance monitoring
- employee's safety motions
- subcontractor's operation monitoring.

Even though the main focus should be on preventing measurement, also results from responsive indicators are important so that already happened issues can be examined.

Responsive indicators could be:

- material damages and production disorders
- reclamations
- fire
- authority's comments and interference to work
- amount of personnel (age construction, gender distribution)
- employee turnover
- sick leave absences

- amount of overtime work
- accidents and occupation diseases
- retiring
- effectiveness of management and knowledge motion.

The main focus of measurement should create a tool for developing work well-being. Measurement indicators should be formed so that they support developing the right items and that they clarify items that are necessary for the organization's success and effectiveness. (Suonsivu 2014, 97-100).

### 2.2.1 Development discussions

Development discussions are kept between the employee and his or her closest superior. Development discussions are part of daily activity because it's main focus is to develop organizations actions and the knowledge of the staff. They are held once a year depending on the organizations culture. Development discussions are confidential and it contains discussion about the employees work commitment, objectives, work well-being, knowledge and how to develop the knowledge. The superior has the crucial role in the discussion because it's his or her responsibility to agree with the employee about the objectives for the employee and also discuss about the organizations objectives. In the development discussion employee and superior discuss about the employees work career and work situation outright from the previous year and conclusions are documented and later on followed. Next year's objectives are also discussed. (Surakka & Laine 2011, 158.)

### 2.3 Influencers in work well-being

There are very many influencers in work well-being. Here I handle some of them. I have chosen such influencer's which are important for my purpose.

#### 2.3.1 Work motivation

A motivated workforce is a crucial and valuable driver of business success. Motivation is an internal energy which drives individuals to attain goals to satisfy their needs and values. Motivation comes from the individual's choice of behavior and determines its form and direction, intensity of effort and persistence over time. ( Clear 2017)

Motivation at work is the organization's ability to stimulate its employees to strive towards achievement of the organizational goals. Satisfaction and well-being at work are essential components of motivation. If motivation is approached in a right way, workforce will be engaged, motivated and satisfied.

Employees have several factors that motivate him or her to the best job possible. Money is often considered the biggest factor for work motivation. Money allows the employees to live their lives the way they have wanted to live. Money can dedicate some employees to put greater time and effort in the workplace.

Personal satisfaction is one item that motivates employees to work. Work can be a passion for employees and then they look forward on going to work, they will show dedication to the organization and stay a bit longer at work if needed. Positive working environment will foster work loyalty and keeps the employees happy and motivated.

One of the best motivators is when the employees are given the chance of flexibility in their work, it can help them keep on track and stay motivated. Flexibility involves possibility to effect on holidays, vacation days and family schedules. Being supportive and flexible can be a strong motivator.

Superiors have the greatest effect on motivation at workplace. They are responsible for the environment, safety, and that the work is pleasant. Superiors divide tasks among the employees and they need to stay professional and not to favor other employees more than others. Giving the chance of influencing in matters at the workplace increases trust and leads to work motivation which is crucial for the community. (Mathe & Pavie & O'Keeffe, 2011. 5-57)



Picture 2. (Website of My English Language)

### 2.3.2 Satisfaction at work

Satisfaction at work constitutes of many different variables. Work satisfaction constitutes of attitudes and the significance which employees give to their work. Satisfaction at work effects either the reward that comes from the work or the nature of work or workplace.

Individuals have certain expectations towards work and the work community. Satisfaction at work consists of how well the expectations and experiences correlate to each other. Satisfaction includes the realization of quality of work. These qualities are the possibility to use knowledge, the clarity of job task, the independence of work, possibility to give and receive feedback and possibility to develop work. Work satisfaction can be approached from the view of wages, employment relationship advantages, working environment, advancement possibilities and continuity of work. Satisfaction at work forms from the leadership, communication, and environment at workplace. (Juholin 1999, 71-85).

### 2.3.3 Atmosphere at work

Atmosphere at work is the interaction of individuals. Management has a large effect on the atmosphere because the organizing of job tasks and how the conditions are effect. Although all individuals are different and have different personalities, they should be able to work together and have collaboration at the workplace. Open and trustworthy atmosphere has a positive effect on the work community and this increases the possibilities to get results.

Interaction and collaboration effect atmosphere. If the atmosphere is good and the work community effective, the employees feel satisfied about their well-being at work. Individuals activity, creativity, and growth are emphasized in the work community. All possible problems are aspired to solve together.

Atmosphere at work is created by how the employees treat each other. Every employee is responsible for creating working atmosphere. Atmosphere is the result of all the employees acting together towards common goals. Positive attitude and openness are admirable features which all the employees will seize. (Erämetsä 2003, 135-137).

## 3 INTERACTION AT WORK

### 3.1 Basic value of interaction

Interaction is action, which happens in turn and affection to others behavior, thoughts, attitudes, and feelings. Interaction is ability to change thoughts, experiences, opinions, and actions. Interaction is creating messages, interpreting messages, and reacting to

these messages. Interaction can happen face to face or via Internet, telephone, or television. Interaction can be seen and observed.

Interaction face to face can be talking, words, silence and faces, expressions, positions, delivering voice or placing oneself to the place. In interaction face to face, it's important to see the other person's face and expressions so that the reactions can be read. Interaction between people can be influenced by the current situation, relationship between interactors and language culture. In interaction situation both parties need to be active with language, expressions, and appearance. (Silvennoinen 2004, 15.)

Interaction abilities are related to social skills which can be learnt from childhood. The society has changed and personal qualities are emphasized and they are required as early as in job interviews. According to Kauppila (2000, 24) the most crucial interaction skills are: discussion ability, negotiation ability, presentation skill, collaboration skill, communication skill, group work skill and empathy skill.

Kauppila (2000, 50-63) has in his book written that interaction has 8 different shapes which are friendly, aggressive, dominant, submissive, directional, defiant, uncertain, and flexible. All of these shapes can be used on daily life and daily working environment. Friendly interactor is social, polite, and considerate towards other people. Aggressive interactor divides instructions, commands and is very hostile. Dominant interactor is oppressive, overbearing and underestimates other people. Submissive interactor underestimates him or herself, admires other people more than him or herself and feels inferiority. Directional interactor gives instructions and takes care of other people. Defiant interactor rebels against others, breaks rules and acts up. Uncertain interactor is very sensitive, hesitant, and afraid of failure. Flexible interactor is confident, polite and gets along with other people. Interaction is easier to examine through these shapes.

### 3.2 Interaction at work

In every work community, there are basic functions and they should be common knowledge to everyone. Based on these functions, employees understand what is done at workplace and why. There should be clear arrangement, common rules, interaction which is open and organization which supports and has a primary mission. (Järvinen 2001, 27-29.)

Interaction between people at the workplace doesn't happen over one night, it needs development and time. Working can't be so busy that there is no time to get to know one's co-workers and managers. A social place, for example break room, is very important for the working community, it is the place where most of the interaction happens.

Interaction consists from ability to discuss and ability to listen. These abilities aren't something that can be taken for granted, most of the time they need to be practiced. Individuals own abilities are necessity when interacting with other people, but the most important item when talking about interaction at workplace are the managers. Managers are responsible for creating good and safe working environment. They should avoid helplessness and dependency and encourage the employees to be spontaneous and accountable. Responsibilities and targets should be assessed according to every employee skills and needs. Both employees and managers need to be straight with each other and be courageous enough to ask if there is something on mind.

Work community and its activity consists mostly from sending and receiving messages which include knowledge, views, and assessments. Collaboration amongst co-workers requires trust. Creating trustful relationship won't happen over one night, it needs time and work. Trust amongst co-workers can be created if all who are involved are authentic and sincere. Trust involves also listening. Employees need to listen managers and managers need to listen employees. Listening needs to be active in both ways so that good interaction can be reached.

According to Hämäläinen (2005, 130-151) there are seven rules for good interaction at workplace.

First rule is to approach the work community with positive thoughts and openness and find solutions for different problems, not to only find who is responsible for mistakes. Second rule is to consider all co-workers and truly care that everyone has the strength to do the job.

Third rule concerns conflicts. In conflict situations, everyone should consider their own part of the situation and sort it out with the other party and not to seek out for other possible reasons that why there is a conflict.

Fourth rule is that everyone should learn from misfortunes and not to be discouraged. Fifth rule is that problems should be intervened straight after discovering them so that they won't become bigger and worse.

Sixth rule is that there is no need to please everyone in the work community, rather to stand behind your own beliefs and opinions.

Seventh and last rule is that everyone needs to appreciate that every person is different and one might need to change own attitudes and behavior instead of trying to change the other person. (Sheward 2010)

### 3.2.1 Openness

Work community needs openness in order to be effective. Positive and supportive atmosphere creates openness and encourages all the employees to develop themselves. Every employee has attitudes and with these attitudes employees can affect and change the atmosphere at work. Opinions should be expressed openly in order to have an open atmosphere where everyone can truly express themselves. Open atmosphere at work requires also giving and getting feedback. Success at work is most of the time not spoken openly and giving feedback is left for managers even though employees can and are as responsible for giving and getting feedback as managers.

Envy towards other employees appears almost in every work community. Envy is most tense in working communities where employees feel that they are treated unequally and unfairly. Envy appears in working community if there are no common objectives



and us spirit is missing. Envy can be defented if everyone can be open towards each other.

Openness is that all the necessary information is divided in the community and there is working ground for interaction and conversation. Help is given if needed and all the members of the work community are supported. Conversation needs to be open and opinions need to be listened. Working communities are constantly changing and only those communities survive where the atmosphere is open and cooperative and everyone can adjust to these demands.

Conversation at work community should be volunteer and no one should be forced to discuss. Forcing all the employees to give a statement will introduce everybody's opinions but will not increase true openness. Listening to employee's opinions and giving them a chance to affect in decision making will guide the working community towards openness.

Giving space and being courageous increases openness. Positive attitude towards matters and creating common objectives will lead to good interaction. Trust towards others decreases uncertainty and will lead the work community to good and open interaction.

### 3.2.2 Listening

Listening is as important as having the ability to form proper discussions. A good listener is truthful, appreciates the other person and shows respect towards the person who is talking and this leads to openness and better interaction.

Listening is an important communication competence and it includes difficult cognitive processes like for example understanding and interpreting messages, being motivated enough to pay attention and behavioral processes like responding with both verbal and non-verbal feedback. Listener needs to take into consideration what he or she is thinking about when the communication is being received. As important is also take

into consideration his or her feelings about the communication and the context of the conversation. Listener needs to also consider what he or she will do in the listening process and how the result of communication turns out. (Schilling 2012)

Good listener asks questions to follow up for clarification. Asking questions indicates his or her attempts to fully understand the messages he or she is receiving. Effective listener can signal his or her affective engagement in the conversation by focusing on attention and receiving the communication with acceptance and empathy. Receiving communication with empathy requires that the listener tries to avoid his or her own opinions, feelings or prejudices towards the speaker and the listener needs to accept the speaker's communication's without trying to make a response.

Non-verbal communication is important for the conversation. The listener should also communicate his or her attention through eye-contact, posture, nodding and other possible body language. Listening is the base of a good and constructive interaction. Listening can help fixing misunderstandings, arguments, and pique. (Isotalus&Rajalahti 2017, 18-21).

### 3.2.3 Giving and getting feedback

In order that the employee can be successful at work, he or she needs to receive feedback. It's crucial when thinking about employees work well-being and the strength which one needs to have to proceed in the job. Both positive and negative feedback are needed but it's much easier to give negative feedback or no feedback at all. The most essential is that how the negative feedback is given, is it given in criticizing tone or improving tone. It's easier to emphasize mistakes and embarrass employees in the eyes of other employees which is wrong and won't at least increase well-being at work.

Managers are responsible for the feedback culture in the work community but also every employee is as responsible as the managers on giving feedback. It's important to remember that feedback should be given straight in the situation when it's still fresh so there are no misunderstandings.

Giving and getting feedback are part of individual's social skills and it's important to improve it. It's also important to have knowledge about the person who is getting the feedback because people are different and have different abilities to receive the feedback. Feedback is given based on behavior and action, not based on personalities. The best way to give feedback is to describe your observations but not to interpret them. The feedback receiver needs to know what he or she did wrong and how it can affect the work community and the employees. The feedback giver needs to be able to adjust his or her own actions and can have conversation without getting angry.

Feedback need to be given in situations straight away. However, it need to be considered who else is in the situation. Feedback is best when it's given in situation where there is only the giver and receiver. Positive feedback can grow envy which is not good for the work community. Everyone is not good at receiving feedback. That's why it's important to create trustful and safe situation when giving the feedback. (Jabe 2017, 134-137).

### 3.3 Individual's abilities in interaction

Interaction is crucial asset. Individuals interact with many different people in many ways during the day. Most of the interaction happens in the workplace, school, or home, in places where the individual meets other people. Interaction happens when individuals are talking to each other but interaction can be in something else and these other ways are shown later this chapter.

Some individuals are better at interacting than others, sometimes it's hard to show feelings and tell what one might really be thinking. However, when interaction is functional, it gives more resources, develops the individual and the organization, refines activity and takes matters forward.

Interaction with other people satisfies individuals. The most important item is that the individual knows him or herself. Knowledge, skills, courage, self-esteem, experiences,

contacts, values, attitudes, and tangible and intangible resources all affect individual's interaction abilities.

In interaction situations, there is always more than one person. Encounters can be first meetings or meetings with people who the individual has already met before. Knowing people and having the ability to understand people's needs, knowledge and constitution is a vital part of interaction. As important as knowing people is to realize that every individual need to have discretion. Whereas environments and situations change, also individuals change their thoughts, needs and priorities constantly so it's important to have discretion when the situations demand it. Discretion leads to better interaction when one knows even a little bit of what the other person is thinking.

Discretion is as important as ability to express him or herself which comes naturally. Expressing includes facial expressions, postures, gestures, and the whole essence of the individual. Also, clothes and makeup are one way to express oneself. All these affect the interaction between individuals.

Asking questions is one way to interact among individuals. With questions the individual can get deeper into the other individuals needs and get a better understanding. Concentration, empathy, and tenacity among the ability of asking questions are a base for good interaction. Unless one can understand the needs of others, interaction cannot be fulfilled properly. Concentration of what the other person is saying, reading between the lines, and fully committing to this situation is necessary. Empathy for other people, ability to interpret other's motives is the base of interaction.

Attachment for other individuals and items is requirement for working interaction. Individuals get attached to firstly other humans and secondly to objectives and items. When individual can create, a real and working relationship to another individual, one can understand what the other individual really needs and wants.

Individual needs to like other people so that one can have interactive relationships. Individuals have a certain way to place conditions whether to like another or not. Individuals will most likely be attracted by other people who like them and think and act

alike. Respect towards other individuals is crucial, without it there cannot be a working interaction relationship.

## 4 IMPLEMENTATION OF RESEARCH

Research was implemented by using qualitative research method. There are many different qualitative research methods, but for this research I chose interviewing. The number of respondents in qualitative method isn't large rather the interviews are done profoundly to a small sample of respondents. The focus of the interviews is to discover both the employees and superior's opinion about work well-being and interaction and how they affect working.

### 4.1 Qualitative method

In this thesis's research was used qualitative method, which was carried out as an interview. Interviews were held with 4 randomly selected employees and 4 randomly selected superiors. The focus of the research was to discover both the employee's and superior's opinions about well-being at work and interaction with the superiors.

Qualitative research is a scientific research method, which seeks to understand given research problem from the perspectives of the population it involves. Qualitative research is effective in obtaining culturally specific information about values, opinions, behaviors, and social context of the population.

Qualitative method allows the population to be more spontaneous. In qualitative research method, the questions asked are mostly "open-ended" which means that the respondents are free to answer in their own words and the responses tend to be more complex than just "yes" or "no". (Hirsjärvi & Remes & Sajavaara, 2015. 23-50)

The research of this thesis was proceeded by using qualitative research method. The choice of the research method was easy because the knowledge wanted to be collected by interviewing from small sample of 4 employees and 4 superiors.

I chose qualitative research because in my opinion interviews are the best way to proceed with the research. Interviews also give a certain kind of freedom to the interviewees to answer.

#### 4.1.1 Interview

Interviews are kept as a best way to collect knowledge. Interviews demand profound interaction between the interviewer and interviewee. There are three different types of interviews: structured interview, theme interview and open interview. Structured interview means that the questions and the sequence of them is predefined. The interview is easy to execute but making the questions so that there can be enough knowledge can be challenging. Open interview is the opposite of structured interview, where the interview happens freely and the questions are not predefined. Theme interview is the intermediate of structured and open interview. The questions are mostly outlined and predefined but according to the answers of the interview questions they can be multiplied or other ways changed. (Hirsjärvi & Remes & Sajavaara, 2015. 60-71)

#### 4.2 Collecting material

Collecting of the material of this thesis was carried out as an interview. The interviewees were randomly selected. The interviewees were both men and women and the total number of interviews was 8, 4 with employees and 4 with superiors. The interviewees were all between ages 20-35. It was easy to get the interviewees to agree with interviews when I told the nature of the interview and names and all the background information stays classified and nobody cannot be recognized.

One of the interviews was held on Sunday 2.4.17. Five of the interviews were held on Monday 3.4.17 and the last two were held 4.4.17. All the interviews lasted about 10-15 minutes. Six of the interviews were held face to face and they were also recorded. Two of the interviews were held via telephone.

The interview form included 10 questions. The forms were made for both employees and superiors separately so 10 questions for employees and 10 questions for superiors. The questions were divided under the headings. First five questions concerned work well-being (questions 1-5). The focus of these questions was to examine what both employees and superiors know about work well-being, how they would evaluate the current situation of work well-being and how the work well-being could be affected by their own actions. The last five questions concerned interaction (questions 6-10). The focus of these questions was to examine both employees and superior's knowledge about interaction. The focus of the questions was also to find out how motivated both employees and superiors are, how they motivate and what is the feedback culture in the workplace.

#### 4.3 Analyzing the material

After the interviews the next step is to analyze the material. The meaning of this is that the recorded interviews are modified into a format that is easier to analyze, in this case into verbal format. This is called transcribing. Transcribing can be done in many ways but the aim in all the ways is to get the interview into verbal format so it's easier to examine. Transcribing is laborious and time consuming of course depending on how precisely the interviews are dissembled. (Ruusu vuori & Nikander & Hyvärinen, 2010.)

In this thesis, I ended up making the transcript almost exact. Transcribing took a lot of time because I made almost an exact transcript. The names of the interviewees won't come out in the transcript, they are named as respondents A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and H. Respondents A, B, C, and D are superiors and respondents E, F, G and H are employees. All the other respondent's interviews are recorded and transcribed but respondent's G and H were held via telephone. Notes were taken from respondent's G and H's interviews.

#### 4.4 Reliability and validity of research

The aim of scientific research is to solve the subject's principles and problems. Research can be a creative process, either executed as theoretical or empirical research. Between these two choices there are many different options, but what all of those have in common is that the focus is to get answers to the questions which are conducted from the research questions. To achieve the best results possible, it's crucial to choose right target group and research method. Research problem and the main goal for the research decides the correct method for carrying out the research. The research problem is in a question form and the result for it will be founded with the research. There is no right method to solve the research problem, there might be several different methods. (Heikkilä 2005, 16).

I am an insider since I am currently working at company x. My colleagues have the courage to tell me what they really think and that is a positive side for the research. Negative side is that I know how everything really works so I might disagree with the interviewees but I need to stay objective.

## 5 RESULT OF RESEARCH

This chapter will introduce the results of the interviews. The interview form is in appendix 1. In the interview form questions 1-6 were handling work well-being in general and the interviewees own opinions about the state of their work community's well-being and motivation. Questions 7-10 were handling interaction, and giving and getting feedback. All the interviews have been made anonymous and reliably and the interviewees are presented as respondents A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H.



## 5.1 Work well-being

The first five questions were made to map out how much both the employees and superiors have knowledge about work well-being. Also, the focus of the questions is to discover the current situation of work well-being at the workplace and how important is the superiors affect in work well-being. The last question's focus is to find out about motivation.

### 5.1.1 Employees questions

Question 1: How would you describe work well-being with your own words?

All the interviewees had a clear mind what is meant by work well-being. All interviewees think that satisfaction at work and having a pleasant working environment and atmosphere are the most important definition of work well-being. Respondents G and E also thought that good ergonomics at work is important for well-being. Respondent F also thought that one definition of work well-being is that it's pleasant to come to work every day.

Question 2: Why is work well-being so important?

The answers from the respondents were quite similar but there were slight differences. Respondent E thought that work well-being is important to can achieve the goals which are set for the work community. The respondents agreed that if the work community is lacking in well-being, working there feels unnecessary and coming to work feels bad. Respondent G thought that work well-being is important in order that employees enjoy their job.

Question 3: How does work well-being show in your work community?

All the respondents agreed that they come to work with happy faces. Respondent G thought that all the employees take care of each other and superiors look after the employees. The respondents agreed that everyone gets help if needed and the work community supports each other. Respondent H thought that the result of the work in the

work community is good and goals are achieved. All respondents thought that there is always something to improve in work well-being at the work community.

Question 4: How big is the superior's effect on work well-being? Why?

The respondents thought that superiors have a very big effect on work well-being. Respondent E thought that if the superiors won't give enough support, it will lead to poor well-being. All the respondents answered that if the superiors are poor, the goals are not achieved. Motivation was one item that all the respondents mentioned that has a big effect on work well-being.

Question 5: How could you improve well-being with your own actions?

Respondent G mentioned that giving and getting help from each other improves well-being. Leaving the bad feelings at home when coming to work was one item that all the respondents agreed on. Respondent F and H said that they are trying to treat other employees like they like to be treated themselves.

Question 6: Are your superiors motivating you enough?

All respondents said that they receive enough motivating from the superiors. Respondents H and F say that ways of motivating are different trainings when the amount of knowledge grows in different working stations. It motivates to learn more and do the job even better than earlier. Respondent G says that if one gets enough motivation, he or she wants to become a better employee.

### 5.1.2 Superiors questions

Question 1: How would you describe work well-being with your own words?

All the respondents thought that definition for work well-being is that all from the workplace feel good at home and at work. Respondents also agreed that work well-being means that co-operation between employees and superiors is working.

Question 2: Why is it so important to take care of work well-being?

The answers to this question were quite similar but there were also small differences. Respondent A thought that if work well-being is working, the work community is efficient and productive and profit is made. Respondents all thought that taking care of work well-being can be straight seen from sick leave statistics, if it works there is no unnecessary absences. Respondent C said that work well-being and work satisfaction are the baseline for everything and via them can be ensured that the employee is able to enjoy also in free time and won't take workload home.

Question 3: How would you evaluate your work community's well-being?

The respondents all said that there is improving in well-being in the workplace. Respondent A said that the employees tire up easily because there is a lot of stress and rush. Tiring up leads to ergonomics problem which according to respondent B leads to back, hand and foot problems because the work load is so big. Respondent D said that work is heavy so that the general well-being is lacking. Respondent C thought that work well-being is a new item in the work community.

Question 4: How important is the superior's effect on work well-being? Why?

All the respondents agreed that superiors have a great impact on work well-being. Respondent C said that delegation and division of work tasks need to be even. Respondent B thought that with one's own actions and abilities the work community can be guided, but respondent B also said that superiors cannot affect the company's guidelines. The respondents all said that superiors are the ones who are responsible for work well-being.

Question 5: How could you improve well-being with your own actions?

According to respondent A, it's important to ask questions and be openly present at work. Also interest towards employees is important. All the answers to this question were quite similar. Respondent D said that physical well-being is as important as mental well-being. Prioritizing tasks into correct line, avoiding hurry and stress, listening, being friendly, flexible, and supportive are items that all the respondents agreed on.

Question 6: Why it's important to motivate employees? How do you motivate?

Answers to this question were similar, of course all the motivating ways are different. Motivated employee works and comes to work with pleasure says respondent B. Respondent A and C agree that motivating each other is also the employee's responsibility because everyone should work as a one big team. Respondent D says that it depends on employee what is the best way to motivate. All the respondents agreed that sick leave absences are decreased and the atmosphere at work is better is the staff is motivated.

## 5.2 Interaction

This chapter introduces the answers from questions 7-10. The questions developed to finding out if the respondents know what is interaction, how it works between the employees and superiors. The last question focuses on giving and getting feedback.

### 5.2.1 Employees questions

Question 7: How would you describe interaction with your own words?

All the answers to this question were similar. The respondents agree that the definition of interaction includes two or more people having an impact to one another with expressions and gestures. Tone of voice and volume of voice is also part of interaction. Respondent E thought that in work interaction means that everyone says what is wanted to be done since no one is a mind-reader.

Question 8: Is the interaction between you and superiors working?

The answers from the respondents were similar. The respondents said that there are no problems in interaction between them and the superiors. Of course, there are sometimes misunderstandings between employees and superiors but not very often, says respondent H.

Question 9: Have you faced difficulties in interaction with your superiors? What are those difficulties?

There are no big difficulties amongst the employees and superiors according to the respondents. Sometimes one can't understand what the superior wants and that might create difficulties if the item isn't sorted out immediately says respondent F.

Respondent E says that there are no difficulties but sometimes the superiors think that the employees are under them which according to respondent H doesn't feel good.

Question 10: Are you getting feedback about your work? Is it positive or negative? Do you give feedback?

All the respondents say that they are receiving feedback from their work, both positive and negative. Respondent F says that maybe the feedback is given too easily sometimes and most of the time it's negative. Respondent H receives enough feedback, both positive and negative and the focus of work is to do it so good that there no need for negative feedback. All the respondents also give feedback and all of them thinks that giving positive feedback is easier. Respondent G says that giving feedback is easy but sometimes it's forgotten in rushed situations.

### 5.2.2 Superiors questions

Question 7: How would you describe interaction at work with your own words?

Respondents agree that definition of interaction is physical and verbal communication between two or more people. Respondent A says that there are problems with interaction in the workplace and wonders if it has something to do with big personalities. Respondent D says that there is a lot talking "behind one's back" or then there is no interaction at all. Respondent D also says that interaction at workplace is often quite extravagant and rakish. All the respondents agree that everyone at workplace has the courage to say what they think and the atmosphere is open.

Question 8: Why it's so important to have good interaction between superiors and employees?

Respondent C says that open and clear interaction creates open atmosphere and gives courage to employees to ask what they have in mind. Respondents agreed that open interaction is the base for good interaction. Respondent B says that if the employees can be open and tell what is wrong, then there are no misunderstandings.

Question 9: What kind of difficulties have you faced when interacting with employees?

Mentally hard situations like crying are equally hard for each respondent. Employee giving up when receiving constructive or negative feedback is one hard item for respondent D. Explaining tasks repeatedly leads easily to tense situation between the superior and employee says respondent A. Respondents B and C agree that sometimes it's hard to modify their own delivery of speech to suitable for the employee to receive the message.

Question 10: Is the feedback culture (giving and getting feedback) working at your workplace?

All the respondents are receiving feedback but 90% of time it's negative even though according to them it's easier to give positive feedback. Respondent D gives feedback but sometimes it feels like one is stepping on someone else's toes. The respondents agree that they would like to receive more feedback from especially their higher management. They also agree that in every company there is probably discomfort on feedback culture. Respondent C would like to have some kind of training how to give feedback.

## 6 CONCLUSION

According to the interviews and the answers received from them, one can easily say that the answers support the theory. The results of the interviews were inclusively received. The focus of the research was to discover what is the significance of interaction

between superiors and employees and how does it affect well-being at work. According to the answers received from the interviews, one can say that the significance is big and it supports the theory.

First five questions for both employee's and superiors concern work well-being. All of them unanimously agree that work well-being means that work is pleasant, atmosphere is good and that the employees want to come to work every day. The results of the definition of work well-being support the theoretical part of the thesis.

There are lot of advantages if work well-being is taken care of, both from the employee's side and the superior's side. The work community benefits from work well-being because if it works, employees feel good and then they can give their full contribution.

The well-being of the whole work community supports also the theoretical part. Employees feel that they are receiving a lot of support from their superiors and they always receive help if they need it. Employees are satisfied of how the well-being at their community works.

The superiors feel that well-being at work is a new item and everyone can't yet handle it. The work is hard and employees tire up easily. Because the employees tire up easily under the pressure and rush, the superiors feel that employees get exhausted which leads to bad work ergonomics and that leads to sick leaves and absences. The superiors also state that the company's work well-being is a constantly changing item and the company is never ready.

One of the research questions was superiors effect on work well-being. The answers also support the theoretical part. The superior's behavior effects work well-being in many ways. Superior who is open, reliable, present, rewarding can protect the employees from burnout and exhaustion at work. Theoretical part also emphasizes that superiors aren't solely responsible that work well-being is functional. Superior guides the way but the work community will help.

The research question concerning how one can with his or her own abilities affect the work well-being also supports the theory. Both employees and superiors agree that is important to think one's own behavior and leave bad feelings at home. Treating other

employees like one wants to get treated is a good way to positively affect the work well-being.

Motivation was one of the research questions. The answers were parallel to the theoretical part. All the interviewed superiors wanted to impact on the motivation of employees. Motivated employees can make better results at work and are effective at work. Research results show that both employees and superiors want to motivate each other as much as possible. Employees feel that if they are motivated, they want to become better at their work and want to be more effective and productive. Superiors believe that when the employees are motivated, there will be less sick leaves and absences from work which also supports the theoretical part.

The second part of the interview format includes questions about interaction. The answer from the interviews support the theoretical part. The definition of interaction received from the interview answers follows the theoretical part. Interaction is communication between two or more people and it be gestures, facial expressions, tone, and volume of voice.

The answers received from both superiors and employees about why it's important to have a working interaction also supports the theory. It's important because if the parties cannot understand one another, there will be lot of misunderstandings and extra work. Employees feel that there are no big difficulties in interaction with superiors which is good. Superiors feel that situations where for example the employee is crying because he or she is so exhausted are very difficult. Modifying their own speech into a correct way seems to be hard. This part of the text also supports the theory because it's very important to be open, trustworthy, and present.

The last question concerns giving and getting feedback. The results received from the interviews emphasized the importance of feedback culture which was one of the subsection in the text and in this case, it also supported the theory. The superior needs to have ability to give both positive and negative feedback to the employee. All the interviewees regarded that it's easiest to give positive feedback. Superiors feel that they are giving feedback but they would like to receive more feedback from higher management. The results support however the fact that giving feedback isn't solely superiors responsibility but also the employees responsibility.



## 7 DISCUSSION

I started the thesis process in winter 2016 during the course Research methods by making thesis project plan. First seminar was held in March 2017 in Satakunta University of Applied Sciences. The original plan was to be able to graduate in June 2017 and the original plan is going to be accomplished.

The focus of this research was to find out how important the interaction between the superior and employee is and how does it affect work well-being. I wanted to study this topic and for the research methodology I chose qualitative method using interviews as the research methodology. The interviewees were randomly selected, 4 superiors and 4 employees. I chose to do the interviews face to face because then I could read the interviewees facial expressions. I also thought that I would get better results from face to face interviews rather than using surveys. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed. Transcribing was difficult but came useful when I was writing the interviews to the thesis.

One can say that the research supported the theoretical part and the interviews gave good answers which I wanted to have. All the interviewees agreeable from the start and were happy to help me with this project. With the interviews the wanted result was achieved which was to discover how work well-being is working in company x.

For future research, I would recommend that surveys every spring and autumn would be best. In summer the case company x has a lot of summer employees who are not as important for the research as the full-time employees. Giving and getting feedback is skill which everyone just needs to learn. Stepping out from comfort zone is one good item when talking about giving feedback.

The thesis process was hard but educational and I got a lot of new ideas for the future.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

#### Interview questions

##### Superiors:

#### Work well-being

1. How would you describe work well-being with your own words?
2. Why is it so important to take care of work well-being?
3. How would you evaluate your work community's well-being?
4. How important is the superior's effect on work well-being? Why?
5. How could you improve well-being with your own actions?
6. Why it's important to motivate employees? How do you motivate?

#### Interaction

1. How would you describe interaction at work with your own words?
2. Why it's so important to have good interaction between superiors and employees?
3. What kind of difficulties have you faced when interacting with employees?
4. Is the feedback culture (giving and getting feedback) working at your workplace?

##### Employees:

#### Work well-being

1. How would you describe work well-being with your own words?
2. Why work well-being is important?
3. How does work well-being show in your work community?
4. How big is the superior's effect on work well-being? Why?
5. How could you improve well-being with your own actions?
6. Are the superiors motivating you enough? How are they motivating you?

#### Interaction

1. How would you describe interaction with your own words?
2. Is the interaction between you and superiors working?

3. Have you faced difficulties in interaction with your superiors? What are those difficulties?
4. Are you getting feedback about your work? Is it positive or negative? Do you give feedback?

