Development Plan For Multicultural Working Environment A Case Study – Middle East

HAMK

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this Master's thesis was to develop a proposal for efficient work culture in a multicultural environment. Global business requires competent and multi-culturally fluent professionals. They need to move fast and adapt quickly to challenging projects all over the world. To be able to win in highly competitive markets of the Middle East, management and the HR face several challenges. Success is measured by the ability to take advantage of these opportunities.

My research method is the case study. A Finnish expert engineering company operating in the Middle East was selected for the case. The aim was to investigate the strengths and opportunity areas for managing demanding projects in the area. Thus, the study belongs to two different theoretical fields, international management and cultural research.

This thesis has been divided into three parts: theory, empirical analysis and the development plan. The theory built on the base of management and culture studies. The empirical research was utilizing the target company's yearly employee engagement survey (quantitative research). Information was collected also from three Finnish expats, who had been working in the target company in the Middle East for at least two years. Personal interviews were confidential and open also for more profound discussions (qualitative research).

A careful analysis of the survey and interviews proved that the target company has lots of professional potential. An improved proposal to further develop the multicultural work environment, the management and the HR skills and finally, to build a highly competitive Project Task Force to operate in challenging projects around the region was then offered as contribution of this study.

Keyword Multicultural Management, Project development, Multicultural work environment, Organizational culture

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Opinnäytetyön tavoitteena oli luoda tehokas monikulttuurisen työyhteisön kehittämissuunnitelma kansainväliseen yritykseen. Kansainvälinen liiketoiminta edellyttää ammatillisesti pätevää ja monikulttuurisessa toimintaympäristössä joustavasti liikkuvaa erikoisosaajien joukkoa. Teamien ulee olla valmiita ottamaan haastavat projektitilanteet tehokkaasti haltuunsa. Lähi-idän vaativassa businessympäristössä teamien vetäjillä, johtoryhmällä ja henkilöstöosastolla on erityisia haasteita voitettavanaan. Yrityksen menestys riippuu sen kyvystä hyödyntää haasteet voiton aineksiksi.

Tässä työssä hyödynnettiin tapaustutkimusta tutkimusmenetelmänä. Tutkimuskohteena on suomalainen erityisosaamista tuottava insinööriyritys, joka toimii Lähi-idässä. Tarkoitus oli tutkia yrityksen vahvuuksia ja kehittämisalueita alueen vaativien projektien hoitamisessa. Siten tutkimus kuuluu teoreettiselta perustaltaan sekä kansainvälisen johtamisen että kulttuurintutkimuksen alueisiin.

Opinnäytetyö jakaantuu kolmeen osaan: teoriaan, empiirisen aineiston analyysiin ja kehittämisohjelmaan. Empiirinen tutkimus hyödynsi kohdeyrityksen vuosittain hekilöstölleen teettämää kyselytutkimusta. Kvantitatiivista aineistoa syvennettiin kolmen kohdeyrityksessä työskennelleen suomalaisen haastatteluilla. Luottamuksellisilla ja avoimilla syvähaastatteluilla pyrittiin tuomaan esiin kvantitatiivisessa tutkimusaineistossa pinnallisemaksi jäävä aineisto.

Tutkimustuloksen perusteella kohdeyrityksen menestys on vakaalla pohjalla. Monikulttuurisen työyhteisön toimivuutta voidaan lisätä. Opinnäytetyän kontribuutiona on esitetty parannettu ehdotus tehokkuuden ja kilpailukyvyn lisäämiseksi.

Asiasanat	Monikulttuurinen johtaminen, henkilöstöjohtaminen, projektien kehittäminen, monikulttuurinen työyhteisö, yrityskulttuuri
Sivut	58 s. + liitteet 1 s.

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

The 21st century has changed the world of manufacturing, marketing and business enormously. The companies and corporations have gone global in every sense of the word. Their headquarters, factories and customers can be thousands of miles apart, but still be able to communicate business on a personal and daily basis. Money, as well as management, can come from any part of the world. The work force is more often than not multinational – consisting of very varied cultural, religious and language groups. This presents a new set of expectations for managing the work force, and to ensure the best competence and motivation for the teams. There is no doubt that those companies which are well established will be successful in winning the future.

Hamel and Prahald claim that, it is "not cash that fuels the journey to the future, but the emotional and intellectual energy of every employee" (Hamel & Prahalad 1994, 139). This is where this study originates from. My main interests are, how to get the best potential from each and every employee, how to overcome the cultural challenges, and further turn them to a driving force?

As global companies will have to tackle with many different management styles, starting from the traditional hierarchical one to more open consensus or independent work styles, managers from various backgrounds will need a simple and neutral base plan to go on with their duties. It is quite clear that it is very challenging to move out for an expatriate assignment. Training and preparations are much needed. Very often these are just overlooked and the professional, practical side of the job is in front line.

Sun Tzu once said: "*Know yourself and know your enemies, and in hundred battles you will never be defeated"* (Tzu 1993, 57). This old wisdom is true also today. Profound understanding of one's own culture is the starting point in accepting differences. Suitable people should be chosen for particularly challenging tasks. Educating the "troops", creating a "company culture" which would be acceptable for most, if not all its members is absolutely necessary in a multi-religious, multilingual, multi-racial company. Culture is a strong phenomenon, loaded also with emotions and deeper values. If it is not understood, it will be a disturbing factor in business as well as in daily work.

The heart of the thesis at hand is best summed up in a quote from Philip Sadler who observes: "The long-term success of the business in attracting, retaining, developing, motivating and utilizing the best talent in its field is likely to be the biggest single factor in determining its long-term commercial viability." As yet few major global organizations manage truly and fully to utilize their human assets in the way Sadler anticipates. Increasingly, they will have to do so if they are to retain their competitiveness. (Oberg & Crainer 1994, 76-77.)

1.1   Research purpose

This study concentrates on investigating the many challenges that the multicultural work force presents to management, and further to draw a development plan to overcome some of them. The study utilizes a case study of a Finnish company based in the Middle East. The profile of the target company is introduced in detail in section 3.3 Target Company's Profile. Author of this thesis has been working for the company in question in the engineering department for more than ten years, two of which in the Middle East.

In the past, most of the management professionals have been either Finns or European. In the target company, the majority of work force is originally South Asians. The total work force around the region consists of more than 1100 professionals from Europe, Asia, Arab countries and Africa. The research material (survey) was made in the regional headquarters, where total 240 professionals work. Most of them have relocated to the city where they work, and have different expatriate agreements. Many of the conflicts at the office base on cultural differences or misinterpretations.

This study is a cross-cultural research. The selected viewpoint is to find practical tools for the management for dealing the challenges and for creating an efficient, dedicated and motivated work force. It is expected, that this study will be valuable for developing the working methods and management in a multicultural environment. It is most likely that soon there will be top managers from Asia and the Middle East, who also need to understand the very different European office hierarchy and work style. This study aims to be a handbook for a manager, no matter where he/she is originally from.

1.2   Research problem and objectives

The research problems of this study are:
1. To find out what kind of problems exist in a multicultural company with very varied work force
2. To find out how the multicultural management can be developed to improve the motivation and dedication of the work force.

The viewpoint is from the management, since it is them who need to solve the problems and to decide how to arrange the work force efficiently. The following are the objectives of the research:

1. To identify and define competence – How do professionals define and see the competence level of their teams and managers? This approach aims to investigate through job satisfaction, how well people feel their personal ambitions are being fullfilled. Do they see their career opportunities similar to their co-workers from different cultural background. Job satisfaction is one factor for motivating people to develop their professional skills further towards advanced competence level.

2. To identify and redefine the responsibilities of the Human Resource (**H.R.**) department – What could be done to promote the efficiency in introducing company values and work style to newcomers and when recruiting employees?

3. To identify challenges arising from cultural differences and to develop multicultural work style – How can the target company cultivate and benefit from the cultural backgrounds of the work force?

What then is development? It would be true development, if human, social, spiritual and cultural values were at the heart of international exchange and they would have an impact on both partners. We need to broaden our concept of development to take human and social development as the basic concept even when studies of development deal with economic and technical advances. (Swantz 2009, 35.)

The final objective of this study is to produce a practical development plan for a multicultural global company.

2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The theoretical foundation of this study belongs to two different fields:
1. International management and
2. Cultural research, specifically organizational and national cultures as people in the target company are from very varied cultural backgrounds.

2.1 Managing Multicultural Work Force

"If global company is to function successfully, strategies at different levels need to interrelate" (Bratton & Gold 2003, 37). This is especially true with the management. On the business level, there has to be a company strategy to be able to win the global markets, but all the other levels, within each particular department or area office, there has to be an understanding of that strategy.

Imagine an organization – as a machine. Everyone working in and for it is a part of that machine. The machine itself is operational if, and only if, all the parts are correctly assembled and integrated to each other. The better those parts are integrated to each other, the better the machine will work. You may of course use weaker and cheaper parts for a time, but soon you will find out that they break or do not function properly and so you have to replace them and start all over again. Better then to choose the suitable strong parts in the beginning. Target Company's international goal should meet both customer's high expectations as well as the human needs of its work force, aided by knowledge and expertise. The benefits rendered by the company should attract the loyalty of the employees and stimulate their motivation and participation as well as expand the area of integration. My argument is that (1) the process of integration takes place within a framework of common, mutually respected value base (2) that the knowledge and expertise are currently available to meet the needs for building the target company to a truly multicultural organization.

2.1.1 Leadership Styles

All the great leaders have strong personalities whether they are as different from each other in their strategies, than Che Guevara was from Mahatma Gandhi. Leadership style depends on philosophy, personality, behavior, experience and also on culture of the leader. Leadership style is the manner and approach of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people. Kurt Lewin has identified different styles of leadership. He established three major styles of leadership: *Authoritarian or autocratic*, *Participative or democratic* and *Delegative or Free Reign.* Although good leaders can use all three styles, adapting fluently according to changing challenges, bad leaders tend to stick with one style. (U.S. Army Handbook 1973.)

Authoritarian (autocratic)
This style is used when leaders tell their employees what they want done and how they want it accomplished, without listening any advice of their

followers. Some of the appropriate conditions to use, it is when you have all the information to solve the problem, you are short on time, and your employees are well motivated. Some people tend to think of this style as a vehicle for yelling, using demeaning language, and leading by threats and abusing their power. This is not the authoritarian style, rather it is an abusive, unprofessional style called "bossing people around." It has no place in a leader's repertoire. The authoritarian style should normally only be used on rare occasions. If you have the time and want to gain more commitment and motivation from your employees, then you should use the participative style. (U.S. Army Handbook 1973.) Many Asian societies are traditionally very hierarchical. The authoritarian managers are still a rule, but things are changing fast. Working in an Asian company may be very challenging for professionals from Europe or North America.

Participative (Democratic)
This style involves the leader including one or more employees in the decision making process (determining what to do and how to do it). However, the leader maintains the final decision making authority. Using this style is not a sign of weakness. Rather it is a sign of strength that your employees will respect. This is normally used when you have part of the information, and your employees have other parts. Note that a leader is not expected to know everything — this is why you employ *knowledgeable* and *skillful* employees. Using this style is of mutual benefit — it allows them to become part of the team and allows you to make better decisions. (U.S. Army Handbook 1973.) Asian workers find it difficult to disagree or debate with their superiors. Many times they experience stress also when communicating with their Western colleagues. It is explicitly difficult to say no, or to point out a mistake of the superior or a colleague. Western workers may misunderstand this reluctance as incompetence or laziness.

Delegative (Free Reign)
In this style, the leader allows the employees to make the decisions. However, the leader is still responsible for the decisions that are made. This is used when employees are able to analyze the situation and determine what needs to be done and how to do it. You cannot do everything! You must set priorities and delegate certain tasks. This is not a style to use so that you can blame others when things go wrong, rather this is a style to be used when you fully trust and confidence in the people below you. (U.S. Army Handbook 1973.) Also this management style is still a bit challenging for mostly Asian professionals joining a Western lead corporation.

2.1.2   Managing Multicultural Teams

At present most of the companies, especially in the West have chosen the working style where employees are given more independent freedom to do the job, sometimes to the extent that boss hasn't got the fad idea who is taking care of what jobs. Boss is mostly needed in signing the paper or making the final decision. How can he/she make the decision on the issue that he/she has no idea what the WHOLE picture consists of? Not to mention the virtual teams that international companies have nowadays.

In Asian culture, people seem to feel the need more or less that the boss is present at all times and tells them exactly what to do. In Scandinavian working culture it is more like team work. In Western working cultures, employees as well as bosses share among them more of the responsibility to get the work done. The responsibility of results is not only on the boss's shoulders. People take part actively and work towards the common goals. The people know the vision, they know the strategy and they know the goals. They are authorized by the leader to make certain level of decisions themselves, so that they can work independently. Naturally we need to remember, that there is no one "Asian culture" just as there is no single "European culture" also. The histories, cultures and religions vary in the vast continent. There cannot possibly be two more different national cultures that Chinese and Indian, both of which have hundreds, if not thousands of sub-cultures in them.

Perhaps different situations and environments call for different leadership styles. Perhaps a dictator or autocratic leadership style may be the most effective in dealing with people from high power distance culture background such as Asians, who often take it for granted that the boss comes and tell them exactly what to do. Most of the Westerners have a experienced that it has been very hard to get Asian people to take any responsibility and to get them to work actively without the boss being present and saying all the time what to do.

On the other hand participative or democratic leadership and laissez-faire or free reign leadership styles might be more suitable for low power distance culture background people, such as Europeans, where most of the people have long traditions of equal rights and democratic decision making. No matter what kind of working environment or culture we deal with, it is basic in management that a person should have one and only one boss. If an employee has more than one boss, there is a great temptation to play off one boss against the other. (Parkinson & Rustomji 1998, 21.)

In my opinion, any leadership style chosen will not automatically be suitable for leading the people from certain backgrounds especially in multicultural teams. It is up to the boss to decide what kind of leadership style he or she should use when leading the people. Leader should not be fixed to one particular leadership style but must be able to flexibly change the style that suit for himself/herself and also the personality and culture of the employees that he/she is leading. It requires knowledge of the other cultures from the boss, curiosity, tolerance, flexibility and last but certainly not least, a thorough understanding on his/her own culture. Otherwise they may be facing a lot of problems later on.

Oberg and Crainer describe this kind of situation. "Increasingly, managers in traditional organizations find themselves in an uncomfortable grey area between autocratic and participative forms of management. While managers talk about empowerment, for example, they are at the same time often making decision in response to the tough realities, style. Managers may not consider themselves to be dictatorial but neither are, they willing to surrender much of what they regard as their power-base to become par-

ticipative. Such tension is at the heart of many of the managerial failures of the 1980s. Managers were enthusiastic converts to ideas such as "managing by walking about" and opening their office doors to the world, but often it was a change without real meaning. There is more to participative management than being able to strike up a conversation with a lathe operator". (Oberg & Crainer 1994, 100.)

2.2 Understanding Multiculturalism in Global Corporation

As this study is focusing on development of culture awareness and competence in the target company, it is necessary to clarify the structure inside the company culture. It is evitable that different national and organizational cultures clash, especially when the whole structure is in a way in "no-man's land". Practically everyone working in the target company is an expatriate – very few local people work in the organization. Therefore it is a priority to build a flexible "company culture" where everyone is respected and mutually appreciated as a competent professional.

The company values and basic rules must not only be listed down for the employees to follow, but they need to be the same for everyone in the company hierarchy, including the senior management. This is important, since for example Legge argues that a corporate culture that is shared by the senior management and is presented as the "official culture" of the organization – may be only one of several sub-cultures within any organization, and may be actively resisted by groups who do not share or empathize with its values. If corporate culture makes no sense of the organizational realities experienced by the employees other than senior management, it will not become internalized outside that small sub-group. (Legge 1995, 187.)

The value base of a multinational company needs to be neutral in religious sentiments, but there are some things which are equally shared by most people all over the world. A new employee should be welcomed with expectations stating that:
1. Everyone has equal opportunities despite of race, religion, age or sex
2. All nationalities, religions and cultures are equally respected for their uniqueness
3. Criticism and feedback has to be restricted to job related matters and possible arguments, disagreements or disputes have to be handled equally and in front of unbiased seniors, management or equals.
4. Honesty, politeness and decency are expected from everyone towards every member of the work community.

This list is very general, but no doubt it could give the clear and precise picture to every employee in the team and what is expected from them. After the describing the company's rules, there should also be regular and fair discussions, open dialogue as well as very clear notion, that the same rules bind also higher offices in the company.

2.2.1   Organizational Culture

According to Trompenaars and Homme, there are four definitions of corporate culture:
1. The way we do things around here
2. A system of informal, unwritten rules
3. A system of shared values, beliefs, assumptions that guide attitudes, behaviors, systems, and practices in our organization
4. What the members of the organization perceive as being central, enduring, and distinctive about it. (Trompenaars & Homme 2004, 13-14.)

If you ask people what is their company culture, most of the company if not all would probably answer "the way we do things around here". An important element in any organizational culture is a normative structure that defines rules of legitimate conduct and behavior and contains general values which individuals can use as support when making decisions about how to act under varying circumstances. (Nordhaug 1994, 215.)
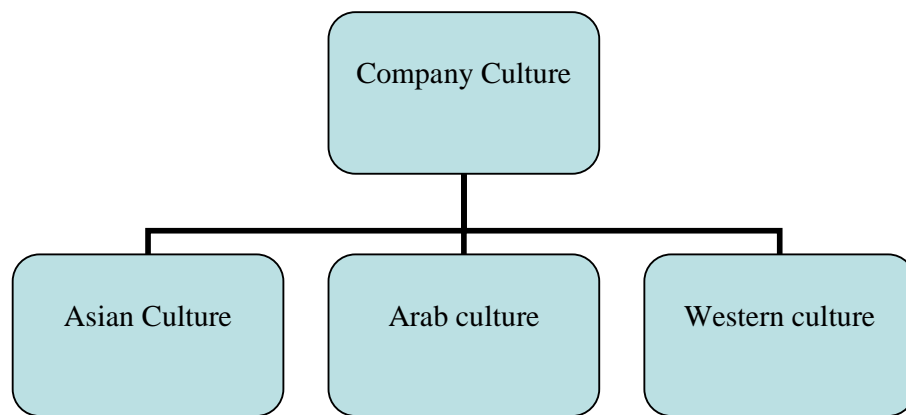
Figure 1 Cultural mix inside the target company

It is generally agreed that such a thing as company culture or organizational culture exists, and that it has an effect on the daily work. However, when you really sit down and talk about it, there seems to be a multiple opinions, mostly opposite to each other, on what it included. Many times there are various interpretations over whose culture it finally is.

Figure 1 introduces the overall cultural mix in the target company. The company relishes rather neutral pluralism from the Western point of view, but as such it is clearly interpreted as "Western" rather than "multicultural" or even "democratic".

The deeply encoded lessons of the past, that are passed from one generation of managers to another pose two dangers for any organization - and to a multicultural organization in particular. First, individuals may, over time forget why they believe what they believe. Second, manager may come to

believe that what they don't know isn't worth knowing. (Hamel & Praha-lad 1994, 55.)

2.2.2   National Culture

National culture is a complex and delicate matter. Culture has been a major topic in management literature for over 30 years, and it continues to grow even more important with the seed of global business. Anthropological, sociological and management literature offer several alternatives for defining culture. Most "general" definitions draw the line with common language and similar way of thinking. I believe culture to be deeper than that.

Most of the people consider themselves as Finns, Chinese, Italian or Australian meaning a certain combination of mutually agreed ways of behavior, history, festivals, foods, belief systems, sometimes still outer appearance or even dress. Internet and American popular culture have had an enormous effect on how people reflect their own culture and what they dream their life to be. On the other side of the picture aggressive nationalism is gaining stronghold. Extreme nationalism has always used stereotypes and fictional mythology to make it stand, nurturing the fears and prejudices in collective imaginary. Global media and especially popular culture is many times spreading stereotypes instead of curiosity and tolerance.

Living and working outside the familiar and safe national culture is extremely challenging. At home country everything and everybody is understandable. There are very few chances of misinterpretations in the neighbors or colleagues behavior. The management style of the boss is predictable. Work procedure as well as duties and responsibilities are clear. Moving to another country challenges all this. Many times expatriates locate to same parts of city, where they create Little India, Chinatown or European compound. Behind the guarded fences life takes more familiar flow. Culture shock is easier to manage with people from the same background. Although expatriate work agreements are often very lucrative and generous, feelings of national pride and homesickness live strong.

It is a sensitive matter to touch any of these strongly felt national feelings. Manager of a multinational team has to find balance in the middle of historical crunches and present day career competition.

This study is not trying to propose a rock solid base for a "company culture". Such a generalization would be impossible and useless, since "culture" is a living organism and continues to change. However, the manager is always a visible part of what the employees see as the "company culture". It is very advisable for managers of international companies to make creative and flexible general ideas on how to live and deal with cultural problems – and further more importantly, how to learn from them for the greater benefit of building a truly multicultural work force.

2.3   Defining Competence

Information age demands the refinement of an existing human commodity *Knowledge*: Knowledge is an important human resource, an asset that organizations have to cultivate in order to compete in the global market. To understand how we can use knowledge to our benefit, we should think about it in practical, tangible terms. When thinking of the knowledge, especially cultural knowledge, it has three basic features:

People: business has woken up to the fact that in culturally diversifying markets, people are becoming the new corporate resource par excellence. The next big thing in the information age is not the emphasis on the electronic aspect, but on its human side. The next big thing in global business is a **multicultural revolution**. The challenge for companies and organizations are to attract, retain, develop, and motivate the best and brightest knowledge sharers.

Relationships: relationship among people both inside and outside the company or organization must be cultivated. In practice, cultivating relationship means that concrete structures for **sharing information** need to be established such as an intranet, databases and teamwork.

Culture: culture is something within us that gives us a **sense of identity** and guides our thinking. (Gore 2007, 25-26.)

In this study the concept of knowledge is understood and used synonymously with competence. Competence is a resource, which can and should be cultivated by investing in the people. How to measure another person's competence is more complicated question. It is naturally simple enough to check if he/she really knows the technical or engineering jobs etc. It is another matter to estimate, why this person would be more competent than the other, with the same education and experience, to do the same jobs. If we ask the question from the worker himself, the answer may be different from what his colleagues or boss would say. Competence is subject to other, social and cultural feelings, also when other people measure our work.

Investing in people means
1. Commitment to invest in excellence of people
2. Willingness to plan how skills, individuals and teams can be developed to achieve the goals
3. Readiness to take action to develop and use necessary skills in a clearly defined and continuing program and
4. Patience to evaluate the outcomes of training and development for individual progress towards goals of the individual worker as well as the goals of the organization. (Gore 2007, 27.)

3   METHOD FOR STUDY

The goal of this study is to produce a plan for the target company for developing the competence, the efficiency and the dedication of it's multinational work force. The development starts with identifying three areas where action can be directed. These are called "approaches" in the following pages. The study utilizes both quantitative as well as qualitative research methods. The two methods are intended to complement each other for better understanding of the study subject, not to explain it statistically.

3.1   Research Methods

The selected approach is case study. Case study is a research strategy, which provides detailed, intensive knowledge of an individual case. Since the goal of this study is to improve or suggest development plan for a established company, it is natural to utilize case study as a research method.

The research is conducted by combining the following two methods. The social sciences use two approaches to the research material. The *quantitative research* refers to the systematic study of research material, which is collected in bulk manner – with anonymous questionnaires in this case. The objective of quantitative method used here is to draw a more general picture on the opinions, atmosphere and feelings of the work force. (Hunter, Laura and Erin Leahey 2008.)   I have considered carefully the cultural dimension of these answers, as the majority of the workers come originally from different parts of Asia.

Qualitative research is an appropriate method for inquiring in many different academic studies and in the social sciences typically. Qualitative researchers aim to gather a deeper insight on matters at hand. The qualitative method investigates the *why* and *how* of decision making, not just *what*, *where*, *when*. Hence, smaller but focused samples are more often needed, rather than large samples. Qualitative methods produce information only on the particular cases studied. (Flyvbjerg, 2006 & 2011.)

3.2   Research Material and Interviews

The quantitative research material is the target company employee survey conducted in March 2010. The target company is collecting data and update information about the employees' work satisfaction and attitudes yearly through a detailed questionnaire. It is possible here to compare the results from Middle East to the company's employees' answers globally as well as to investigate in detail how the answers reflect general and particular work satisfaction of the workers. The Middle East survey, which includes 45 questions all together, was sent to 240 employees. A total of 231 of them replied. I have also the Middle East Survey results from 2009 in my use, so that it is possible for me to make comparisons with other target company subsidiary companies around the world.

Further, there are three personal interviews with former Finnish expats conducted in Finland. The qualitative interviews on a more personal level of the three Finnish expats took place in Finland during winter 2010-2011. The open and confidential face-to-face interviews were intended to draw a reflection on how the expatriates from home country see the same work environment and whether their ideas of target company global future meet the premises I suggest here. These discussions will be important material in reflecting and adding depth to the anonymous bulk material from multicultural teams collected by target company official questionnaire

My informants had been working in Middle East for minimum two years, so they had reasonably well-grounded and many-sided experience for their expressed opinions. My questions are included in this study in Appendix 1. Naturally my own personal experiences for working in Middle East in 2006-2008 are building the base for my preliminary hypothesis. The results of this study will be used for analyzing, interpreting or - when possible – for explaining the data for the benefit of target company's global development. The information also provides tools for prediction and forecasting future challenges in a multicultural work environment. The questions are divided into specific groups to distill the accurate information from the more general flow. The main question to answer is how well the organization works, and how to make it function more efficiently.

A survey research – whether it is a questionnaire or a personal face-to-face interview – always includes a number of problems. The results have to be investigated with care and analytical precaution: Were enough people included in the study? Did they represent the kind of professional group whose opinions can be used on more general level? Were a necessary number of questionnaires returned to give enough evidence? Were the questions right in the first place? When people's opinions, values and attitudes are investigated, there are further more problems ahead. Did the interviewed people feel confident and free to express their real feelings? How much do differences in their cultural background bring up to their answers? The same problems of trust and cultural differences come to picture also with face-to-face interview.

The interviews will be marked with Roman numbers to differentiate from each other: v, vi and vii. They were all conducted in open discussion form. The informants got the written questions (Appendix 1) but were encouraged to discuss them thoroughly according to their experience.

3.3 Target Company's Profile

History and profile of a company has a great importance on how people feel working for it. A well-established successful company is a dream work place for most people. For many Non-Europeans an extra bonus is to be able to join a Western company in a wealthy exotic location.

My target company is one of the global leaders in the engineering companies. It is present in more than 50 countries worldwide and has been oper-

ating in the Middle East market for many years. Middle East office has become the leading supplier in the Middle East employing over 1100 people across the region through its network of joint ventures and authorized distributors.

It is the main pioneer for the whole Middle East region concerning engineering competence. At present, mega projects are booming around the region especially in Saudi Arabia. It is crucial that my target company can effectively handle the work load and technical support needed.

Bratton & Gold argue that the real sources of competitive leverage are the culture and capabilities of the organization deriving from how you manage your people. The whole emphasis on people as one of the most important competitive advantage a company can create, demands that the top management attracts, cultivates, and keeps the best workforce they can possibly find. The role of Human Resources is becoming as important - if not more than - any other executive leadership function. (Bratton & Gold 2003, 3)

At the moment, the company's head office is based in Finland. It has branches and business all over the world. As has been seen in other "Finnish" companies, the senior management is little by little becoming more international. Customers and finance have been that already long ago. Company culture is changing. There are three options:

1. Different cultures within the global organization remain separate. Companies and subsidiaries maintain their identity.
2. Some cultures dominate others. This happens typically when a company joins or is acquired by another.
3. Third possibility is that cultures will blend or assimilate. In this case the desirable result is that the company culture is built on the best characteristics or each sub-culture and that each of them is mutually respected. (Pitkänen 2006, 31-32.)

4   RESULTS

The Employee Engagement Survey 2010 was conducted by Target Company in March 2010. The headcount for the company was at the time 32.537. Total 25.360 Surveys were completed. Middle East headcount was 240 people of whom 231 returned the questionnaire. The response rate in Middle East was 96%. It is not possible to estimate how and what the employees felt that they were expected to answer and whether they felt somehow compulsory to answer the questionnaire. All and all the response rate is extremely high and the replies very mainly favorable to the company.

There were 45 questions to be answered. The questions requested answering in "favorable", "neutral" or "unfavorable" mode. The questionnaire was divided into ITEM groups under which several more detailed questions were offered. The item groups surveyed for example on how the company's leadership, culture and values had fulfilled, how the employees job satisfaction had developed or how the employees found the strategy and changes in the work environment and atmosphere had effected their life during the year. The Survey gives the statistics globally as well as makes it possible to compare the results to the previous year.

I will divide the thesis chapters according to the item groups and analyze the answers carefully. The analysis will give me material for overall idea on what and how the employees of Middle East feel the multicultural team operates. I will base my management ideas on these details.

Three Finnish expats have been interviewed for this study in personal and detailed in private. There were altogether ten questions presented, aimed in to collect opinions, ideas and experiences on the interviewees. They included the basic background questions as well as more personal opinions on the competence level, management skills and future prospects of the target company. My aim was to check my own ideas reflecting them to the expats with similar background and work status. The interviewees were free to express their opinions freely also on related items.

My main interest in the survey answers as well as the replies of my informants was how well the management functions in a demanding multicultural work environment. The culture of the host country imposes further challenges both to the work force, the Finnish expats as well as to the management.

4.1 Competence Approach

My first approach for development plan is to investigate if the competence level of Target Company can be developed to fully realize the ambition of motivated foreign expats. If we intend to find out, whether the work force of a company has reached the optimal performance, we have to turn our interest and investigations on their competence level. Competence has been defined above as knowledge and cultural awareness. In this study it is investigated through factors related with job satisfaction. What kind of

professionals are they? Have they been given the chance to learn and develop as the job requires, or were they "kept" in certain "need-to-know"-level for some specific reason? It is naturally up to each person him/herself to find the motivation to express ambition, and that ambition can also be based on very varied backgrounds. Many times it is just about enough to get an expat job in a dream location. Social prestige is in many cultures connected also to the paycheck. These are personal ambitions.

For the company success it is important to find the right people to do the right jobs. Therefore it is absolutely vital, that the competence level of both professional work force as well as management is optimal. It is the boss's duty and responsibility to see the talent and to encourage it to grow further. This may seem an extra task, and requires a keen psychological eye. Different things make different people "tick". Whatever the personal motivation, it is the competence, the knowledge and the professional skills that the company is after.

4.2 Human Resource Approcah

My second assumption for this thesis is that the Human Resource department can promote dedication and motivation when recruiting and orienting new employees. In order to develop this area, we have to turn our interest and investigations on the employee engagement index. The questions include items such as strategy and change, and communication and collaboration. HR department not only takes charge on employing new professionals. They are expected to introduce the company culture basics for them. The study investigates how well the employees know the company, it strategy and visions and above all what is expected from them.

First thing to consider is the cultural competence of the HR**.** Is the HR treating the expats in neutral and equal way? Are the agreements and assistance fair? Do some experts (the Western) get more help in settling in than others? This may seem a minor question, but actually it is one of the main ones! A newcomer is bringing huge potential and innovative professional skills to the company. He should feel appreciated from the beginning.

For the expat, the following inventory of questions is crucial: What kind of expectations they had before they join the company? How do they experience the HR taking care of guiding the newcomers? Has the HR done enough in orientating them? Have they been chosen the right kind of jobs according to their professional level? Were they informed about career opportunities and training? Were they given the opportunity to show their ambitions as well as talents?

Needless to say that it is important to recruit the right people to the right positions. This is where HR personnel's competence comes into the picture. HR personnel's' are the first contact that new employees make when they join the company.

4.3 Multicultural Approach

Pluralism is a base value for most democratic societies and companies. In a global company culture, pluralism means a flexible and tolerant view towards difference – a "live and let live" attitude. Pluralistic values, however, include by definition a silent agreement or an understanding, that some values (or someone's values) are more valuable than others. In a company culture, this could spell trouble, especially when it is a multicultural global company operating outside familiar European turf.

A company is an organization of people, and as such, it also contains characteristics that we attribute to our understanding of culture. For intercultural communication, the main message and enduring vision is: culture is communication and communication is culture. Yet simply having a diverse group of people together doesn't naturally result in learning from one another, as multicultural societies often poorly demonstrate. A certain structure or learning tools are needed to bring out the culture within each and every one of us. Additionally, it might come as a surprise that the true objective of intercultural communication is to learn about one's own culture and way of communicating, and not such things about another culture. (Gore 2007, 15-19.)

5 ANALYSIS

All the different item groups will be handled in following way. I have sketched three main challenges for the Target Company. These presumptions are based on my experience as well as the interview material.

The survey made by the target company included of course several questions which involved material for my presumptions. There were straight forward questions on management and the employee relationships for example, and further several, which enquired an opinion on leadership or senior management. Other groups of questions which were related to job satisfaction include suggestions on the management's leadership skills. All and all, this gives rather many sided picture on how the teams see the situation at the work place. It is clear that there are no possible ways of knowing for fact, how closely the answers of the survey match with people's true feelings. Also, it is not possible to give prove beyond reasonable doubt, how much different cultural and personal expectations effect on the answers. I am concentrating in analyzing the suggestions for development and change, which can be found in the difference between the answers in the questionnaire survey and the actual experience of the interviewed experts.

The answers from the survey, the interview results and my personal experience give reason to argue, that **tacit knowledge** of the target company could be used more efficiently to develop the performance of the teams. This means that the **knowledge management** which comprises the processes of knowledge transfer, and knowledge creation are not fully in use. The transfer processes include knowledge transfers from

1. Tacit to tacit. Acquiring someone else's tacit knowledge through observation, imitation and practice
2. Explicit to explicit. Combining discrete pieces of explicit knowledge to form new explicit knowledge
3. Tacit to explicit. Conversion of enquired tacit knowledge into an explicit form
4. Explicit to tacit. Internalizing explicit knowledge. (Laamanen et alii 2005, 78.)

Thus, I believe my research material will give an idea on how well knowledge management works in the target company. This information in turn will be the base for management guideline, which is the final purpose of this study. I have in previous chapter page five of this seminar essay already explained the principal ideas of management styles. The research material from survey and the interviews will build on that structure.

5.1 Competence Analysis

All of the three Finnish expats interviewed see the multinational teams in the target company strongly potential. Some cultural barriers exist, maybe slowing their career opportunities also. One major cultural speed bump is the reluctance in some cultures to take active initiative or independent decision-making. There seems to be a sense of duty and respect towards the

superior, which prohibits hands-on-attitude to work. This is a common experience among Western expats working in Asia. Asian employees usually expect the boss to give direct and clear orders what to do, how to do it and in which timetable. Many Westerners express anxiety on Asian workers who seldom make any decisions by themselves even though they would be asked to do so frequently. Asian employees seldom criticize management's decisions and certainly do not confront him openly. It is very embarrassing to lose temper and they are severely insulted if being shouted upon. Asian culture is a high power distance culture. Asian professionals assume that the decisions should be made by the boss. They consider that also the responsibilities will lie solely on his shoulders as well.

According to my experience and the interviews made for this study, it seems the level of professional competence in the target company is good. The basic engineering and related technical skills are on a good level. My informants agree, that there is "*a lot of competence*" (ⅴ) and that "*the competence level is excellent - actually our process people could learn from Target Company. Also their technical experts are really high class compared to most of our FrontLines (globally)* (ⅶ). On the other hand they see that "*the differences in culture of the multinational work teams create problems. Sometimes it seems that nobody wants to take the responsibility in solving the conflicts. Due to their cultural heritance it will take time for them (South Asians) to take the responsibilities as expected in Europe, and to act accordingly. It will take some time and training to make them go over the cultural barrier*" (ⅵ).

Despite of open declaration of company values, the equal chances are not always reality in teams. My interviews confirm that there is a lot of potential in the multicultural teams: "*They have potential. If you give them equal chance they will learn more and develop also. The management and HR should encourage the newly employed work teams to go over the cultural barriers*" (ⅵ). "*There should be a systematic way of improving. If you give peanuts you will get squirrels*" (ⅴ). Teams could be developed towards smaller size, where everyone could specialize in some areas: "*I feel that there should be small teams designated to special assignments in Major Project business. Also the sales team structure could be developed further.*" (ⅶ)

We can see here, that at least the Finnish experts believe that the competence level could be promoted by giving a fair and equal chance to grow over the cultural barriers. Let's check then, how the employees see the situation in the target company's survey.

As already explained earlier, the survey for the target company's personnel included altogether 45 questions in nine different item groups. The following questions can be interpreted as belonging to the employee's personal feeling on how his competence, performance and career ambitions are taken in consideration by the management. Does he/she feel that he gets from the company a fair share of compensation for his/her professional contribution? The survey can be also read simply as how satisfied

the employees are to the present situation at work. If they are overall happy with their work, it suggests there are no main concerns or conflict in their mind on how well their competence is being compensated.
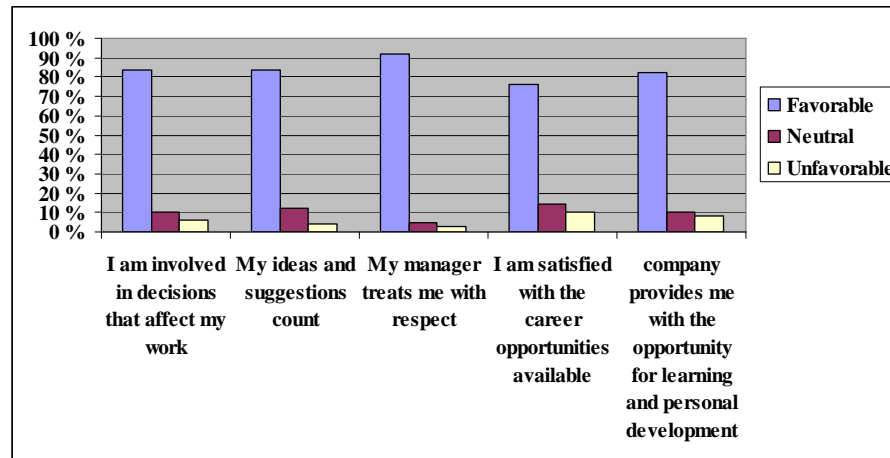

Figure 2 Job satisfaction

From the chart in Figure 2 we can see, that the work force in the target company is very satisfied with their work opportunities as expatriate professionals. They seem to feel they are involved in decisions that affect their work and experience that their ideas and suggestions count. What is important in the results is that the survey shows improvement in this last item. In survey 2009 79% of the answers to this item were favorable, but in survey 2010 the percentage had risen to 84%, leaving 12 % neutral and only 4% unfavorable.

In many cultures, especially Arab and Asian traditions, respect is extremely important. It would be very difficult to create a dedicated team, it there were not mutual feelings of respect and appreciation. In the target company the employees seem to experience that their manager treats them with respect.

The two last questions in this chart seem to prove the positive atmosphere in the work place. The workers are satisfied with the career opportunities available in the company. They also agree that the company provides them with the opportunity for learning and personal development. Since the neutral and unfavorable answers here sum up to 24% in the first and 18% in the last question, it seems to me that there is one possible theme to improve. These percentages have not much changed from the previous year.
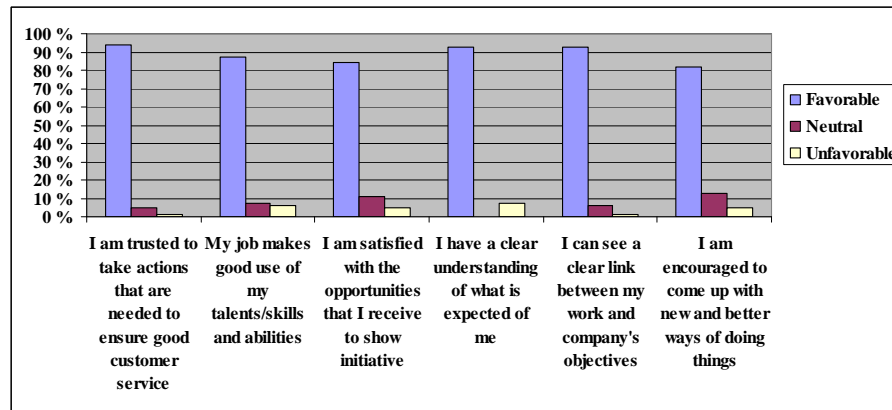
Figure 3 Career Development

Vision of future career in the company is a sign to estimate, how the employees feel their competence level will develop. If the working environment encourages initiative and creative new solutions, it has a very good chance to survive in the global business competition. Motivation grows always where the work force feels appreciated. In many Asian cultures, coming forward with new business ideas and suggestions to change the ways "it-has-always-been-done-here" is not at all encouraged. Therefore the management should take every opportunity to cultivate the creative and open atmosphere.

The chart in Figure 3 shows clearly, that the workers feel the management trusts their competence and are satisfied with their career opportunities. Exceptionally high 94% replies that they have "a clear understanding of what is expected of them." Only approximately 5% replied "neutral" and none "unfavorable". Also, 93% answered that they can see "a clear link between their work and target company's objectives." This result would strongly indicate that the HR is doing exceptionally good job in employee engagement. The work force is motivated and ambitious to perform.
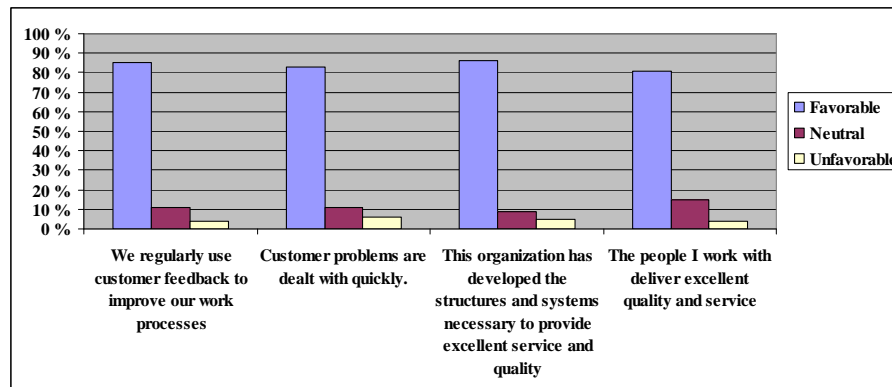

Figure 4 Team Competence

Figure 4 shows the employees impression on their colleagues' competence. The questionnaire did not touch culturally sensitive matters in any item group. The teams are culturally mixed and the goal is to keep the of-

fice on neutral ground. With English as the official work language, there are naturally some possibilities of misunderstandings. The employees seem to trust the company's technical excellence and reputation. They are proud to work in the company.
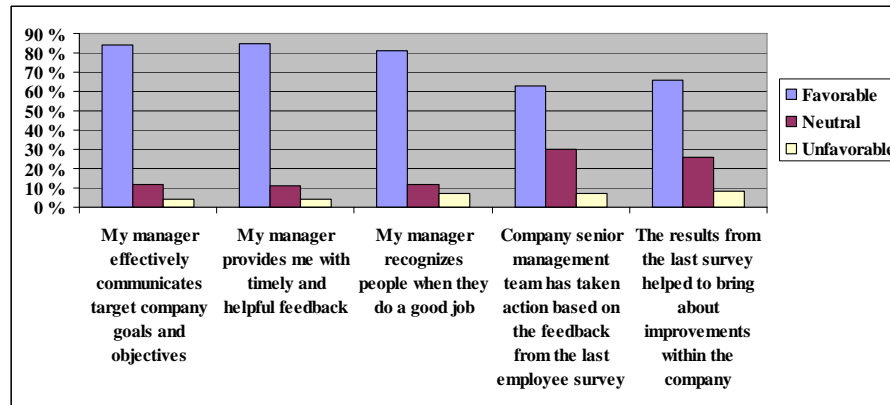

Figure 5 Management

Figure 5 shows a chart of employees' experience and opinion of their immediate manager. As stated above, the manager is in many ways the key person in the team. He represents the good and the bad in company culture. Employees in the target company seem to be rather satisfied with their boss's performance. They feel they receive feedback and recognition from their boss when their work is well done. Their opinion on how the management has reacted in the feedback given by the employees and the enthusiasm to be committed to improvements gets more neutral and unfavorable replies than most other questions. Only 9% of the total of 231 employees was convinced that the management was performing excellently, while a little over 50% agreed to reply favorably. More than 30% of the work force was not fully satisfied with the management in listening and reacting to their suggested improvements.

There is a mutual agreement on the high professional level of competence in opinion of my informants as well as in results in the survey. The Finnish experts see the talent but also the problems arising from the lack of opportunities. The figures in estimating the performance of the management could indicate that there is work to be done in fully realizing people's ambitions concerning their careers.

5.2 Human Resource Analysis

HR is the first department one meets when joining a new company. In foreign assignments HR's role is of utmost importance. They not only employ a professional but many times provide a new home country and many times new lifestyle for his entire family. According to Karen Legge, there are three great lies:
1. I will love you forever
2. The cheque is in the post and

3. I am from the personnel department and I am here to help you. (Legge 1995, 7.)

The target company is employing people from varied background and expectations. My Finnish informants agree that their agreements were financially very satisfactory and that the benefits for a foreign assignment were obvious. It offered a "*chance to join MEGA projects and an interesting multicultural experience*" (v) and a chance to "*live like a king*" (vii II) as well as "*meet the local customers and experience the expat life style in the Middle East*" (vii). All praised the living environment, reasonable prices for commodities and enjoyable surroundings for family.

They agreed that the local customers and market was challenging. On the other hand, all my interviewees pointed out some things the HR could have concentrated more. A guideline should have been given to newcomers concerning some of the immigration formalities. One informant expressed *negative feelings on having to work alone in major projects* (vi). They consider that *HR should have planned and trained a successor for each leaving expat in good time* (v). *Biggest disadvantage was the long working hours compared to Finland* (vii).

All the three informants and I felt that the HR could have done better job in orientation when we first arrived to location. Help was available for visa and other necessities, but it had to be always requested. As the expats have to adjust quickly to their work and duties, many important tasks for settling in the family are left to spouse, who does not have access to HR help. "*You should need to know differences between your and assignment country's culture, schooling system, living expenses*" (vii). *Also many laws and cultural differences in living in the Middle East require information, which the HR did not provide* (vi). Some kind of guideline should be given to all expats and their families. (There are some development ideas suggested in chapter 7.2 Cultural Awareness) Also the expats coming from different countries were now settled in different locations based on their agreements. This created hierarchy and negative feeling among the professionals. Employees meet each other only at the busy office and couple of festivities arranged by the company yearly, but there are no real opportunities to learn to know each other on more personal way. Cultural conflicts can heat up in stressing job related issues if people do not know and understand each other's behavior. The mutual agreement of the interviewed professionals was, that "*the HR is the key person*" (vi).

In survey, questions connected to daily work at the office, for example "do you have access to the resources (e.g. materials, equipment, technology, etc.) you need to do your job", 86% were happy. On the other hand 67% were according to questionnaire contented with their ability to balance their work and personal life. Obviously the percentage would be smaller, if only Western expats were concerned as they all mentioned the long working hours and demanding job in their interview.
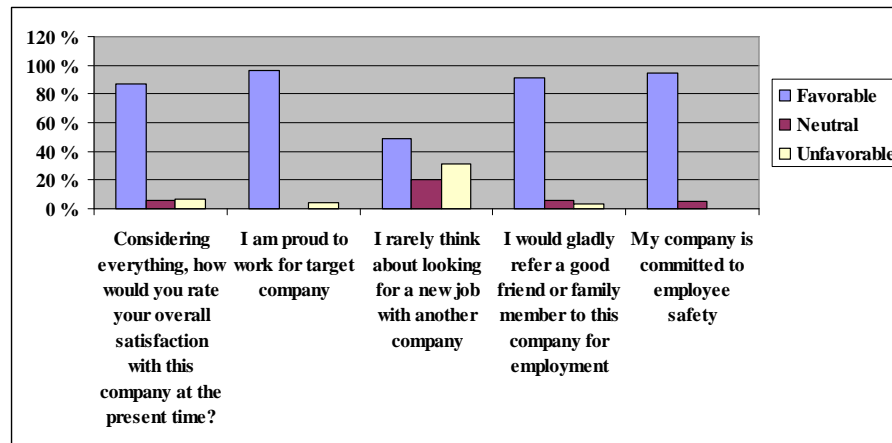
Figure 6 Employee Engagement

The questions presented in Figure 6 reveal an interesting drop in the target's company's overall excellent ratings. Even though 87% of the employees reply favorable to the question, "considering everything, how would you rate your overall satisfaction with this company at the present time?" and a whooping 96% express that they are "proud to work for the target company" (4% neutral, nil unfavorable) they anyway had been considering for looking a new job. 49% told that they had "rarely thinking about looking for a new job with another company" while the thought had occurred to 51%, and to 31 % more often than "rarely". This could of course point to quite natural professional ambition, but it also throws a shadow on the other replies.

As I have already stated, it is very likely that Asian employees find it difficult to express their negative feelings straight forward to the employer. The survey is showing very positive attitude to the target company. The job commitment reply indicates that there are things to be done for keeping the trained and experienced professional on the payroll. According to recent survey published in major Finnish newspaper Helsingin Sanomat, on "why competent employees leave company" 64% of the replies stated that they were looking for new challenges and professional development. The other reasons for changing jobs were money and conflicting values (Helsingin Sanomat 25.2.2011.) These suggest for a careful think-tank for any global company at present.

Target company's excellent reputation as an employer is clearly shown in replies for questions: "I would gladly refer a good friend or family member to target company for employment" (91%) and "my company is committed to employee safety" (95% favorable, nil unfavorable).
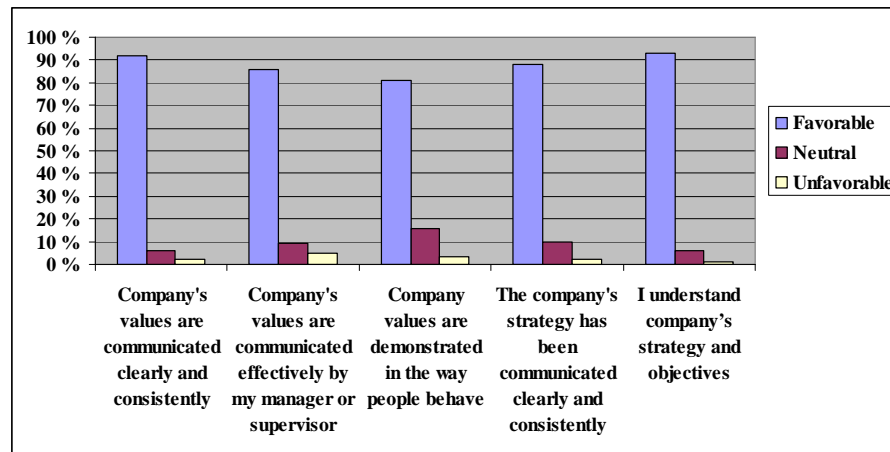
Figure 7 Company Values

The employees meet their colleagues and boss on daily basis. They may (or may not) appreciate their co-workers way of life and culture, but they naturally understand that these are someone's private values. The manager, on the other hand, is the mirror of the company's values. It is a huge responsibility. The fancy statements or fine speeches by senior management do not mean anything, if the work day at office proves otherwise.

The HR holds keys for communicating the values in real life. Every decision made by the management and HR reflects to the realities not only the employee but also his/her entire family. If these decisions are experiences as unsatisfactory or even unfair, they are understood as the "company's official way". This is demonstrated in answers to questions like: "target company's values are communicated clearly and consistently", "target company's values are communicated effectively by my manager or supervisor" and in "company values are demonstrated in the way target company people behave." The overall favorable replies indicate more to my assumption, that employees connect the management's behavior to the "company value" than that they would agree or understand what exactly those values are. When each of the professionals is in fact a "company representative" to customers and competitors alike, there is a good reason why it is absolutely necessary to develop a flexible idea of company culture.

Strategy and changes in company's official policy need to be communicated clearly to the troops. Open communication is a value as itself. Target company's employees seem to be satisfied with the ways this is done. Strategy and change will be discussed in chapter 5.4 below.

5.3   Multicultural Analysis

Understanding the possibilities of culture in global business means that we understand the functional base differences and guide them to work for positive results. According to Hofstede, culture can be defined through extremes (as long as we remember them just what they are, the extremes, existing nowhere in "pure" form).

1. Power distance: the degree to which members of a society automatically accept a hierarchical or unequal distribution of power in organizations and society.
2. Uncertainty avoidance: the degree to which members of a given society deal with the uncertainty and risk of everyday life and prefer to work with long-term acquaintances and friends rather than strangers.
3. Individualism: the degree to which individuals perceive themselves as separate from others and free from group pressure to conform. Contrast to collectivism.
4. Masculinity: the degree to which a society looks favorably on aggressive and materialistic behavior. Contrast to femininity, which refers to nurturing and welfare orientation in society.
5. Long term orientation: fostering virtues oriented toward future rewards. Long term orientation work values include learning, honesty, ability to adapt, accountability and self-discipline. Short term orientation values freedom, right achievement and thinking for oneself. (Gore 2007, 41.)

As can be seen here, identity is complex and it has potentials for both good and bad. The concept of identity also includes social and cultural identities, which add further complexity. An individual identifies him/herself through categories such as gender, age, sexual, racial, ethnic, religious, class, national, regional, sub cultural and finally personal identity, which in turn chance according to time of life, place of residence, work etc. (Gore 2007, 45-46.)

The Finnish expats interviewed for this study all agreed that there was hierarchy between the employees. They expressed concern on this, even though as Europeans they did not experience any problems during their stay at all. Some had enjoyed the opportunity to be able to employ cleaners and gardeners, which is quite rare in Finland. At the work place they saw that *South Asian professionals, who make a majority of the foreign expats tend to pull together and sometimes press down the other Asian employees* (v) but on the other hand the South Asians were also "*clearly treated as not equals*" *with the Western professionals and Middle East Arab nationals* (vii). *One informant told he did not much bother about the cultural and the religious schisms, since they did not have much effect to his daily work* (vi). These opinions point towards my assumption that there is a culturally divided hierarchy among the professionals.

On more general level, they had noticed that *it is more difficult for employees from Non-European countries to accept a young person for their superior* (v). They agree that the *target company's culture should be introduced to people* (v), but could not exactly pinpoint what that would include. My general impression was that they appreciated the "*Finnish ways*" to communicate and work, and so I conclude that this also was their impression on the target company's culture. *It helped a lot in their adjustment to challenging work environment if they had previous experience in*

working outside Finland (vi) *If that was not the case, they expressed the need to have another Finn to work with in the beginning* (vii).

Many cultural experiences by the Finnish expats can be explained by Asian tradition. Asian nationals (in general and East Asians in particular) are very conscious of "face". Losing face or suffering embarrassment is constantly stressing. For example a Japanese person feels embarrassed even if he himself did not "lose face" but he witnessed his superior doing so by for example losing temper and shouting to subordinates. This may lead to several problematic situations in team work. The Western colleague or manager may experience that the Asian professionals are reluctant to make decisions and to confess their mistakes. They do not easily ask for help even if they are need it. The most confusing feature for the Finns is the Asian reluctance to tell the truth if they feel that would lead to losing face.

The answers in survey again gave favorable results to target company's overall performance in matters related to cultural sensitivity. 91% of the replies expressed the trust that the "senior management team of this company is committed to ethical business practices and conduct." With nil giving unfavorable reply. Also 91% felt they were treated with respect by their managers (1% of total 230 replies gave unfavorable feedback). Total 93% felt that they are "part of a team". The hierarchy seen by the Finnish expats does not show in these replies, or it is not experienced in similar way.

As has been stated, many Asian societies and particularly South Asian traditions are expressly hierarchical. As this is a part of people's identity and behavior code, it may not be felt as a "burden". Asian people are familiar with navigation among each other. They may feel awkward when working with a low power distance manager, who expects individualist work attitude. An Asian professional would expect his boss to show strong masculine management and take action as well as responsibility all by himself. A Finnish boss will face problems in assigning people for jobs. Asian professionals come from uncertainty avoiding cultures and try to minimize the possibilities of making a mistake by doing just and only just what was ordered. A Finnish work culture is feminine: it is based on intuition and consensus. Conflicts are solved by negotiation. It may also be a surprise to Asian professionals to realize that salary and benefits in Western company does not necessarily relate to his/her position in the company hierarchy. In Finland the salary range between top and bottom positions is relatively small. Also, highly skilled manual workers may have better salary and higher status than low-skilled office worker.

5.4   Strategy and Change

Cultures consider "change" differently. In the West, change is often valued. It is connected to development and progress. Changes are seen evitable and, when controlled as positive. Companies actively invest in research for finding new ways of doing business. Change is seen a part of business strategy.

Traditional Asian societies on the other hand see change as threat. Asians still see ambiguous or unknown and surprising situations threatening. In a hierarchical system an individual knows exactly where his place is and what is expected of him. In Asian lead companies employees are more appreciated by their implementation than for their inventions.

In global business, like the target company, Western business ideas rule, owners, investors, as well as senior management are trying to control and direct the changes for better success. Controlling change is an essential part of business strategy. Sometimes changes are affecting employees' future. A company can emerge with another, global business. Workers have to choose whether they stay with the employer or, for example, move to another country.

As the interviewed Finns did not experience a special threat for their future jobs, they considered business strategy and change not relevant for their job. In survey replies employees of the target company were satisfied with the information given. They agreed that the company's strategy has been communicated clearly and consistently (88% favorable) and also stated that they "understand target company's strategy and objectives" (93%). 80% of the answers provided the opinion that "the changes that are happening within company are good for its customers."
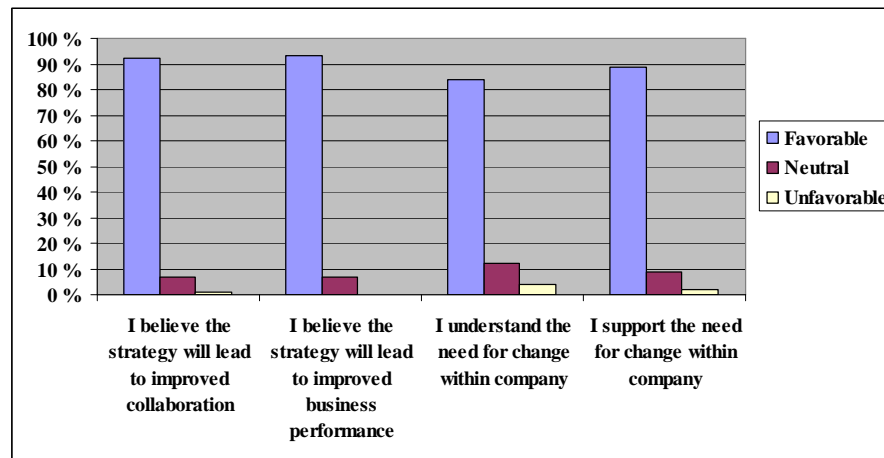
Figure 8 Strategy and Change

If we sum up, that the employees feel they have been told and that they understand the company's strategy, there must be an indication proved by chart in Figure 8 that they also conclude that changes in company are also going to benefit them on more personal level. They express that they "understand the need for change within company" and also "support the need for change within" it. Changes are here understood as positive opportunity to continue with the same employer and maybe even promote one's career. Answers like "I believe the strategy will lead to improved collaboration" (93%) and "I believe the strategy will lead to improved business performance" (93%) clearly connect the business strategy as success in the competitive Middle East market.

5.5   Communication and Collaboration

Communication and collaboration is an excellent indicator on how successful the management is with motivating his troops. Once again there are multiple cultural factors to consider. In high power distance culture employees are not expected to express disagreement. Their opinion may be enquired but individualism and initiative are not appreciated or rewarded. In questions relating to communication we need to consider, what kind of information the employees expect to get, and also how and from whom they expect to get it.

European and especially Finnish (or Scandinavian) bosses traditionally appreciate independent and active work force, which eagerly develops and invents new ways of working. Employees are expected to look after themselves. Everything is not explained in detail and the employee is supposed to find out how to solve the problems independently. Professional knowledge is seen as a valuable asset and sometimes kept as insurance for career opportunities. Thus, sharing the knowledge becomes a problem.

In collective culture like most Asian cultures, societies as well as work teams tend to form around a common background or goal. Information and knowledge are shared with members of the group. Links between the team members are being built also on more personal level. Sometimes, when a certain national group forms a work force, even language, religion and regional borders which are explicitly important in home country disappear.
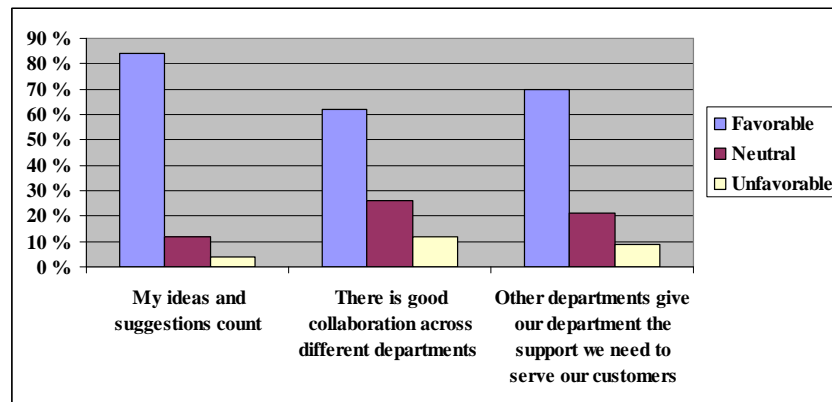
Figure 9 Communication and Collaboration

The survey replies show that the employees are convinced that they are actively "involved in decisions that affect their work" and that their "ideas and suggestions count" (84% favorable, 12 % neutral, 4% unfavorable). In Asian culture long term orientation, fostering the virtues oriented toward future rewards count. Traditional Asian work values include learning, honesty, ability to adapt and self-discipline. Short term orientation values are often seen "Western": freedom, right achievement and thinking for oneself.

For the management, it is important that the employees and teams work well together. According to interviews, there were some problems connected with the language barrier as well as misinterpretations in cultural code. Collaboration and communication between the different teams and departments could and should be developed. The survey answers express the similar tone with the interviewed expats: Argument "there is good collaboration across different departments" got only 62% favorable rate against 25% neutral and 13 % unfavorable. On the other hand 70% of replies expressed satisfaction on "Other departments give our department the support we need to serve customers", which could indicate that dedication to excellence is rather high.

6 DISCUSSION

Engagement is a combination of perceptions that have a positive impact on behavior. These perceptions include satisfaction, commitment, pride, loyalty, a strong sense of personal responsibility and a willingness to be an advocate for the organization. The main interest of this study has been to find out how the target company has succeeded in building dedicated, competent multicultural teams.

As was expressed in the opening pages, competence is a complicated issue to measure, as are also many other factors in this study. Conventionally the validity of research results would mean the ability to measure exactly what was meant to be measured. In quantitative research we have numbers and percentages as results. The questions in this case were not formulated by the author of this study, but were given to the employees of the target company as a part of yearly engagement study. The answers were divided in one-to-five point agreement categories: very favorable-favorable-neutral-unfavorable-very unfavorable. It is not possible to make assumptions how carefully the employees read the questions. The survey utilizes the data in order to determine how closely certain attitudes and opinions are related to the engagement work force. The results may give reason to consider action or development in some areas, but it does not indicate culturally sensitive matters. It is also not possible to check whether the answering mode of for example South Asian workers differed (and which items it did, if it did) from European, Arab or South East Asian employees.

I have carefully considered the cultural factor when analyzing the answers from the survey. Cultural influencing in the target company was further checked through personal interviews. There were only three interviews available, since my aim was to collect information from the target company only. The three Finnish professionals had all been working and living in the target company's location in the Middle East for a minimum of two years. The open conversations revealed many facts and experiences, which I share. There are naturally a great number of professionals in the target company, who have foreign experience. I chose to leave them out, since the location and work in Middle East is quite unique.

I cannot estimate the possibility of favorable answers dominating the overall survey in Target Company resulting from personal or cultural motive. The survey was anonymous and answers were confidential. The original idea was to interview in person some Non-European employees from the target company as well, but this proved to be complicated and sensitive issue. The interviews should have been arranged in location, and they would have needed to ensure the employees total confidence. As this was not possible, I have made my development plan with the help of the material available, the interviews conducted and lastly based on my own experience.

The purpose of this study was to draft a development plan to improve multicultural management in Target Company. The first step was to make an

investigation on how things are at the moment. The research material was collected to find out the strengths and opportunity areas. The idea was not to challenge the existing management style, but to provide a creative tool for developing cultural awareness. One important fact to underline is the importance to understand that cultures are constantly changing phenomenon, which like living organisms have the ability to adapt to changing environment and situations. Cultures, more often the ones which differ from ours, are often compressed to a list of stereotypes, forgetting that any "culture" is a combination of individual values, traditions and dreams.

The development plan for the target company consists of practical ideas on how to ensure high competence level by motivating and training people, how to win their dedication and trust by efficient management and HR policy and finally how to make the teams unite under mutually respected and valued pluralistic company culture.

7   CONTRIBUTION

7.1   The Development Plan

Dedicated and competent people are the foundation of a successful company. The target company is famed for it's technical excellence and skilled professionals. Good customer service is important in the highly competitive Middle East. As I have concluded in my research above, the Finnish expats see the employees in the target company as highly potential. They are eager to learn and develop their professional skills, and ambitious to promote their careers within company. The interest shown to change of employer to competitors has however occurred to many. What can the target company do to keep their most valuable asset – motivated and innovative professionals?

At the moment, the target company has supply lines in Finland, China and Italy. Usually the supply lines are sending their quality surveys to other subsidiary companies around the world. The supply line in question will then base their development plans on the feedback. If, for example, the survey would show that the supply line response time is too long, they try to adjust their functions accordingly. This kind of system could also be adapted to the target company as well. Thus the target company would send their survey to supply line professionals to find out how they see target company performance. The results can then be used by the target company's management to plan and develop their work force further. The following chapters will introduce my suggestion for development plan.

During financial crises firms normally search for locations where expenses can be cut. It is lucrative to employ work force with only basic professional skills. Western professionals are then seated on the manager's office with hopes as high as their salaries. The problems will soon become everyday procedure. It is easy to point the finger to the less than hoped for competence of the Non-European and local workers. Investments in human capital are frequently considered as residual budget elements which can be expanded or contracted as the economic conditions change. However, the paradox is that the firms being forced to cut these expenses quite often are those that need to develop their human resources the most. In that way, short term adjustment to difficult economic circumstances may damage the firm's long term potential since necessary human resource investments are either not made at all or postponed. (Nordhaug 1994, 221.)

It is very easy for the target company of this study to invite professionals to work in Middle East. Cultural awareness and new kinds of learning environments are however needed. The employee's competence should form the base of functions in every organization. It is the most economically viable decision for any organization to make. Employees are the heart of the organization's success, therefore they should be professionally skilled, adaptable and highly motivated. The company can reach this level by consistent planning and developing the whole organization. (Kilpimaa 2005, 108.)

Manager is a key member in the work force. His competence requirements go far above the normal university degrees. The boss is responsible of the competence of his team. Senior management of the organization has to make sure he knows and levels with both personal and professional quali-fications. Boss has to be able to continuously monitor and further develop the competence of his people. (Kilpimaa 2005, 75.)

Even though Human Resource department and middle management can follow people's development and training needs from regular P.D.P. (**Pe**r-formance **D**evelopment **P**rocess) and I.D.P. (**I**ndividual **D**evelopment **P**rocess) program, it is the immediate bosses who see, meet and talk with their people on a daily basis. They have to be interested in their ambitions for career move, or the total lack of it. The target company is the compe-tence center for Middle East. The management must foresee the future of competition, huge building projects and vision also for the future. The need for professional employees will continue. It is very frustrating for teams as well as to management to see continuous chance in personnel. The team key people need to have a successor or an apprentice. The new-comers can learn quickly through a seasoned mentor. Management needs to find the talents and make use of them. There are right guys to do the right job, and then there are guys who can do just about everything right.

According to philosopher Tuomas Nevanlinna, a democratic society faces problem with conflicting ideals and use of power. According to its basic equal principles there should not be authoritative use of power, but it is there, anyway. What could be the solution? Use of power has to be masked as voluntary. Thus, a Swedish form of use of power is created: The top management decides things in advance. Afterwards a democratic and equal discussion is arranged. The results, which have already been agreed upon are then manipulated sophistically to the direction, which leads the opinions towards the management's preliminary goal. There should be some meaningless subjects or items where the subordinates can have their say, so that the principle and the feeling of mutual agreement in decision making prevail. The Finnish version is the same, except for the more silent, sullen and reserved atmosphere of the meeting. Development discussions are the purest and most flourishing product of typically Swed-ish use of power. There the management and the employee discuss to-gether in constructive way on alternatives, when there is a single one choice only. (Nevanlinna 2011, 25.)

Competence management comprises the processes of competence build-ing, leveraging, and maintenance.

1. Competence building is any process by which a firm achieves qualita-tive changes in its existing stocks of assets and capabilities
2. Competence leveraging is the applying of a firm's existing compe-tences to current or new market opportunities in ways that do not re-quire qualitative change in the firm's assets or capabilities
3. Competence maintenance requires continual adaptation to maintain an effective coordinated deployment of assets. (Laamanen et alii 2005, 59.)

The following chapters will draw a flexible practical plan for developing different sides of the company's approach. The cultural awareness plan, management, choosing the right people to do the right job, sharing knowledge and training are studied in detail here.

7.2 Cultural Awareness

As stated earlier, multiculturalism as such is not a value as itself; it does not necessarily produce an effective Dream Team. Certain conditions have to be met. Diversity is an either/or factor for the success of a team. If well-managed, diversity leads to high effectiveness. If poorly managed, it leads to high ineffectiveness. Statistically, the safer for effectiveness is the single culture team, but the level will be average. (Gore 2007, 106.)

Cultural differences often cause anxiety and discomfort among people, but for some of us they are an endless source of fascination. Sadly or not, the ability to study only for the sake of pure, esoteric interest is becoming more challenging, even if the desire is there. In short, we have to make choices and think pragmatically. The study of cultural differences and intercultural communication has fallen victim to the thinking that it would be a nice, additional thing to know, but in a world of more urgent choices, it is often dropped from the learner's "have to do" list in favor of "useful studies". (Gore 2007, 118.)

Like true multicultural awareness, also knowledge is an organic environment. In a multicultural workplace, it is a much more difficult and complex form than in a mechanistic operating environment. Most of the skills people have are based on hidden knowledge, which in turn are based on experience. In other words, people often act directly on the basis of their "gut-feelings" and previously catered knowledge. It happens without them being able to unravel their actions in the form of logical explanations. This tacit knowledge cannot be precisely defined. This is why tacit knowledge becomes the property of an organization only through social interaction. Cultural tacit knowledge can only be transferred from one person to another by doing – by practical experience and personal realization. (Sähle & Grönroos 2000, 105-106.) I will concentrate on practical explanations that emerge through social interaction and communication in the work environment. One important factor not to be missed is also the effect of culture shock, which can have devastating results in an otherwise efficient and professionally skilled person.

As we understand, organizations are functional social entities, which consist of individuals. An organization changes along with the people moving in and out, of individuals, who bring their own beliefs, values and working culture with them. Thus, the company culture is a total of these ideas. Company culture changes personal behavior and individual ideas change company culture. Even though the word "culture" is usually connected with a country or nationality, we must understand it has more to do with individual values than of a certain large number of people. In a global business organization, the company culture forms a cognitive framework which guidelines the joint work efforts and is a functional base for multi-

cultural work environment. In time they build in norms according to which people tend to work, since "this is how it is done over here". Often one of the cultures tries to override the others, may it be the senior management culture or the majority, sometimes even the loud minority culture. It is sometimes claimed, that knowledge is the most important resource of both companies and individuals. To be able to develop and succeed a multicultural global company has to be able to create a company culture, where every member is participating. Thus every member of the team is equally important part of the functioning intelligent machinery. (Heikkilä 2005, 54-55.)

7.3   Company Culture

Our identities base often on our language. In the target company the common language is English, but to understanding each other is totally another question. That will require more than ability to speak with each other. Even if we are speaking the same language, we might not necessarily have same interpretation to a concept. Non-verbal communication is another challenge. Language is the way we interact and communicate so, naturally, people use the means of communication to try to shape attitudes and opinions and to induce conformity and subordination. (Chomsky 2004, 18.) In order to fully understand other culture you musts be "a native speaker" of that particular culture – or even a sub-culture. As the target company is very multicultural, the best way is to define multicultural pluralism as the starting point.

The strategy of cultural relationship management includes an understanding of the relationship between interacting part on various levels. On a concrete level, intercultural communication competence is knowing oneself and using this self-awareness to better manage relationships with others who are culturally different by how and what we verbally and nonverbally communicates. On an abstract level, intercultural communication competence is gaining an understanding of the strategic areas of intercultural communication and analyzing oneself, and then others, within that framework. The strategic and interacting areas of intercultural communication are defining culture, identity, religion, history, geography and economic mindsets. When we have a clear understanding of where we personally stand within these areas, we can better manage intercultural relationship with others. Assessing and increasing our knowledge in these strategic areas then gives us the concrete knowledge to be able to more effectively communicate verbally and nonverbally with people of different cultural backgrounds. (Gore 2007, 61-62.)

Some employees in the target company might be enjoying their first foreign assignment. A natural consequence is the culture shock: one feels totally alien and foreign inside the country and the company. In times of trouble people usually cling onto the closest. In culture shock this would be the people with same culture, customs, language and values. This will promote the birth of national groups - teams inside the team itself. Indians will prefer to socialize with other Indians, Westerners to Westerners, and

Arabs to Arab and so on. This can be strength, but it can certainly also create many problems. It guidelines the performance, it guidelines the kinds of job the teams are able to do and it creates jealousy between the teams. To avoid this, the management should build the teams on a multi-cultural base.

There should be a **written** rule of mutual conduct for each member of the work force from the office assistant to senior management. The culture related rules for Target Company could include statements like:
1. Everybody is equal in this company.
2. All nationalities, religions and cultures are equally respected.
3. Racism is not tolerated in this company in any form.
4. Decency and consideration is expected from each member of the work force. The customs of the host country have to be respected.
5. Arguments and disagreements connected with politics and religion do not have place in the office or workplace. Any problems concerning work are taken to be solved with the presence of the manager.
6. Ideas and opinions and open discussions are encouraged
7. Knowledge and information are expected to be shared with colleagues actively. Teaching one's skills to others is rewarded.
8. Mutual help, support and assistance should be offered for newcomers and colleagues alike
9. Everyone enjoys the same career opportunities in this company. They are to be developed in understanding with the employee's personal ambition and the company's benefit and success
10. All effort should be taken to create a tolerant and encouraging work atmosphere for the benefit of the all employees.

This kind of clear and explicit list of expected conduct would no doubt send a message to every employee, that the company is serious indeed in it's intention to unite it's people under the ideal of equal and multicultural "WE". An important element in any organizational culture is a normative structure that defines rules of legitimate conduct and behavior and contains general values which individuals can use as support when making decisions about how to act under varying circumstances. (Nordhaug 1994, 215.) It could also be used as a base for solving disagreements or misunderstandings. The main stream flowing under the written rules is to make people see, that it is not possible to consider other nationalities as somehow "outsiders" or lesser members in the company. The underlined strong message should be: WE are the company.

The company values and basic rules must not only be listed down for the employees to follow, but they need to be the same for everyone in the company hierarchy, including the senior management. This is important, since for example Legge argues that a corporate culture that is shared by the senior management and is presented as the "official culture" of the organization – may be only one of several sub-cultures within any organization, and may be actively resisted by groups who do not share or empathize with its values. If corporate culture makes no sense of the organizational realities experienced by the employees other than senior manage-

ment, it will not become internalized outside that small sub-group. (Legge 1995, 187.)

7.4   The Human Resource

The Human resource department is in many ways the key for successful management. Thus it is of utmost importance to choose right kind of people to do the demanding job. There should not be any place for playing power games for the HR. One nationality should not be preferred to another – only high competence and tolerant value base matter.

The real job for the HR is to smoothen the newcomer's way and to help him adapt to the work force. Another, as demanding and important one together with the management, is to keep up the creative and enthusiastic atmosphere of WE. The company must be able to change its ways "things are done here" according to the multicultural work force. For the employee, who eagerly, curious and full of expectations arrives to start a new life with a new life with his family, the real challenge is not to understand foreign culture but to understand one's own. I am also convinced that all that one ever gets from studying foreign culture is a token understanding. The ultimate reason for such study is to learn more about how one's own system works. The best reason for exposing oneself to foreign ways is to generate a sense of vitality and awareness-an interest in life that can come only when one lives through the shock of contrast and difference. Simply put, in learning to understand our own ways of thinking and behaving, we can begin to really learn about such things in others. (Gore 2007, 19-20.)

In practical situation, the HR should have a ready-made and tailored "welcome"-package for the newcomers (and their families). It should include the normal protocol of fulfilling what has been promised in the work agreement, an assigned person for each family to help with the stay permits, visas, housing, children's schools and health issues. A smooth and welcoming start is promoting dedication and cannot be won after a bad start! A Notebook for the Newcomer should at least include the following chapters and headlines:

(1) Welcome to XX. Some global companies have a person called "the Manager for First Impression". These professional take care of the Public Relations as well. In a challenging work environment place like the Middle East, the HR is the first contact they have with their new employer. There are several small ways to make them feel more welcome. For the company, it is the first chance to introduce the company values, to show how they take care of their people. This will ensure mutual appreciation. The new employee will no doubt try his best to learn his duties in short time. If he is relocating with his family, the fewer problems there is to overcome, the smoother is his success in performing his best.

(2) Helping employee and family to get the visa and other permits
One of the first and most stressing challenges for especially European expats is getting the visa in Middle East. All of the official documents are in Arabic language. The best solution would be that HR official is joining the

employee to Immigration. HR must be Arabic speaking and further, to know the procedure. The health checks and other requirements are challenging in some parts of the Middle East, and require assistance.

(3) Helping employee to find Home
After the official paper works, home and settling in is the next task. If this would be the employee's first foreign assignment in the Middle East, it will consume a huge part of his time and consideration. The HR should have a procedure to solve the housing simply to save time and energy. One solution might be a certain person or a housing agent in the HR team, whose main duty would be to find suitable lodgings for the new employer and family. Some of the employees get the housing allowance as part of their salary. One possible solution for the company's benefit would be to rent an apartment building with number of comfortable flats near schools and facilities. This would offer at least two advantages for the company.
1. The employees and their families have a chance to get to know each other better.
2. The housing allowance is in effective use and people will enjoy the comfortable living. Foreign expats usually sign a 2-3 years agreements, so the apartments can be rotated among new people

(4) Transportation
In the Middle East, public transportation is not as developed as in Europe for example. This means that moving around is either by taxi or by private car. Since not everybody wants to buy a car or travel by taxi in a megavolt where traffic jams are monstrous, a solutions could be a HR arranged "job bus" system. The company would have a big bus taking people to office and back during the work day.

(5) Social Clubs
To promote understanding and respect between the languages, cultural and religious barriers the HR could start regular Social Club, where people from different teams get together. There should be a dedicated evenings for Arab, European, Asian and African nationals, who each in their turn would make a joint effort to create a pleasant program, food and entertainment. The purpose of this is of course to build the WE-spirit in a fun way, but also to introduce the different cultures on a personal experience level. Thus there should always be a light lecture or introduction to customs in specific cultural group. Families should be included in the evenings. At present the case often remains, that the Finns meet only other Finns, and the Indians meet other Indians. There are no real friendships or bonding between the nations, since they never actually meet. The yearly company party is clearly not even close to enough. The real challenge of HR and the target company is to keep the highly skilled and dedicated people in the company. The social mode could be just one small, but very important factor to achieve that.

There could naturally be a guidebook introducing the proper behavior, the laws and customs of the host country. Since it is anyhow a fact, that few of us will ever actually have time to study it all, it would be far more beneficial to arrange a short and compulsory course including a personal guide

introducing the cultures of the work place and the host country. The values of the company could become familiar from the beginning. It is always more efficient to hear the facts, than to just read them from a guideline. The HR guide should be native to the host country or an experiences expat from some other national group - and NOT from the same cultural background as the newcomer. If the guide for a Finn is another Finn, the viewpoint to things around is also a Finn Point! The true nature of the host country and culture will only reveal itself when the newcomer is curious and active enough to search for it. Usually the testimonies from "experienced" expatriates become the guideline for next round of expats – both in good and bad.

Guidebooks and the short introductions offered to the families leaving home country give often a long list of **dos** and **don'ts**. While this may be good to know, it should anyway explain the **whys** and **why nots** as well. Also, since it is many times impossible to detect a person's religion or value base by the outer appearance in an international office, it is also useless to "warn" a newcomer of the many things he/she can do "wrong". This is just creating fear of "making a mistake". There should be generally accepted air of tolerance and mutual respect, which builds a good starting point for future work together. When the reasons for certain new customs are explained, they also make sense more than just as something strange or exotic. Thus, the guidebook should be written by an experienced professional writer, preferably with multicultural background.

7.5   Choosing The Manager

Managing culture has sometimes been likened to riding a wave. The best the surf-rider can do is to understand the pattern of currents and winds that shape and direct the waves. He may then use them to stay afloat and steer in the desired path. But this is not the same as changing the basic rhythms of the ocean. (Legge 1995, 207.)

One of the most important tasks for the success of a company is to carefully choose the right person to lead the teams and the organization. We can already agree that the manager is the main instrument in implementing the "company culture". He has to be able to surf the cultures, choose the best combination of work force and convince them that they have found the best opportunity to live and develop their career dreams. He needs to be aware of personal differences as well as the cultural ones. He has to be able to offer training to the ambitious ones and support the ones who want to commit to their daily routines.

Organizational survival, it is clear, is directly linked to our willingness to cultivate leaders. Leadership is the factor that will ultimately determine pure success or failure. No longer can organizations rely solely on technological superiority to achieve economic dominance: rapid changes in technology make obsolete what only yesterday was considered cutting-edge. The three dimensional framework recognizes that our strength must derive from the strength of individuals. It recognizes that most people use only a fraction of their potential to lead and that the challenges faced by our or-

ganizations require the full development and expression of a wide range of leadership capabilities. It poses a tantalizing question: can leadership talent be a source of competitive advantage. (Hesselbein et alii 1996, 172-173.)

The most important practical tasks of management are:
1. To choose the right jobs and responsibilities to right kind of people, forming functional teams, seeing ambition and utilizing it.
2. To analyze and define the levels of professionalism and skill for each job sector
3. To crate a system for evaluating personal performance levels
4. To find suitable ways for rewarding excellence
5. To encourage personal development and creativity on each person. (Luoma 1990, 76, also in Ekuri 2002, 8.)

I believe there is a very fine line between a manager and a leader. Almost anyone can be nominated as a manager, but to become a leader requires special and very personal skills not everybody has. Within this context of true leadership, true leaders for the future must be willing to accept five fundamental challenges:
1. They must be willing to become more sensitive and understanding with respect to the ethnic, cultural, and gender differences within the workplace and to demonstrate that sensitivity and understanding.
2. They must have a vision for the workplace that ultimately results in a significant broadening of the corporate culture and the workplace environment.
3. They must be willing to craft and implement new and different employment and communication processes to enhance and promote perceptions of fairness and equity.
4. They must be willing to bring full and unquestioned commitment to the effective utilization of a diverse work force.
5. They must be the linchpin between their organization and the larger community, to establish the organization as a place where people want to work and be productive and to develop new markets and maintain existing ones.

In the final analysis, true leadership brings people of diverse backgrounds and interests together in ways that provide fair and equitable opportunities to contribute their best, achieve personal goals, and realize their full potential. (Hesselbein et alii 1996, 78-79.)

Company will have to make careful decision in choosing the leader and it is for sure not an easy task. The best thing to start would be to decide where a multi-culturally fluent boss is needed most? What would that position mean to the company's strategy and organization chart? What kind of impression the company would wish to give to their employees, subcontractors, customers and competitors alike? You may have people who are expecting a promotion inside the organization. They might feel disappointed and in worst case bitter, if the company chooses a fresh face from outside. The senior management must make the difficult decision. If the company needs to have chance, or even a face-lift to better suit the cus-

tomers' expectations, they could take a chance and chose an outsider. This may no doubt bring the new ideas into the company and different views from outside. On the other hand, the positive effect of choosing someone who already knows the company products is well familiar with the work culture and who knows the people can also provide new ideas when given a chance.

There are certain basic qualifications for a successful boss. They include:
1. Management skills, both organizational as well as personal
2. Excellent collaboration skills, creativity in building teams
3. Diplomatic skills, social and open personality
4. Multicultural fluency, tolerance and respect
5. Professional performance and competence
6. Experience in management and training people

The many management guidebooks tend to list personal qualifications of a "good boss". As a person who would have them all is probably non-existent, the management could check at least a few from the applicants. Successful managers should be: optimistic, balanced, charismatic, able to think logically, possess a healthy sense of humor, good deal of intuition, manage and endure stress, have tactical skills, stamina, and perseverance, be loyal and trustworthy, self-disciplined and flexible, tolerant and future oriented. (Nöllke 2002, 17.)

If the senior management considers between options, they should already know the abilities of their "own" people, as choosing a new face to the team (especially for a foreign assignment outside one's own cultural field) is a risk. The usual way for companies is even today, that there are certain "ladders" to climb up during the years of service. People are used to the idea that they go forward and up no matter what and how they perform their duties. A middle boss becomes a big boss and a big boss goes on to become director. This makes one wonder if anything changes. Where are the big bright new ideas coming then? Another thing to remember would be the lesson to learn for the subordinates: If a person who has done a lousy job and treated the subordinates like dictator gets promoted, you can bet your money that the teams will have certain things rolling through their brain. The same goes without saying, if the bosses always get chosen from the same national or racial group.

One idea would be to create a system for the boss where their management skills will be based on success and performance of their team and the professional development of it's' members. For a highly specialized company like the target company of this study is, the best solution many times is to choose a new manager from the work force already available.

Position is a crude way of measuring power it fails to reflect the subtleties of actual alignment. In order for an organization to operate with flexibility, power must derive from more than rank. Ted Jenkins describes three possibilities:
1. Power of expertise, of specialized knowledge or skills,
2. Power of personal relationships and connections,

3.   Power of that great intangible, personal authority or charisma.

An organization that permits people to manifest and develop these kinds of power without regard to their official status will have a head start in nurturing leadership within the ranks. (Hesselbein et alii 1996, 23.)
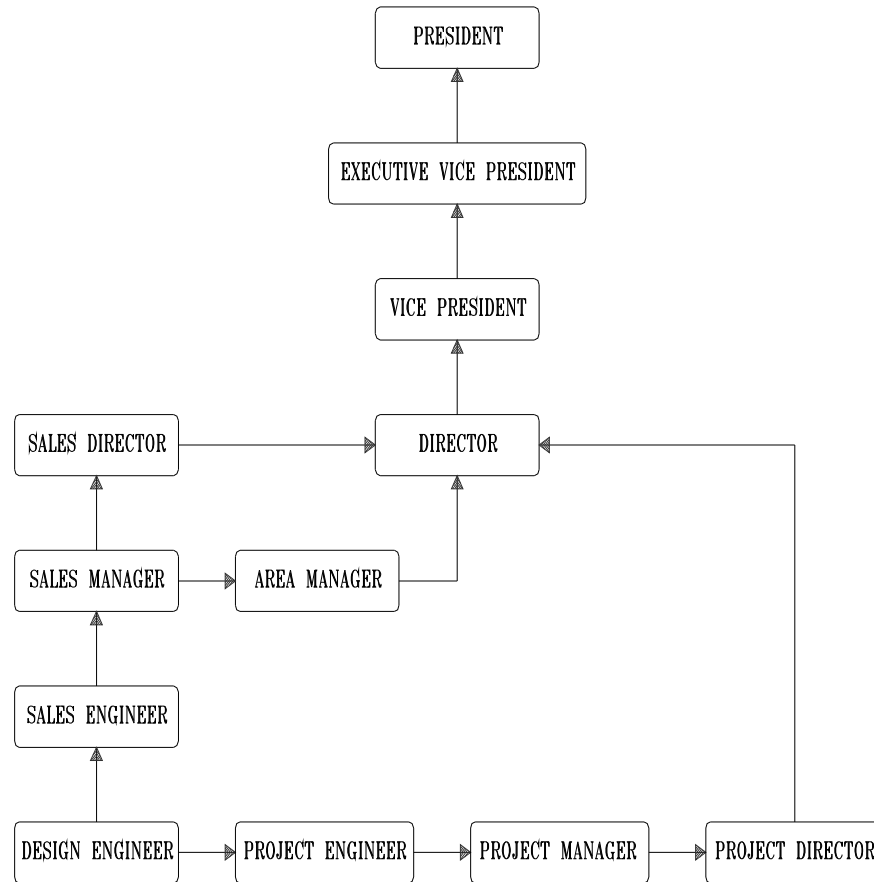

Figure 10 Options for Developing Managers Inside the Company

If the position is for senior management position, the company should at first check the options inside the company. If major changes are needed, an outside candidate may be more ready to take action more harshly than a person who knows most people personally. It is nowadays quite common that the outsiders are not from the company's home country, and have strong global business experience. A person for a senior management position must be experienced, self confident and intellectual. He should aim in creating an idea of WE, where all members of the team could believe.

One of the many abilities a good leader has is confidence in himself and his skills. By this he can create air of trust around him. He should therefore be:

- *Able to take and listen all the criticism.* People sometimes have the problem in expressing themselves especially to their boss. This will leave some important things unsaid. Self confident boss can avoid this problem by encouraging subordinates to speak frankly.

- Able to laugh him/herself
You may meet a lot of bosses who are stiff especially when they have made some mistake. This will create a cloudy atmosphere inside the team and which in turn subordinates will interpret that they should not say anything especially when they make the mistake. They would think that better to listen to the boss than say some of their opinions. This is particularly true among Asians.

- Able to take the blame of mistakes made by teams
You may have met bosses who are nowhere to be found when things get rough. They may be present when the teams have done good job, just to collect the credit. A good boss is there for his people no matter what.

- Able to confess the mistakes that he/she has done.
Most of us are reluctant to make a mistake and not to mention to confess it publicly. This requires humility from the boss. Making mistake is human and confessing one's own eases the tension between the team and the boss.

It is this self-confidence that makes it possible for leaders to be willing, prudent risk takers who encourage others to take similar risks. Self confidence in a leader also enables that, individuals to have confidence in, and support the advancement of, the people in his or her organization. Believing in the enormous capacity of empowered people, leaders unleash that capacity by encouraging their teams not only with sincere praise and recognition, but also by providing constructive critiques and by applauding responsibly undertaken "bold tries" as well as true victories. (Hesselbein et alii 1996, 255.)

There is a very thin layer between clever and intellectual. You may have met a lot of clever people, who are able to manage the teams and departments, but they might not necessarily have vision. In the worse case they end up thinking for their own interests and not for the company first. Senior management primary values must be the company's values. He/she must always see ahead what company needs instead of what he/she needs. Not to spend too much time and thinking what should he/she be do to get the better position instead of better result for the performances.

7.6   Forming the Team

There are several factors to ensure success in multinational team. They include for example, creating the common vision and goal which are not overriding the personal primary values of the employees. The company culture's aim to ***cultural pluralism*** means that different personal, national and religious values are equally respected. Cultural pluralism is a term used when smaller groups within a larger society maintain their unique cultural identities, and their values and practices are accepted by the wider culture. The existence of such institutions and practices are possible if the cultural communities responsible for them are protected by law and/or accepted by the larger society in a pluralist culture. This automatically re-

quires a very wide, thorough understanding and above all flexibility from the management.

A success can naturally be achieved in many ways, but one for the future would be the concept of *learning organization*. In learning organization, people feel they are doing something that matters to them personally and to the larger world. Every individual in the organization is somehow stretching, growing, or enhancing his capacity to create. People are more intelligent together than they are apart. If you want something really creative done, you ask a team to do it - instead of sending one person off to do it on his or her own. The organization continually becomes more aware of its underlying knowledge base-particularly the store of tacit, unarticulated knowledge in the heart and mind of employees. Visions of the direction of the enterprise emerge from all levels.

The responsibility of top management is to manage the process whereby new emerging visions become shared visions. Employees are invited to learn what is going on at every level of the organization, so they can understand how their actions influence others. People feel free to inquire about each others' (and their own) assumptions and biases. There are few (if any) sacred cows or un-discussable subjects. People treat each other as colleagues. There's a mutual respect and trust in the way they talk to each other, and work together, no matter what their opinions may be. People feel free to try experiments, take risks, and openly assess the results. No one is killed for making a mistake. (Senge et alii 1994, 51.)

Even though the survey did not include questions about culturally sensitive issues, my Finnish informants confirmed my personal experience from the work place. All three of them felt that some nationalities suffered from being treated less equal than others. However, none of them had paid attention in problems arising from different religious backgrounds.

There are three basic types of conflict in intercultural communication: object, relationship and priority.

- *Object conflicts* involve contrasting assumptions about what is right or wrong. In this sense, the word object does not necessarily refer to a concrete object, but it can also mean an "object" that can be perceived intellectually. Object conflicts involve conscious or unconscious disagreement or misunderstanding about something.
(For example certain kinds of calendar photos are considered "normal" or "funny" in a Western work place, but in the Middle East it would be harshly insulting and inappropriate)

- *Relationship conflict* focuses on how two or more people connect with each other. The main distinction in a relationship conflict is identity. For example, how do identities affect rights and responsibilities, which then taken on the form of behaviors? Different culture can maintain different perceptions about rights and responsibilities for a certain identity and expectations for behavior. Across cultures, there is not always agreement on

the rights and responsibilities associated with various relationships or with what that behaviors are even sensible within certain relationships.

- *Priority conflict* involves a judgment of the relative morality of certain actions. Although judgment and values play a part in other conflicts, feelings about what are good or bad and judgments that reflect particular moral orders are at the core priority conflicts. In a given circumstance in which we have to take a course of action, we are faced with a set of choices. The set of choices might be similar in different parts of the world, but the prioritizing of the choices can differ depending on what is valued in one culture as opposed to another, which can lead to a priority conflict. (Gore 2007, 168-169.)

Most of us are proud of our country and culture, and there's nothing wrong with that. The problems rise only, if we think certain nationality and cultures is better than others or certain nationalities can do things better than the rest of other nations. In the target company where there are different nationalities inside the teams and departments, it is sometimes rather challenging to maintain the equilibrium among them. If majority of the team members are from one country or culture, there is a big chance that they tend to dominate the rest of the team. Individuals are products of their culture; they are conditioned by their socio-cultural environment to act in certain manners. Culture includes the things that have "worked" in the past. It includes shared beliefs, attitudes, norms, roles, and values found among speakers of a particular language who live during the same historical period in a specific geographic region. These shared elements of subjective culture are usually transferred from generation to generation. Language, time, and place help define culture. Culture is to society what memory is to individuals. (Mooij 2005, 36.)

I believe that it is possible to mix the teams in such way, that one culture would not dominate. Instead, a group of competent professionals respect each other because they work brilliantly together. The best professional would be chosen for jobs, no matter which country he originally is from. Personal conflicts are naturally occurring, that is unavoidable. The base line is that there should not be any *cultural* items to create conflicts. If the company culture is emphasizing the *professional* over personal and tolerance over national pride, maybe the personal conflicts could also be easier to solve. The idea is that the team is able to solve its problems and work efficiently without hidden feelings of inequality.

The effectiveness of multicultural team depends on the task, stage of development and the ways diversity is managed. In short, diversity is most valuable when the need to create fresh solutions is comparatively more important than the need to reach agreement (cohesion). When a task requires team members to perform highly specialized roles, it is usually more advantageous to use a diverse team: a routine task is more suitable for a homogenous (single culture) team because its members tend to think and behave more similarly. (Gore 2007, 106.)

However the key to success does not appear to lie in the selection of team members – you only have to look briefly at team sports to find examples of talented individuals working poorly as a team. Instead, success is often characterized by the genuine granting of power and responsibility to teams so they can solve their own problems. (Obeng & Crainer 1994, 179-180.)

7.7 Developing People

It can be expected that efforts to detect and active latent competences in firms will become an increasingly important human resource management activity. The reason is that the supplies of skilled labor in many nations will shrink due to demographic trends involving smaller cohorts of young people entering the labor market. Employers who used to be able to cream the most qualified workers from an oversized labor pool increasingly will have to make rather than buy skilled employees. (Nordhaug 1994, 247.)

The results of the survey stated that the target company employees felt that the collaboration across different departments is good level. The main company global overall percentage was 48%, so it seems that target company teams operate well above the average.

This is one of the important tasks that company will have to tackle in advance. If the collaboration between teams and departments is poor, the performance will suffer as well. This issue can also link to my and my Finnish informant's experience, that cultural sensitivities sometimes conflict each other. It is natural that if you don't get along with the person you are likely not to share the knowledge with them either. Many times cultures, which are close to each other geographically and historically, tend to be less tolerant to each other that they would be to distant cultures. Maybe the reason simply is tolerance to "forgive" embarrassment to a stranger than it would be to one's neighbor.

Transfer of competence between employees is reckoned to be among the most important forms of learning in work organizations. However, the frequency and amount of such transfer strongly depends on the actual relationship between colleagues who interact during working hours. (Nordhaug 1994, 202.) This issue could find solution in mixed professional teams, where learning new things would be encouraged. The career moves should base not only to professional competence, but also on how much they are willing to contribute in the common "knowledge data base" of the company. Teaching others should be rewarded. At the moment people tend to keep their specialist know-how to themselves as insurance to keep their jobs in the future. If sharing the knowledge is rewarded, teaching special skills and creativity will become a company value. This in turn will build strong foundation for technical competitiveness in global market.

The main organization of the target company has an active job rotating system where employees have a chance to work in subsidiary companies around the world for short period of time. They are encouraged to switch within the other teams as well. This kind of system should be adapted to

target company as well. The management and HR can easily see from the **P.D.P**. and **I.D.P**. program that who is willing to learn new things. Naturally there are people who are just happy where they are and contend to do the routine jobs.

Placing the people from one team into other teams would bring not only the transferring the knowledge between teams, but also make a big different in collaboration between teams and departments. Teams members can get to know each other's team member which in turn will form the positive network. Also the more conservative members of the teams, who are not willing or able to face the challenge of changing job environment, will benefit from the fresh ideas brought back to the office by the visitors. Short time experimental job exchange could be interesting for jobs differing from each other. The engineering professional could see the business with new vision after time in Sales and Sales people would benefit for deeper understanding on what goes on in the design tables and engineering office. Personal contacts freshen up the communication and collaboration between the different teams. This kind of real work relationship is far more beneficial for the whole company than the few get-together parties arranged yearly.

One idea for developing people would be to employ more designers for future projects. There always is a future strategy in the company and certain prospects as well as expectations for the market area. When major projects are won, it is too late to start recruiting and training people! It would be advisable to employ more designers in advance, to train them and while doing it check and evaluate the most promising and ambitious of them for further study. A good professional who knows the company product and has an idea of the projects is the backbone of the project team.
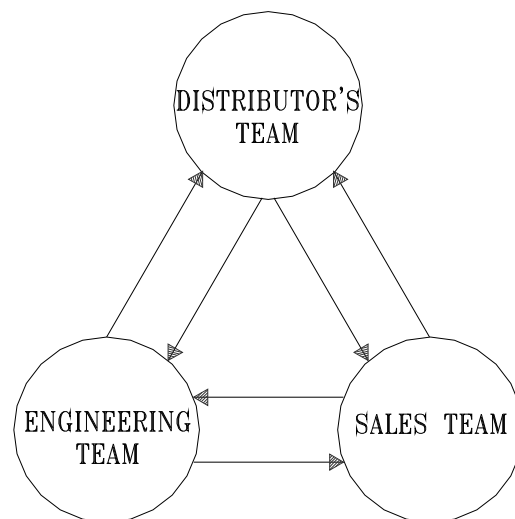

Figure 11 Collaboration Between Teams

Despite the extensive literature about teams and team working, the basic dynamics of team working often remain clouded and uncertain. Teams

only occur when a number of people have a common goal and recognize that their personal success is dependent on the success of others. They are all interdependent. In practice, this means that in most teams people will contribute individual skills, many of which will be different. It also means that the full tensions and counter-balance of human behavior will need to be demonstrated in the team. It is not enough to have a rag-bag collection of individual skills. The various behaviors of the team members need to mesh together in order to achieve objectives. For people to work successfully in teams, you need people to behave in certain ways. You need some people to concentrate on the task at hand (doers). You need some people to provide specialist knowledge (knower) and some to solve problems as they arise (solvers). You need some people to make sure that it is going as well as it can and that the whole team is contributing fully (checkers). And you need some people to make sure that the team is operating as a cohesive social unit (carers). (Obeng & Crainer 1994, 178.)

7.7.1   Learning by Doing

Learning strategies refer to broad-ranging and functionally complex knowledge-formation processes whose influence can be seen in the qualitative and quantitative features of the learning process. Learning strategies can be grouped into cognitive, meta-cognitive and resource management strategies. Cognitive strategies help the learner to code new material and facilitate the analysis and formulation of knowledge. Meta-cognitive strategies help the learner to plan, regulate, monitor and formulate his/her own cognitive processes. Resource management strategies help the learner to control time, effort and outside help in order to perform the task. (Ruohotie 2002, 55.)

Cognition, or thinking, refers to a learner's ability to attend to, acquire, represent, and retrieve information. It directs the learner's perceptions, actions, thinking, and memory. Meta-cognition, or thinking about thinking, refers to the knowledge and regulation of thinking and learning. It directs the learner's ability to reflect upon, understand, and control his/her learning. (Ruohotie 2002, 58.)

The organizations which encourage the wheel of learning, which relish curiosity, questions and ideas, which allow space for experiment and for reflection, which forgive mistakes and promote self-confidence, these are the learning organizations, and theirs is a competitive advantage which no one can steal from them. (Antikainen et alii 1996, 96.) In organizations where experimentation and learning by trial and error are encouraged, a number of mottos expressing similar values have been put forward: "It is better to ask forgiveness than to beg for permission". "Everyone can make mistake, try again", "Don't ask in advance go ahead". Mottos of this sort may serve to enhance the utilization of competence in that they legitimize attempt at innovation and reduce expected personal risks or costs or error through trial. (Nordhaug 1994, 45.)

There is an old saying; *I forget what I hear, I remember when I read but I understand only when I do it myself.* Special engineering and technology

required in the target company cannot be studied at any institution. It can only be learned by doing the job. There is no doubt the newcomer will be lost without supportive boss and a skilled professional as mentor and teacher. In the target company, several problems arise from the culture conflict: for the Western boss, it is beyond comprehension why he needs to tell what to do and how to do it to his professionals over and over again. He might also be expecting them to be innovative and come forward with their new ideas. For the Asians, it is embarrassing and difficult to ask for help. They would rather do what is told, and then wait for next instructions.

In some Japanese companies, young apprentices are nurtured by learning the skills along with the old masters. Under the supervision of the old masters, young apprentices are slowly but surely learning all the things need to be skilled professional. This traditional of system could be adapted to target company also, since majority of work force originate from Asia. Best results for long run would be achieved, if cultural backgrounds could be mixed as well. A nominated mentor would introduce the newcomer not only to professional, technical skills but also to pluralistic company culture. New teams must base around people who are willing to share the knowledge with others. This would create a true learning organization.

In a learning organization:
1. People feel they are doing something that matters-to them personally and to the larger world.
2. Every individual in the organization is somehow stretching, growing, or enhancing his capacity to create.
3. People are more intelligent together than they are apart. If you want something really creative done, you ask a team to do it-instead of sending one person off to do it on his or her own.
4. The organization continually becomes more aware of its underlying knowledge base-particularly the store of tacit, unarticulated knowledge in the heart and mind of employees.
5. Visions of the direction of the enterprise emerge from all levels. The responsibility of top management is to manage the process whereby new emerging visions become shared visions.
6. Employees are invited to learn what is going on at every level of the organization, so they can understand how their actions influence others.
7. People feel free to inquire about each others' (and their own) assumptions and biases. There are few (if any) sacred cows or un-discussable subjects.
8. People treat each other as colleagues. There's a mutual respect and trust in the way they talk to each other, and work together, no matter what their opinions may be.
9. People feel free to try experiments, take risks, and openly assess the results. No one is killed for making a mistake. (Senge et alii 1994, 51.)

In the future, few manual laborers will be required. There will be greater need for people who can think, who can formulate a moderately complex thought and express it coherently both verbally and relate well to a team of

others. Moreover, given the expectation that workers will increasingly change not only jobs, but occupations as well, it will be necessary for the new worker to learn – and to learn for a lifetime". (Nordhaug 1994, 60.)

7.7.2   Importing Knowledge

In the knowledge-intensive society more and more organizations will be affected by the increased importance of knowledge. Accordingly more and more people will be occupied within "intellectual industries", where production processes are based mainly on knowledge and professional expertise. (Kontkanen & Valkama 1995, 156.)

Aalto and Sarala would argue that, there are numerous examples of organizational literature, where the focus is on education and training. We agree that training can be important, but only if it facilitates learning. It is learning that is fundamental for the improvement of a person or an organization, not the training or education itself. People learns through active reflection in collaborative and communicative actions. (Aalto & Sarala 1995, 149.)

Every one of us has participated training as job requires. Most of the memories are dim: there usually is a man in black with a power point presentation. The target company has number of experienced and skilled professionals, but since the work load is big and timetables very demanding, there is very little time for them to actually share their knowledge. One of the areas where Target Company's competence could benefit from is the foreign expats coming from subsidiary companies. Western expats are usually more expensive for the company. Therefore the expectations for their performance are also high. Importing experts for training permanent employees is a good idea. They must however be carefully chosen. They should possess multicultural fluency and willingness to adapt to challenging the multicultural environments. They should preferably have teaching experience. Knowledge on Middle East and Asian culture would be definitively a very big plus. The agreement must bind them to training of the local workers who are less competent. The management and HR in the target company should already make a training program and choose active and ambitious people for it. Training is a long process, lasting sometimes for several years. The trainee would benefit also for example from short time work experience in company's headquarters. This would give them confidence and also offer first hand experience on different work culture. Later on, when the trainee has reached professional levels, he in turn will become a new comer's personal trainer. Investing in this kind of motivated people who also learn multicultural fluency is extremely valuable for the company in the long run.

Another idea could be that some specialist from other department of Target Company would come and talk about their work. In this way employees will form the "big picture" and have a better understanding on the company functions.

7.7.3   Training

Most of the latest technological know-how is to be found from global company headquarters, in this case Finland. Research and development take place here. Even though the main company has effective documenting systems, training is needed to use and understand it fully. There are various modern teaching technologies available, but technical things are better to learn on site. Unfortunately, sending a whole engineering team for training to Finland is not possible. The manager has to decide who would be the best with future prospects in mind. The person to be send for training should be a good and dedicated worker, who has clearly stated his/her willingness to learn and develop his/her professional skills with the target company. As training in Europe would be considered as reward, the manager needs to handle the choice with fairness and equality. The trainee should be expected to give presentation as well as start training others once he/she returns back to target company.

Employees who try to expand their job territory after having gained new skills and knowledge may meet with strong resistance from other employees who feel that their own territory is thereby threatened. Such reactions are likely particularly when there are no strong traditions of cooperativeness in the firm and when it is bureaucratically organized in a way that promotes boundary-oriented thinking. (Nordhaug 1994, 203.)

Training, especially when it is a training week abroad with all-inclusive benefits, is usually considered as a reward. If it IS a reward for an achievement or professional performance, then it should be seen as such – no tight schedules involved. But when it is meant to be what it says - a training it needs to be carefully planned and executed. Too often a person flies over from other side of the world just to find out nobody has time for him. When a professional is being send for training, there has to be a specific person nominated for the training and teaching duty. The receiving end person has to clean his timetables for the time and plan carefully the schedules. There should be a training timetable, guideline, arranged meetings, site visits and other interesting things, not to forget the introduction to the host country's culture. This way there is a dedicated person to welcome as well as train the visitor, who benefits professionally as well as gets a profound idea of "how things are done here".

The trainee should be expected to report and further train other members of his team after returning back to his office. When knowledge and experience are shared, everyone benefits! Well planned training trip also encourages others to perform better, so that they in turn would be similarly rewarded.

7.7.4   Sharing Knowledge

Knowledge is an organic environment is in a much more difficult and complex form than in a mechanistic operating environment. Most of the skills people have are based on hidden knowledge based on experience, in other words, people often act directly on the basis of their feelings and

know-how. This happens without them being able to unravel their actions in the form of logical explanations. This is called tacit knowledge, which cannot be precisely defined. This is why tacit knowledge becomes the property of an organization only through social interaction. Tacit knowledge can only be transferred from one person to another by doing and talking. (Sähle & Grönroos 2000, 106.) One of the main tasks is to document the tacit knowledge as well as all projects carefully for the benefit of future challenges. The knowledge should be in an easy-to-find form and openly available for all interested parties. Knowledge should never be hidden and locked up in one specialist's personal desk. The company cannot afford to depend on one or two experts – it needs flexible expert teams, who are qualified and ready to take action fast.

Training teams benefit the company on the long run. The team members can perform many kinds of tasks, not only the ones they are committed on daily basis. The obvious benefits are: People are more easily replaced in case of illness or emergency. It will be more comfortable to "borrow" or transfer professionals among teams and departments. Company can utilize rotating job program and through it encourage learning and developing their skills. Career moves are actually easier to achieve and furthermore there is a valuable feeling of joint venture and equality.

Tacit knowledge is a company's internal knowledge that is based on experience, feelings, instincts and intuition. It is difficult to recognize and, thus, also difficult to utilize. Tacit knowledge is often the source of competitive advantage and the key innovations of the company. (Laamanen et alii 2005, 115.) As the target company is specialized in high technology, it works on and with loads of complex documents. All these papers can be easily found. The problems arise when nobody present can interpret them. As stated above, tacit knowledge is a valuable asset, used to promote one's own career. Keeping, even hiding knowledge is very big problem since many times the projects have tight timetable. There is very little understanding from the customer's side for matter like time difference between continents or somebody's summer holiday in the other side of the world. The company needs people who can read the documents. It also needs substitutes for them, as well as substitutes for substitutes. The chain on information and knowledge cannot break at any point.

7.8   Project Task Force

Based on the results of this research, it seems to me that the main areas in the target company work satisfactorily. Teams are competent and ready for challenges in winning the highly competitive markets. My investigations in competence, Human Resource and multicultural awareness gave all good results. There is a possibility, as I speculated in my analysis, that some of the Non-European replies might have been different if the interview was conducted in person and if the confidentiality was solid. Also, the survey did not touch any culturally sensitive subjects. All my assumptions were in one way or another linked to each other. The deeper I dug in the Finnish interviews, the more it seemed clear that there could be a

shadow of doubt in the replies in the survey. Since this is just speculation and does not have any validity in this study.

As a conclusion, the target company came out winner. They must be doing something very right over there. There are still many things to improve. The main responsibility is no doubt lie in the hand of management and the HR. They can continue to;
1. Use PDP and IDP programs effectively
2. Choose carefully the bosses to lead the teams
3. Choose the right kind of people to do the right kind of jobs
4. Create a strong company culture and mutually respected value base
5. Create learning organization and develop training systems
6. Develop multicultural teams and diversity management
7. Set foundations for an rewarding recognition system

The target company has been winning big projects throughout Middle East during the last decade. When a project is considered big in the Middle East, it is huge anywhere else. The future challenge will be to keep the competent teams ready. As the Finnish expats testify, the Middle East is extremely demanding and competitive business area. It requires many kinds of know-how and a great deal of cultural sensitivity One idea is to create a "Project Task Force" – a team of fast moving pros, who can build up a competence centre from the scratch. "Project Task Force" would be specialist from different teams and departments and who would be specially trained for handling projects. When a big project is won, the "Project task Force" would be send to the location. After the project is completed, they would return to their units. It is utmost importance that the project professionals share their knowledge and the experiences. They can become mentors for less experiences newcomers, who also wish to join this special team. Many-sided work experience encourages for further studies and professional development.

When the teams have been formed, trained and operational, there should be a clear goal for them. Performance needs to be explicitly guided towards a commonly accepted and further; it has to be properly rewarded. Bonus, possible future promotion and raise of salary are naturally powerful boosters for an effort on a personal level. Since we try to find here suitable inspiration for the team's reward, extra holidays with families are very welcome to most people. Excellent performance could also be rewarded with a small trip abroad with all the team member's families joining. This would further promote feelings of success and of WE the Team more than the "compulsory company party" –kind of get-togethers. Further it would create true friendship between the team members and build a foundation for future achievements.
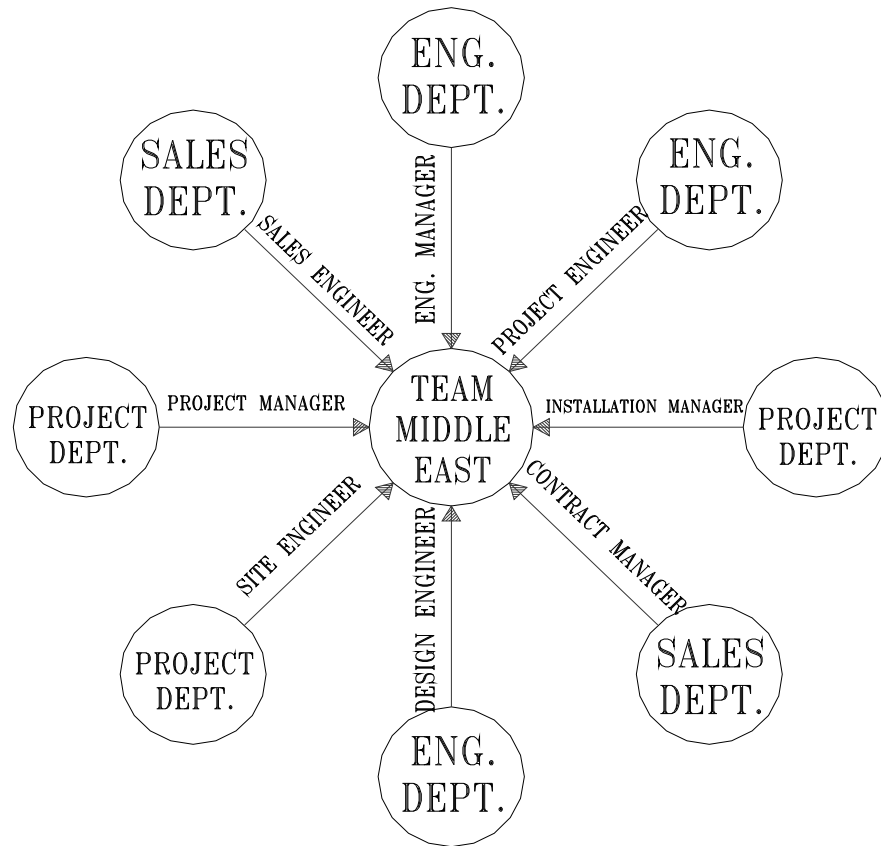
Figure 12 Project Task Force

The Project Task Force should be trained and kept on excellent professional level. It should be desired Dream Team which everyone's looking for to join. Also the Task Force should very flexibly change combination with the requirements of the various projects. The combinations should move and hit targets around the world effectively. Everyone would learn to count on and respect the other team members. The leadership of the Task Force should be to a person who has personal leadership skills and not base on the nationality. Management skills need to be trained to several members. No job or position should be granted. Every project is a new challenge and requires an efficient combination. When projects are won in certain more challenging countries, the top leadership could be chosen from professionals who thoroughly know the host culture and who are ready to adapt in different work culture. Different projects require different special skills. If the leadership always falls to one and same person (or nationality) also the creative variation will be lost!

When people know each other personally – even on a family and friendship level – the hardships and challenges with projects are lighter to overcome. After the projects, the team members would return to their usual duty stations. It is important, that they remain actively recruit and train new members, since the projects are many in the fast building world.

With excellence of management, professional competence, HR coverage and dedication of the teams, true benefits of globally functioning active multicultural Project Task Force can be created. Thus, the target company's Middle East organization could become excellent example for other subsidiary companies around the world.

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APPENDIX 1   INTERVIEW FOR FINNISH EXPATS

Personal details & background

1. How long were you working for target company?

2. How did you feel working in Target Company? Please describe advantages and disadvantages?

3. What were the biggest challenges in working Target Company?

4. What kind of things made your life easier living in Middle East?

5. What kind of information you should have before you go to foreign assignment?

6. Did you feel that you were an equal member of the team?

7. How do you see those different national and religious groups in Target Company? How would you describe the tension or relationship between them?

8. How do you see the target company competence level?

9. How should it be improved in your opinion?

10. If you are given a chance to improve and develop Target Company, how would you do it?