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Broström AB; **the organisation**
~from the perspective of a
vessel~

Bachelors thesis
Carolina Elenbrant 1983

Tutor: Gill Widell

A couple of months have passed since I,

Carolina Elenbrant, first contacted

Kenneth Thorén at Broström about writing a thesis.

Now several months have passed and an

Organizational analysis has been made of Broström;

With the perspective from a vessel.

Laugh, tears, frustration, inspiration have created this thesis, along with an

Effort which would...

Definitely not have been possible without...

Gill Widell, a fantastic tutor which have provided me with

Enormous support and invaluable advice.

Many more have contributed with their opinions,

Emotions and ideas.

Now it is time to wrap it up, and...

Thank you all!

Abstract

Bachelors thesis in Business, Management, University of Gothenburg; School of Business, Economics and Law, spring 2010.

Author: Carolina Elenbrant

Tutor: Gill Widell

Title: Broström AB - the organization; *from the perspective of a vessel*

Background and problem analysis:

There is often a strong sense of 'us and them' that is created between the vessel and the office, so the purpose of this report is to create an analysis/guide for the ship to understand the overall picture of the organization it is part of, both internal and external.

How do the employees at the vessel perceive the Broström organization? How is this perception interrelated with the communication with the different departments? Furthermore, how are the employees motivated to facilitate the communication and strive for excellence together with the other parts of the organization?

Purpose:

The purpose of this thesis is to study how the company communicates with and motivate their seafarers. The report will suggest improvements, if possible.

Method:

Literature studies have been made on published literature in the theoretical area. The results have been received from questionnaires and interviews carried out on one of Broström's vessels. To create a comparative dimension, questionnaires have also been answered by a proportion of the shore-based personnel.

Analysis and conclusions:

The crewmembers perceive the organization of Broström differently from the shore-based personnel. They have a good perception of all departments ashore, therewith an understanding for the communicational networks. However, they are to an extent dissatisfied with how communication and information is exchanged, thus interfering with their motivation to strive for excellence.

The comparative study between the crewmembers and the shore-based personnel showed that the perception of the organization differs; the shore-based personnel omitted the vessels from their charts. Furthermore, the motivational factors differs widely, something which the management must pay attention to; that the crewmembers are focusing on other motivational factors in order to feel satisfied and strive for common excellence.

Proposal for further studies:

Further studies can be made on how the management practically should overcome and interlink the difference between the two groups; crewmembers and shore-based personnel.

Keywords: *Broström, Shipping, Organization, Communication, Motivation*

Abbreviations and Glossary

AB – Able seaman is an unlicensed member of the deck department of a merchant ship. An AB may work as a watchstander, a day worker, or a combination of these roles.

Charterer – The part which hires the vessel from the shipowner for a voyage.

Charterparty (C/P) – A contract between the shipowner and the charterer which hires a vessel.

ISPS code - International Ship and Port Facility Security Code *is a comprehensive set of measures to enhance the security of ships and port facilities*

Deadfreight – If the charterers do not load as much cargo as contracted, they must still pay for the contracted amount.

Demurrage – refers to the charges that the charterer pays to the shipowner for its **extra** use of the vessel.

DWT – Deadweight is an expression of a ship's carrying capacity, including the weight of the crew, passengers, cargo, fuel, ballast, drinking water, and stores.

Fitter – One who positions the structural pieces of a ship for riveting and welding.

Freight – The amount the charterer pays the owners for transporting the cargo from point A to point B.

H & M - Hull & Machinery insurance

P&I – Protection & Indemnity insurance

Rating – a sailor who holds neither commissioned nor warrant rank; an ordinary seaman.

Split – when a vessel carries more than one oil product, it must be calculated exactly how much of each product the vessel can carry, ensuring that they can be fully segregated.

Vessel operator – A person in the office which instructs and assists the vessel during the voyage.

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1 Introduction

It all started when I did my internship at the office of Broström AB three years ago. One of the first days I was asked to call one of the vessels and ask for a 'split' (See glossary) for the next voyage. I had a vague sense of what a split was, and was a little nervous since it was my first phone-call. Well you will handle this excellent, my supervisor said...

I called the vessel, presented myself and asked for the split.

- #x%&!!!*# (the words that came in return are not suited for this thesis)

I was transferred to the chief officer who replied:

- #x%&!!!*#, we have calculated five different scenarios already. But if YOU want me to do it again I will, and he hung up.

That was my first phone-call and I was left told-off and shocked. Why did they react in this way? Did they not know that it is the oil company's right to ask for as many optional splits as they want? Do they have an accurate perception of who is doing what and why certain things are communicated?

Thereafter, an interest from my side has arisen to investigate how the vessels perceive the organization, both internal and external.

Important factors in any well-functioning organization are information and communication, as well as establishing a certainty that everyone in the organization sees the bigger picture and is motivated to withhold it and strive for excellence together. As stated above, this report will examine and analyze the organization of Broström AB – *from the perspective of a vessel*.

1.1 Background

Broström AB is a renowned shipping company operating on the tanker market. The company has an ancient history with many mergers and takeovers in hindsight. Broström in its present form is wholly owned by A.P. Moller-Maersk A/S, and operates a fleet of 64¹ vessels and consists of 72² shore based employees. A further and more thorough description of Broström AB is found in section 3.

1.2 Problem formulation

How does a company succeed in motivating all their employees to take an active part in the organization and strive for excellence and further development? How is this accomplished in a shipping company which consists of a complex structure; i.e. a shore-based organization and numerous vessels with their own organizations onboard?

¹ From the Gothenburg office (office in Singapore excluded as the thesis focuses only on the Gothenburg office)

² At the Gothenburg office (office in Singapore excluded as the thesis focuses only on the Gothenburg office)

The main question this report has to answer is:

How do the employees at the vessel perceive the Broström organization? How is this perception interrelated with the communication with the different departments? Furthermore, how are the employees motivated to facilitate the communication and strive for excellence together with the other parts of the organization?

Except from examining the organizational structure it will also be of importance to analyze the current communication channels and motivational factors used within the organization. Based on the results of the investigations, some possible practical improvements will be suggested.

1.3 Limitations

The perspective of the organizational analysis is from the vessels point of view. The organization is not limited to the company, Broström AB, itself, thus also includes external interest in the business around the vessel.

The report will be limited to analyzing the vessels which are manned by Broström Ship Management a further requirement is that the vessels examined needs to have a Swedish crew. To create a comparative basis, the personnel at the Gothenburg office will be interviewed.

Although the organization has recently gone through a transition, this report will not examine the effect of the take-over itself, but rather analyze and examine how the current organization is structured; *from the perspective of a vessel.*

2 Method

This section will present the methods used during the process of writing this thesis. Focus will be on how I did it and why I did it. The different choices of methods described in the forthcoming section all have their advantages and disadvantages. The reason for including them into this report is that I believe they can all contribute to the end result of this report.

2.1 Data collection

A description of I have carried out information research is presented below. Furthermore, different methods of how I have gather information will be presented; with their advantages and disadvantages in focus.

2.1.1 Literature studies

There are different types of data that can be gathered for a thesis; either primary or secondary. Primary data is information that is collected for the first time, directly from the source of information. Examples of typical primary data is information gathered through interviews and questionnaires, as can be seen further on within this section. (Jacobsen 2002)

Secondary information, as opposed to primary data; is data gathered by studying other actors information. The secondary data can be either qualitative or quantitative. Qualitative data is often referred to as texts, such as published books, articles and websites. Whereas, quantitative data is information that is quantifiable and measurable, often common in economical studies, such as statistics, annual reports etc. (Jacobsen 2002)

When utilising secondary data in a thesis it is important to be critical in the selection of these references. Attention must be brought to how this information is gathered and by who it is gathered. Further focus should be on the trustworthiness of the references. (Jacobsen 2002)

A first step in conducting this study was to perform literature studies of previous studies and published material relevant for the thesis. These literature studies consisted of books, articles and internet researches.

I searched for general organizational theory, within the field of communication and motivation.

2.1.2 Interviews

Interviews can be divided into three main groups, unstructured, half structured and structured. Which method that is most suitable for the interview depends mostly on what the purpose of the interview is. (Jordan 1998)

An unstructured interview is used to get a first insight in the area of choice. Unstructured interviews can be used to get more information about how the person sees the problem and

what thoughts he/she has about it. The unstructured interview is in the initial stage also used to get a view of the entire problem and what subjects and persons we need to study closer. (Jordan 1998)

A half structured interview (also called semi structured) is structured so the interviewer has prepared questions for the responder in order to give him/her time to prepare and give some thoughts about the problem discussed. In this kind of interview it is the responder who decides what angle and prospective he/she wants to discuss. The interviewer has to interpret and ask questions to get a broader understanding in the responders answer. (Jordan 1998)

Structured interviews demands previous knowledge of the interviewer and is more in shape of a questionnaire where the responder gets different alternatives, this type of interviews gives answers that can be analysed in a quantitative way. The most negative side about structured interviews is that they can be very controlled and that in turn can hide relevant facts. (Jordan 1998)

When I felt that I had a solid base of background information and a relevant theory base I advanced into the next step of this study and gathered empirical information and results. To gather this empirical information I travelled with a vessel for a voyage and performed interviews with the crew, in order to find out how they perceive their surroundings and to receive a picture of their perception of the organization they are part of.

These interviews resembled discussions and were a mix of 'open question-interviews' and 'semi-structured interviews'. The persons I interviewed were the master, the chief officer, second officer and the chief engineer. The reason for why those were selected is that they hold the positions onboard which are in most contact with the shore-based organization.

As their work schedule is very intense I had to follow them around the vessel as a patch, which resulted in that some questions were asked at the master's office, some in the smoking room, some while at the bridge etc. As the general perception was that my research was welcome, discussions evolved and I continuously took notes of what was being said.

When returning back to Sweden, I sat down with my notes and compiled my notes into the text found in the result section of this thesis. Thereafter, I analysed the material according to the theories I have chosen to include in the thesis. Where clear indications arose of what the perception and motivation of the crew is.

2.1.3 Questionnaire

A questionnaire can be a suitable way to gather information if the information you are searching for is quite shallow, easy for the respondent to answer without making a deeper analysis.

It is of utmost importance that the questions of the questionnaire are clear cut and really relevant for the respondent, therefore it is also important to understand the respondents

situation and terminology so the questions and therefore also the answers is understood likewise by both the interviewer and respondent. (Andersson 1994)

The questionnaire must be written in a neutral way, since there is always a risk that the questions influence the respondent's answers. Therefore the type of questions you choose is also very important. Closed questions, when the respondent can choose between several alternatives can influence the respondent more than open questions when he/she gets to write their own answer. When writing suitable alternatives you need to have a lot of back information in order to get the correct answers from the respondent. (Andersson 1994)

Closed questions have one great advance when the answers is really easy to interpret and compare against each other, this type of questionnaire is suitable when the result is to be used more quantitative. Open questions get more accurate and qualitative information, when the answer can give answers on more than just one single question. (Andersson 1994)

During my visit at the vessel questionnaires were handed out to the crewmembers which I did not interview. The purpose of these questionnaires was to gather qualitative responses from the respondents, thus adding quantity to the answers gathered during the interviews, which can contribute to the result section of this report.

Further, time was also be spent in the office of Broström, handing out questionnaires with corresponding questions to the shore based personnel, in order to find out how the shore-based part of the organization's opinions.

For the result section the answers of the questionnaires were compiled and presented, the valuation statements was quantified and presented and presented through charts. An analysis of the material was done with reference to the theories presented in the theory section of this thesis.

The results instantly gave thought for reflection of how the motivational factors differ and how this can be handled by the management.

2.2 Selection and trustworthiness

Choices of available method alternatives have been studied and carefully analyzed, all in order to apply the best available for each situation. The author is aware of the advantages and disadvantages and how the outcome of interviews, questionnaires should be interpreted.

When selecting what previous research that should be referred to I selected renowned authors within the organizational area and course literature used in the shipping educations at Chalmers.

Regarding the visit at the vessel, a suitable vessel was selected by Broström within the limitations of this thesis. Onboard, I interviewed the master, chief engineer, chief officer and second officer since they are the persons with most contacts outside the vessel.

The questionnaires were answered by the rest of the crew, anonymously. After analysing the material the result is presented in this report securing the respondents anonymity.

During my visit at the office, I handed out questionnaires randomly. However, I made sure that I had all departments represented.

2.3 Reflections on the process

Things never end up as you plan them to do!

Even though you have everything meticulously planned, there are always external factors which disrupt your path. With that being said, I must say that the process of writing this thesis has although been relatively uncomplicated.

I started out in January, as I am writing the thesis on part time, with the aim that most focus should be put on the last two months. Yet, I started with full speed ahead and had my plan set out. I had close contact with my supervisor at Broström, which helped me plan a visit to a vessel, a visit which exceeded my expectations. All were very sympathetic to me doing the research and thus provided me with very valuable information and opinions.

As I have worked at the office of Broström myself, I found it very easy to know who to ask of certain things and where to look for certain information. I believe it would be a very different thing if conducting the same study on a completely unknown company.

The one struggle I have experienced is to stay on the right path, what was my purpose? Where am I going? And why? I had to weigh in my purposes as well as the preferences that Broström wanted me to focus on. During the process the focus shifted slightly to focus a lot on communication and motivation.

In perspective, I am glad I started off early, because there are always things which keeps popping up; both with the thesis and other unexpected external matters. In the end it all came together and I am very grateful for all that have supported me in the process.

I hope you will enjoy the reading!

3 Broström AB



This section will give a brief introduction to the history of Broström AB, as well as how the organization is set up today. Broström's market drivers are briefly highlighted. Furthermore, the company's human resource policies will be introduced.

Last but not least, a model, which the author have constructed, will be presented; the voyage model. For this section the model will fulfill its purpose as an explanatory chart of which parties are involved around the vessel during a voyage.

Some parts of this section may be seen as superfluous depending on who reads the thesis. However, since one of the targets for the thesis is management students, which may lack previous knowledge about shipping, I believe that this section is necessary in order to fully understand the forthcoming analysis and conclusions.

3.1 Historical events that built today's organization

Historically, during the twentieth century, the business was diversified within different branches of shipping. In the 1970's the company ran into financial difficulties and the following decades the company experienced a transition through a number of different ownerships. The first step to the current Broström organization was taken in 1990 when the company was acquired by Shipinvest AB.

Next step was a the merger between Shipinvest and Erik Thun-rederiet , which resulted in the notation of the company on Stockholm stock exchange, in the name of United Tankers. The current name Broström was regained in 1992 and has since then undergone mergers and collaborations with a number of companies.

The final step to today's organization was taken in September 2008, when A.P. Møller Maersk placed a bid on Broström AB, an acquisition which became reality in January 2009. Even though the company was wholly acquired, a decision was taken that all vessels under 25.000 DWT (for explanation see attached glossary) should be traded under the brand of Broström AB and run from the Gothenburg and Singapore offices (www.brostrom.se).

3.2 Today's organization

As mentioned above, the company has undergone numerous transitions during the years; however this report will only focus on the organization as it is constituted today. Consequently, there should be of interest to receive a brief introduction to the organizational structure and the market that the company is active within.

Today, Broström AB is active in the product tanker market, mainly in northeastern Europe as well as Asia. The fleet consists of some 70 vessels, all 25.000 DWT or less and are traded from the offices in Gothenburg and Singapore.

In 2008 Broström AB changed their structure into a functional organization. On their website they motivate the change with the fact that they will be able to act proactively towards customers’ demands, which has several spin-off effects, such as:

- The functional organization will facilitate further global expansion.
- New possibilities to differentiate themselves from competitors.
- Powerful tools for optimizing their resources within the group.
- Broström can continue its growth and expansion by gaining better control and management over a larger fleet of vessels.

Broström has identified following factors that drive the demand and supply in their market:



Figure 1 - The tanker shipping market (source: www.brostrom.com)

3.3 Human resource policies

On their website Broström has a written staff and salary policy published. The policy is drawn in order to create a fair and just workplace. After having studied the policy, it became apparent that this document will be of relevance for this report. Below extracts of the policy is quoted:

- All employees shall be made aware of both the Broström Group's and their own company's business concept, vision, financial goals and strategies and have frequent access to information regarding the development and results of the Group and the company.
- Management will promote an open and honest exchange of thoughts and ideas.
- Managers at sea and ashore shall be clear and distinct in their leadership by availability, feedback and support.
- All employees shall be loyal to their employer and to the Broström group.

When interviews were conducted with the employees within the framework of this report, this policy was used as a base. When analyzing the organization and the communication channels of Broström, regards were taken to whether the company fulfills their promises stated above.

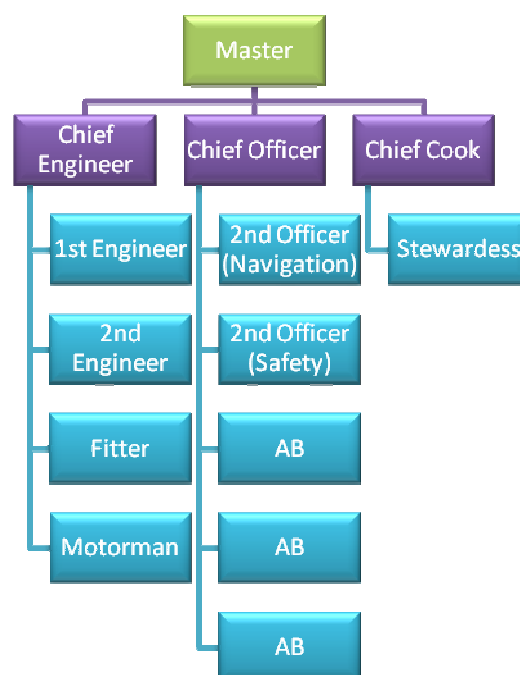
3.4 The structure of the vessels organization

How a vessel is manned depends on what type of a vessel it is. A rule of thumb may be used here; the larger the vessel, the more crewmembers there is. However, it also depends to a certain degree of the complexity of what segment the vessel is trading in.

With regards to the Broström organization, which operates vessels under 25.000 DWT, a crew of around 15 persons is commonly seen. Depending on the vessels owner and what flagstate it belongs to, the nationality of the crewmembers varies.

The figure close by here shows a common organization onboard a vessel. The person in charge is the Master, which has the

Figure 2 - A vessels organization

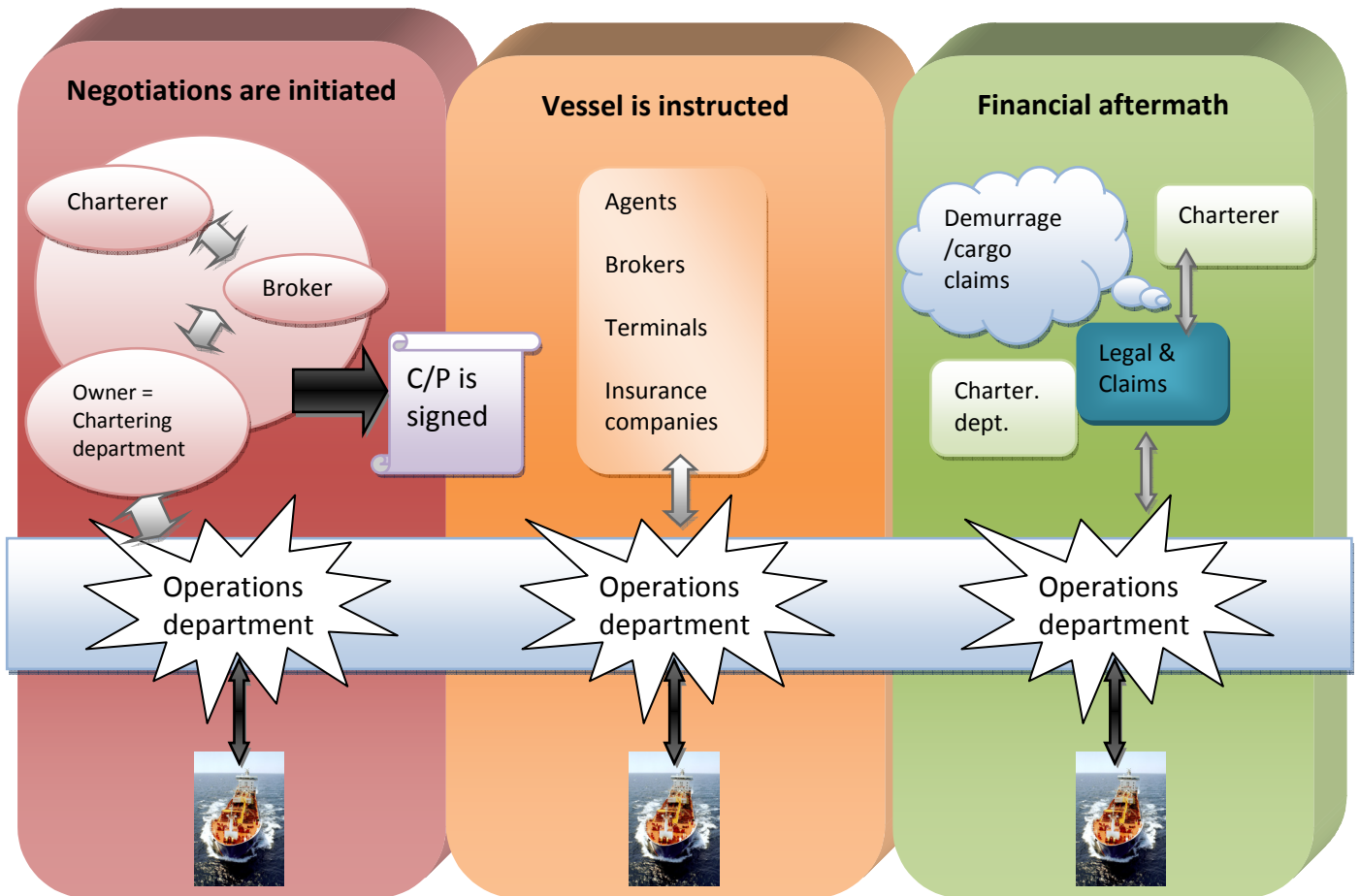


utmost responsibility for the vessel and its crew. The Chief Engineer is responsible for the vessels propulsion and the crewmembers working in the engine room; i.e. 1st Engineer, 2nd Engineer, Fitter and Motorman.

On the deck side, the Chief Officer is next in rank after the Master. The other crewmembers associated with the deck side are two second Officers and a number of AB's (ratings). Furthermore, the organization consists of a Chief Cook and a Stewardess which are responsible for the meals as well as the cleaning onboard.

3.5 The voyage model – what is a voyage?

Below model is self-constructed by the author and its purpose is to explain the involvement of the vessel in each step of a voyage. In order to receive a proper understanding, this section will guide the reader through a voyage of a tanker vessel and introduce the reader to the “counter-parties” of the vessel.



The voyage has started for the shore-based personnel...

...but not until now for the vessel.

Voyage is completed for the vessel...

...but not for the rest.

Figure 3 - The voyage model

Below description of a voyage is based on common procedures of voyage chartering within tanker shipping. The information of this, as well as the information presented about the external and internal organization is based on renowned published literature. (ICS Tanker Chartering (2010)) (Gorton et al.(2009))

3.5.1 A voyage

I have chosen to divide this section into three areas, according to the voyage model presented above.

Negotiations are initiated

The definition of when a voyage starts is different depending on who you ask. The actors enter the voyage at different stages. Briefly it can be said that the one owning the cargo, the charterer, is offering it to the market via a broker. Then it is up to the vessel owners to negotiate with the charterer about the terms that the cargo should be freighted on.

When all parties are in agreement, a charter party is signed. A charter party is a legal document which regulates the terms for the voyage. Within tanker shipping there are a dozen of different charter parties to choose from. However, one rarely trades on a standard form, but rather changes some parts and adds others for each specific voyage.

Even though the voyage has not started for the vessel, it is involved in such ways that they assist with information and calculations on cargo intake and itinerary.

Vessel is instructed

When the charterparty is signed, the vessel is instructed accordingly. All relevant information has to be forwarded back and forth in-between involved parties. It is of utmost importance to have smooth and accurate communication system. No information may be delayed or lost; such an event could cause severe consequences.

This is the time period when the vessel is 100 percent involved in the voyage. The vessel has hands-on contact with most parties and is assisted by its vessel operator.

Financial aftermath

After the vessel has discharged its cargo, the voyage is completed; for the vessel and in terms of contractual commitments. However, there is a lot of aftermaths which has to be taken care of. Most obvious to the beholder is the financial transfers, along with the reconciliation with the charterparty; has everything followed the terms set out? Will there be any extra claims, demurrage or cargo claims?

The vessel is rarely involved in this stage of a voyage; they have most probably started to perform their next voyage steaming to load port.

Below description of a voyage is based on common procedures of voyage chartering within tanker shipping. The information of this, as well as the information presented about the external and internal organization is based on renowned published literature. (ICS Tanker Chartering (2010)) (Gorton et al.(2009))

Below the different actors will be further explained, still briefly though.

3.5.1.1 External organization

Since this thesis focuses on the perspective from a vessel, this section will have the vessel and its ship-owner as the center of attention and all other parties belong to the external organization.

Charterers

A charterer is the party owning the cargo or the one who hires the vessel for a voyage. A charterer can be an oil company as well as an independent oil trader.

Brokers

When having a cargo that needs to be transported, the charterer most often offer it to the market through a broker. It can be done either via many different brokers or to on exclusive broker. It is common that there are numerous brokers involved in a deal, for example one that represents the charterer's interests and one that represents the ship-owner's interests. For their efforts the brokers charge commission, most common is 1.25 % of the F/D/D amount (freight, deadfreight and demurrage invoices, for further explanation please see vocabulary list). Another thing which applies is the expression 'No cure, no pay', which means that the broker is only paid if a contract is signed. In other words, no deal no money.

Agents

Since the tanker vessels call at ports in irregular patterns, it is of utmost importance to have a network which helps out in every port. In each port there are agency companies which are nominated to assist at the vessels port call. They assist with everything from ordering pilot, tug boats, registering the vessel to port authorities, picking up or leaving crew members at the airport etc. furthermore, they are in constant contact with the terminal where the vessel will be loading or discharging.

Terminals

When a vessel calls at a port she berths along a quay at one of the ports oil terminals. Most terminals have huge tank storage facilities where the products are stored in waiting for the vessel to ship them of or for the refineries to use them in the production. It is the terminal who is responsible for loading/discharging the vessels. Most parties during a voyage are in close contact with the terminal for updates on schedule and progress.

Insurance companies

All tanker vessels must have insurances when performing a voyage. There is a distinction between Hull & Machinery insurance and Protection & Indemnity insurance; however, their respective meaning will not be further covered within this thesis. Depending on what type of accident there is the respective insurance company shall be notified, either directly by the vessel or the shore-based organization.

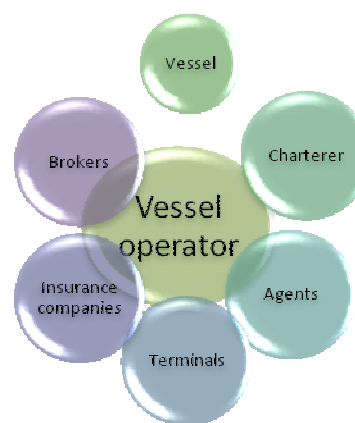


Figure 4 - The external organization

3.5.1.2 Internal organization

Above section described the external partners to the vessel and its shore-based organization, pictured with the vessel-operator as the mediator in the middle of the spider-web. Under this heading 'internal organization' focus will lie on the shore-based organization of a tanker shipping company.

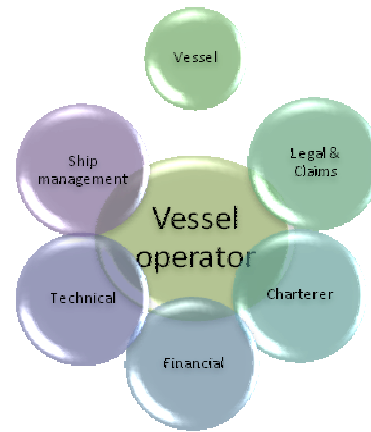


Figure 5 - The internal organization

Owner

Keeping in mind the focus of this thesis, an organizational analysis of a tanker ship-owner; the owner can be defined as the company itself. The tanker owner has a number of vessels which he or she wholly owns or charters in to perform voyages. The companies' primary source of income is freight revenues. For efficient operations of named vessels, following shore-based departments are commonly found within a tanker company:

Chartering department

One of the most confusing expressions in shipping is the term 'charterer'. Apart from being a cargo owner or the one who hires the vessel for a voyage, it is also the term for the in-house position at the ship-owner who negotiates about cargoes for the vessels.

Operations department

The vessel operators are the spider in the web during a vessel's voyage. They are involved in most of the communications concerning the vessel, both with in-house departments and externally. The operators' role will be further clarified in the next section, which will describe in more detail a vessels voyage.

Legal & Claims department

Depending on the size of the company, there may be a legal and claims department, which supports the other departments in negotiations and handles cargo claims etc. one of the most important and time consuming tasks of this department is to calculate if there is demurrage due; a sort of liquefied damages which the charterer must pay extra if they have used the vessel longer than contracted for.

Other internal departments

The reason for calling below internal departments 'other, is that they are not directly connected to a specific voyage; however, it does not make them any less important for the daily running of the vessel.

Technical department

The technical department is responsible for the technical operation and maintenance of the vessel. They have to make sure that the vessel fulfills all requirements imposed. They keep in close contact with the vessel and prepare for both planned maintenance and if something unexpected needs attention.

Ship Management / HR department

A ship-owning company often have two separate HR departments one for the shore-based personnel, and another for the crew onboard the vessels. Focusing on the ship management, this department differs from regular HR departments in the way that they have to plan and administrate all crew changes, which in Sweden means monthly for each crewmember.

Financial department

All voyages generate incomes and expenses which have to be handled by the accounting department; invoices must be issued respectively paid. Depending on the type of company financial statements must be made monthly, quarterly and yearly.

3.6 Broström – summary

Above sections have aimed to introduce the reader to a brief introduction of Broström in particular and shipping in general. A description of Broström's history and current organization has been given and the reader should now be acquainted with which members a crew at a product tanker consists of.

Furthermore, the above explanation of a voyage and the actors involved, if not known earlier, should help the reader to a better understanding of the forthcoming sections.

4 Theoretical background

This theoretical background is essential for the reader in order to receive an understanding of shipping organizations in general and Broströms' organization in particular. Focus will be on communicational networks within an organization, what types of networks are there? Since the organization onboard has a pre-defined hierarchy, how is communication and authority interlinked? Furthermore, focus will also be on motivation; and what factors that help motivate the crewmembers; thus allowing for focus to be on information flow and communication instead of distractions such as demotivating factors.

After having been introduced to a brief summary of Broström AB's history, in order to grasp what the background of today's organization is all about, the reader will now be introduced to a number of organizational theories which will be applied in the analysis of the organization.

Below organizational theories focus on communication and motivation in order to be able to best analyze the organization of Broström AB – *from the perspective of a vessel.*

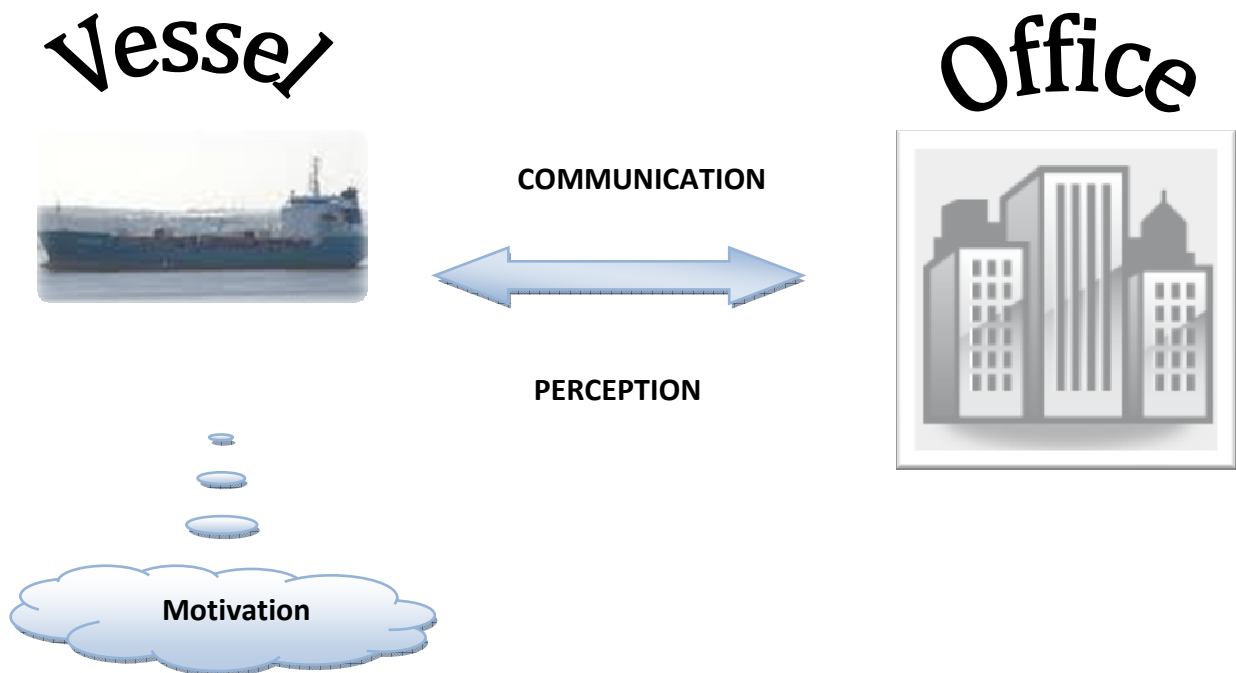


Figure 6 - Communication and perception

The above model describes the structure of what this thesis aim to analyze. How is the organization perceived? What communicational networks are there, internal as well as external? And how are the crewmembers motivated in order to facilitate the perception and communicational flow? With the help from below theories, the following questions will be examined and hopefully answered:

How do the employees at the vessel perceive the Broström organization? How is this perception interrelated with the communication with the different departments? Furthermore, how are the employees motivated to facilitate the communication and strive for excellence together with the other parts of the organization?

4.1 Communication within an organization

It is hard to differ between formal and informal communication. While, in a meeting face to face, the persons attending tend to discuss more than if a communication is sent out via e-mail. Thus, more information is shared. Also, at a workplace people continue to discuss and deal with a lot of information they have previously received; at the coffee break for an instance. (Jacobsen et al. (2008)) Then what happens to those not attending the coffee break? Or even more complex, what happens in an organization, for example, a shipping company, which contains business entities like vessels where the crew physically cannot attend meetings at the office. Do they receive the 'gossip' spilled at the coffee-break?

Studies have been made of different communicational networks in order to receive information of which one that works most efficiently. Three of those networks are 'the circle', 'the wheel' and 'all channels'. (Jacobsen et al. (2008))

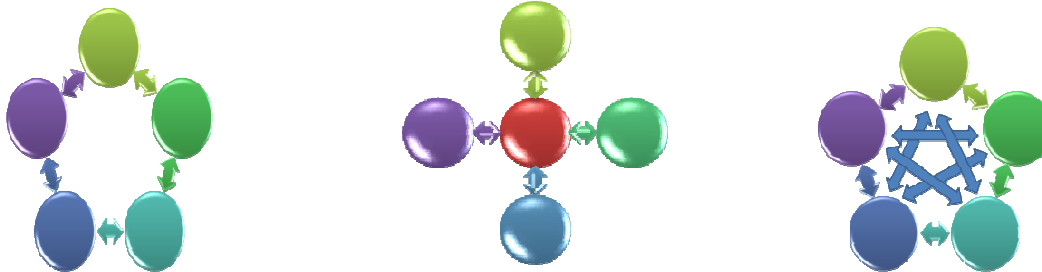


Figure 7 - 'The circle', 'the wheel' and 'all channels'

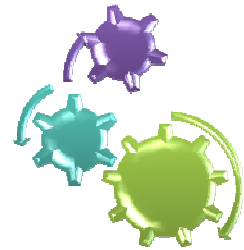
Both 'The circle' and 'All channels' are portraying examples of decentralized networks, where no one in particular is in the central position. The disadvantage with 'the circle' might be that each entity only communicates to the two on each side of it. Thus, information might be lost further on and not all entities are involved in the bigger picture. On the other hand, in these organizations it is often very clear who does what, so only because not everyone knows everything it does not automatically mean that the organization is totally inefficient. (Jacobsen et al. (2008))

In the other decentralized model, 'all channels', all entities communicate with each other and the information flows freely. (Jacobsen et al. (2008)) However, how can it be assured that everyone is informed? And who is responsible of informing who?

The third model, 'the wheel', represents a centralized organization where one person/entity is central in the communications. This person both receives information from different entities, as well as distributes information out to all parties involved. This model puts a lot of responsibility and depends on the person chosen to be the central one. The usage of a 'wheel' model does not necessarily mean that other models cannot exist at the same time.

Sometimes there is crucial that some parties have direct contacts outside 'the wheel'. (Jacobsen et al. (2008)).

When identifying this central person/entity in the 'real world' of shipping, it can be portrayed as either the vessel's master, which is the link between the shore-based organization and the vessels organization, or the vessel operator at a shipping company, which is the spider in the web between all parties involved in a voyage. When identifying these 'wheels' it is important to remember that they are not isolated from each other, they could rather be seen as interrelated cogwheels.



Then which model is the most efficient? The result of several studies show that the choice of the most suitable model depends on the complexity of the tasks. The more complex the tasks are, the more efficient a decentralized model becomes. Whereas a centralized model, such as 'the wheel' is efficient when the tasks are to a large extent based on routines and the day to day work looks pretty much the same. (Jacobsen et al. (2008)).

4.2 Communication and authority

The social constructivism's approach to communication is that a collective "reality" is continuously produced and reproduced in every organization. These perceptions exist in order to guide its members, the employees, and make them strive to strengthen the cohesion. These realities are recreated, reminded of and strengthened in order to maintain a 'feeling of unity'; us against the world (Alvesson,1991).

It is important that the objectives and guidelines of the organization are not communicated as something obvious to the employees, there must be space for reflection and questioning. Again the employees must be left with a feeling that they have participated and that they are part of the decision (Alvesson,1991).

One of Broström's visions is; "*Going for excellence; together*". This vision is in line with the above approach; however the challenge is to unite the vessels with the shore-based organization. It very easily becomes an 'us and them' feeling, the direct opposite. However, through making the members believe that they are creating the cause, rather than the board of directors', one automatically avoids discontent and receives motivated employees (Alvesson,1991).

The sociologist Foucault believes that authority develops in relations everywhere. If information is given to one member, this means that this person has automatically authority over the others; this person can chose to take advantage of the situation and not share the information. However, the authority can also be achieved unintentionally, if the other

members suspects that one member has information, authority develop, even if the person might not have this information (Alvesson,1991).

Above situations with communication and authority is common within shipping in general and within Broström in particular. It is most often the master onboard the vessel which handles all the communication with the shore-based organization; often the operator, management or technical department. Along with the natural hierarchy onboard, being a master means having authority. Situations of miscommunications and discontent might easily occur when the crew feel left out or suspect that information is not shared amongst them all. Therefore, a great challenge is to have a master which is aware of the importance of communicating and earning trust and respect from his/her employees

4.3 Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and Motivational organization conditions

After having above described different theories, and the importance, of communicating it is now time to evaluate different ways of how to motivate the employees of an organization.

The individual is the organization’s most important resource. The relation between the organization and the employee has changed drastically over the last decades; nowadays the human capital is often valued higher than the physical capital. Since the individual is so important, a great challenge for the organization is thus to motivate its employees to perform with excellence (Jacobsen et al.,2008).

When studying organizational motivation, the theory of needs has been the most common focus. One of the most influential theories is Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. Maslow claims that all individuals have five different basic needs; physiological needs, security needs, social needs, needs for recognition and needs for self-fulfillment (Jacobsen et al.,2008). Below chart show the connection between the motivational organization conditions and what satisfies those needs

Maslow’s hierarchy of needs	Motivational organization conditions	Satisfaction of needs
Physiological needs	Salary Rules for working hours	Tangible ‘goods’ Balance between work and freetime
Security needs	Working conditions	Permanent employment Safe workplace
Social needs	Working groups Employee-oriented leadership	Affinity
Need for recognition	Feedback on work Title and position	Status and prestige
Need for self-fulfillment	Challenging tasks Ability to be creative and improve	Personal development Promotion The joy about performing

Chart 1 - Maslow's level of needs – source: Jacobsen et al. (2008)

The needs are not necessarily strictly separated; one need does not need to be completely satisfied before the next need arises. Maslow's conclusion is that most people are partially satisfied while they at the same time are partially unsatisfied, and this applies for all level of needs.

Maslow's theory and other theories of needs identify that the organization's conditions for a successful motivation of its employees can be divided into two categories (Jacobsen et al. (2008):

1. Individuals are motivated to act when they see a possibility to fulfill their needs. Different individuals have different preferences and one can never presume that all the individuals in the organization are motivated by the same conditions.
2. It can be beneficial to separate *interior reward* that the individual award themselves with (for example achieved goals); and exterior reward which the individual receives from the organization (for example salary and benefits).

4.4 Instruments for motivating employees

Above section identified that the fulfilment of the individuals needs are of importance for how successful the organisation might be in motivating its employees. This section will further develop some instruments that can help the organisation to achieve their goal.

Fredrick Herzberg has done research about the employees' well-being. The research resulted in below lists where he separates motivational factors from hygiene factors (Jacobsen et al., 2008);

Motivational factors

- 1. Nature of duties; they are challenging, interesting and varied
- 2. Responsibility for own work, and control over own work situation
- 3. Performance and satisfaction over doing a good job
- 4. Recognition from others for work well done
- 5. Promotion
- 6. Development

Hygiene factors

- 1. Company's personnel policy and administrative systems
- 2. Leaders skills and ways to lead subordinate
- 3. The interpersonal relationships between superiors and subordinate
- 4. Working conditions surrounding the tasks that need to be successful
- 5. Salary
- 6. Status
- 7. Job security
- 8. Conditions at work that affect leisure and privacy

The motivational factors create comfort if the factors exist, however they do not automatically create discomfort if they do not exist. The other way around, the hygiene factors create discomfort if they do not exist but does not automatically result in comfort if they do exist (Jacobsen et al., 2008).

In order for an organisation to successfully motivate its employees it should be fully aware and make sure that the motivational factors are fulfilled and concurrently make sure that the hygiene factors also exist. (Jacobsen et al., 2008)

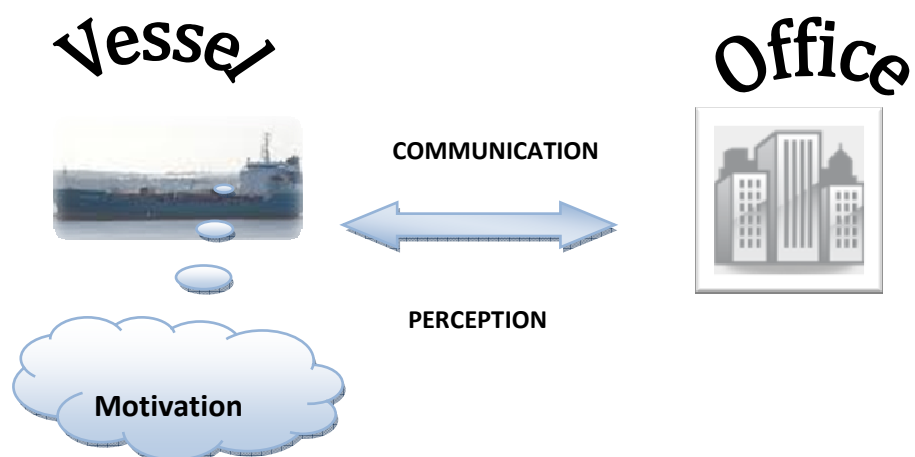
4.5 Summary of theoretical models

Above theoretical models have focused on the following areas:

- Communication; *identifying the communicational pattern of an organisation.*
- Communication; Authority – *a help or hinder?*
- Motivation; *what keeps the employees satisfied and what makes them strive for the organisations common good?*

The communicational networks described in the above section identified three different patterns, the interviews and questionnaires will investigate the relation between the perception of the organization and what kinds of communicational networks are experienced within Broström.

Furthermore, Maslow's and Herzberg's motivational theories will be applied in the studies in order to find out what motivates the crewmembers and the shore-based personnel.



5 Empirical results

This section is based on the results from the interviews with the employees at Broström AB. The results will be presented with reference to the theories introduced in previous chapter. As can be seen in the appendix 3 the interviews/questionnaires with the vessels crew had the following structure: perception of the organization, communication and motivation, ending with a number of quantifiable statements at the end of the questionnaire.

Visiting a vessel

I left home with my bag on the shoulder for a trip to Hamburg and a visit to one of Broström's vessel which should be loading there. After a safe flight I was met at the airport by a very kind taxi-driver which gave me a guided tour of Hamburg whilst driving from the airport. What a beautiful city! I felt a sting of envy of the seamen who travel across the world and get the opportunity to see so many places.

STOP! Wait a second... In today's shipping everything is about efficiency and the vessels are built to be loaded/discharged as quickly as possible. Furthermore, most oil terminals are located outside the cities without any immediate connection to the town. Therefore, it is not uncommon for a seaman not to have the time to go ashore, for the entire month he or she is onboard. Thinking about this, a light feeling of claustrophobia comes crawling up on me...

After September 11th 2001, all ports have adopted the ISPS code (International Ship and Port facility Security code) which implements high safety standards. Therefore, one must present oneself at the gate of the specific berth with id. The person at the gate took me for a person who easily speaks German...and I admit, I once was fluent...once being about ten years ago. So after some very brief answers he took me to the vessel...vielen dank!

I am not afraid of heights, however passing the gangway with shaking knees and a convulsive grip around the rail, it came to my mind; no one who is afraid of heights may ever come onboard here. Writing this I am still onboard, what if I do not dare to disembark?

Well onboard it was almost midnight and I was guided to my cabin, a very pleasant one. I took a quick tour and said hello to the few people that were awake. I was informed that breakfast was served between 7.30 and 8. I slept very well, and had a nice breakfast in the morning. After that it was time to get to work. I had prepared questionnaires that I handed out to the crew to fill out. Further interviews with the captain, chief officer and chief engineer were "scheduled".

When flying down the purpose was to stay onboard for the 40 hours the vessel was scheduled to stay in port. However, the latest news is that the vessel be fully loaded already tonight and leave for discharge port. Nothing to be surprised about, all these shifts in shipping, nothing to waist too much energy on...it will have shifted numerous times before I finally leave the vessel.

To be continued... ..

5.1 Interviews and questionnaires answered by the vessels crew

The main purpose with the interviews and questionnaires was to receive the most efficient answers to the main questions: **How do the employees at the vessel perceive the Broström organization? How is this perception interrelated with the communication with the different departments? Furthermore, how are the employees motivated to facilitate the communication and strive for excellence together with the other parts of the organization?**

The responses presented below are a mix of answered questionnaires as well as interviews.

5.1.1 Perception of the organization

In the questionnaire, I asked the respondent to draw a sketch of his/her perception of the organization of Broström AB. This question was intentionally left very open and broad, with the purpose to find out what the respondents perception of the organization was. How did they limit their perception and from which perspective did they see it?

The responses varied in level of details, from the bigger picture with Maersk as an owner of Broström which in turn operate the vessels; to some sketches which in detail described the shore-based organization of Broström AB.

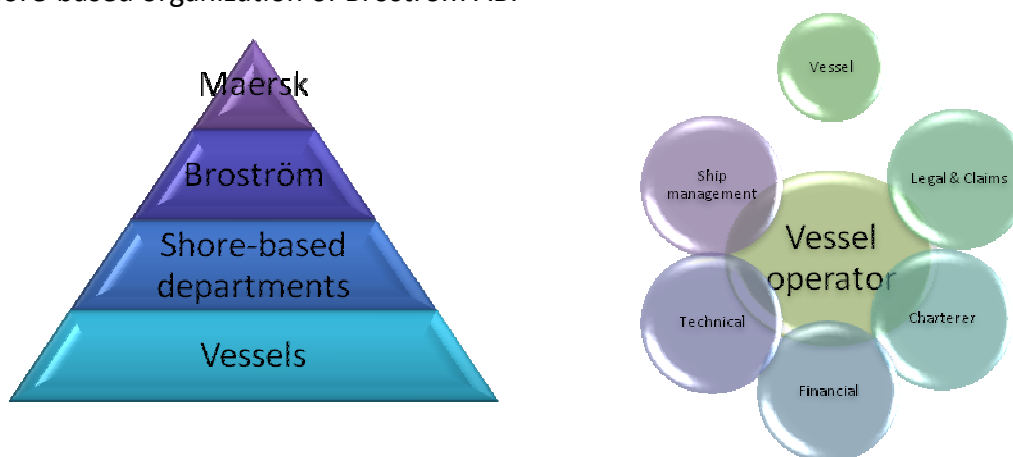


Figure 8 - Examples of sketches where the level of details varies

One common detail to comment on is that many had a close link to Broström Ship Management, which they are employed by, almost as a filter to the shore-based organization.

On the question of how they have received this information and understanding the most common response was through organizational charts and bulletins sent out to the vessel. Some had been attending conferences for officers arranged in co-operation with the shore-based personnel, which also reflected in the sketches; these were the most detailed ones.

Regarding the set up of the organization, most respondents replied that they are satisfied with the level of understanding although there very a few which felt that a broader

understanding would be beneficial. Some comments were made about the fact that they feel that the organization has changed a lot since the recent take-over and that an update on the current organizational set-up would be appreciated.

During the interviews, the company's staff and salary policy was discussed; the conclusion from the reactions and responses is the awareness of the policy was very limited.

5.1.2 Internal and external communication

This section will focus on both the internal communication onboard the vessel, as well as the external communication with the rest of the organization.

5.1.2.1 Internal communication onboard the vessel

The organization and environment onboard a vessel is very straightforward and complex at the same time. It is embossed by a traditional professional hierarchy, at the same time all members live onboard together and spend their leisure time in the same environment surrounded by their fellow o-workers all day, and night, long.

The communication is almost to its full extent verbal. Important information is forwarded via e-mail, however the daily communication around the work tasks is performed during personal contacts. And all employees are in contact with each other on a daily basis.

5.1.2.2 The vessel's external communication

Previous section described the internal communications channels onboard the vessel. It is a closed organization as they are literally drifting as a sole entity cut off from the shore-side.

In Broström the master and the officers of the vessel has daily contact with the vessel operator and is instructed during the voyage. During interviews a suggestion came up for a common database where information could be shared:

“Much work is done over and over again, for no apparent reason.”

Especially during the negotiation stage of a voyage, much calculations are done, which could be saved and use as a reference for upcoming voyages. Eventually a reference library will have been created.

Another thing comes up during one of the interviews is that communications is sometimes complicated and misunderstandings created due to the different levels of knowledge between the employees onboard and the shore-based personnel. Calculations and information is passed on and if the other party does not share the same knowledge base, then this information is taken for an absolute truth. During the interviews a wish for some 'resistance' was wished upon, i.e. that the vessel operator could debate and question and participate more actively in the tasks being performed, rather than just receiving the information and passing it on forward. Again here it is important to have the understanding

of who is responsible and authorized to perform which tasks, something which is not as clear-cut within a shore-based organization as onboard a vessel.

When the vessel has discharged its cargo she often immediately starts steaming to the next port, leaving the repercussions of the last voyage unknown. The respondents saw a clear disadvantage with this; they would like to be more involved in what effects and consequences some actions have. However, this is not practically possible, therefore suggestions for a reference base with 'cases' was mentioned:

“If we could have a folder which described different scenarios, with for example laytime related mistakes and what to think about; if we could easily see what the consequences or advantages of an instruction or alteration was, then a greater understanding would be created.”

A quite remarking fact which arose during discussions was that the vessels are excluded from the organizations intranet. Another piece of the puzzle, which points in the direction is that the vessels are not fully included in the exchange of information. Even if not all information is of direct importance, it immediately creates a feeling of alienation if being excluded from something that the rest has access to.

The response from the questionnaires and interviews to the communication in general within the organization was that it was poor and unsatisfying. As one crewmember phrased it:

“We are feeling alienated and the ‘information’ is perceived as directions being passed rather than a two-ways communication taking place”

5.1.3 Motivational factors

Reason for choosing a career onboard a vessel

Working onboard a vessel differs a lot from a 9 to 5 job. As mentioned earlier you are at work around the clock for a month at a time. The questionnaires asked the respondents to specify why they have chosen to work at a vessel, and all answered that it had to do with the amount of vacation and freedom the profession offered, along with a relatively high salary. Very few mentioned something about the work tasks or any other factors.

Changeability

The questionnaires raised a couple of questions regarding what would make the respondents want to change work tasks, change vessel, change company and change profession totally. All answers pointed in almost the same direction; all seemed to be satisfied with their work tasks.

When it comes to changing vessel everyone is prepared to do so, since it is common as a policy to shift the personnel amongst the ship-owners vessels. No one is employed to a specific vessel, rather employed to the ship-owners fleet of vessels. However, many

respondents mentioned that they could see themselves actively ask for a transfer if the atmosphere amongst the crewmembers was strained.

As the reasons for why choosing a career onboard a vessel pointed out, salary and amount of leisure time was of utmost importance. Thus, these reasons were also dominant of factors that would make the crew members switch to a totally different company.

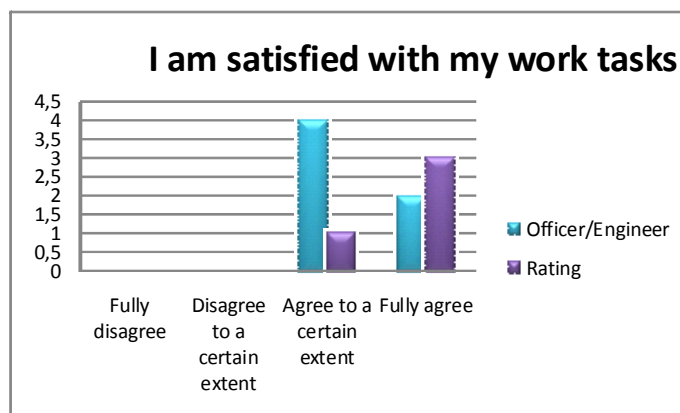
Leaving the profession at sea is a great step, since it can be hard, if even possible to find a job which matches the amount of spare time and salary. However, everything comes with a price. The reason for the high amount of leisure time and salary onboard is because the crew members work long hours, seven days a week while onboard, and they miss everything that happens in the evenings and weekends at home. Thus, the most common response for wanting to switch profession was for family reasons.

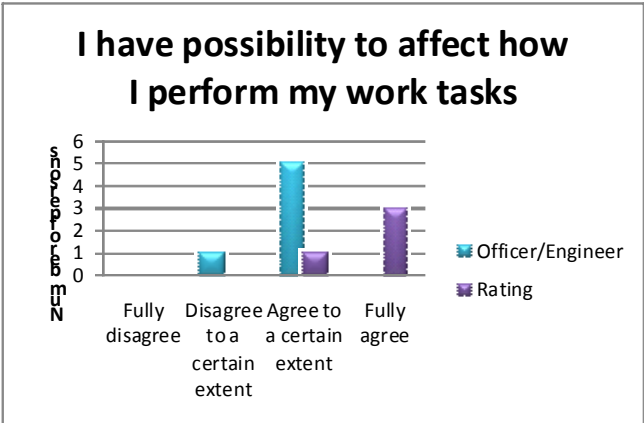
5.1.4 Valuation of statements

Here below, the results from the valuation of the questionnaires statements are presented. The responses are divided into two categories in order to analyze if there is any major discrepancies between them both.

I am satisfied with my work tasks

As above section about motivational factors pointed out; few respondents had something they wanted to change about their work tasks, most very satisfied with the current situation. Something which is also reflected in the adjacent chart, all agree that they are satisfied with a slight tendency that the ratings are more prone to fully agree.





I have the possibility to affect how I perform my work tasks

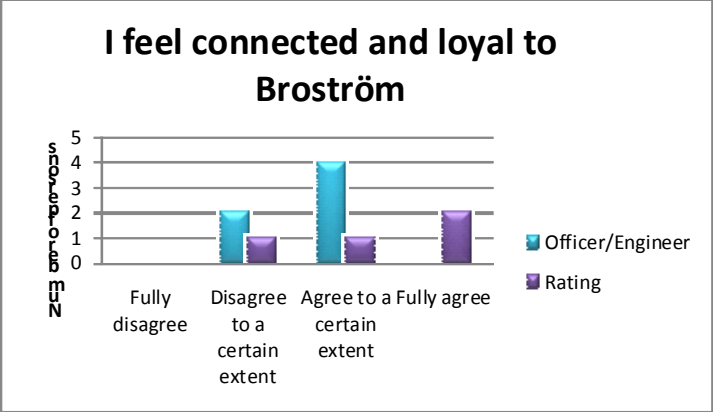
The work tasks onboard a vessel is far more clear cut than in most other organizations. The profession comes with a certain responsibility and work tasks. Each rank has its own tasks, which is regulated in internationally renowned conventions and

guidelines, therefore, the crew members

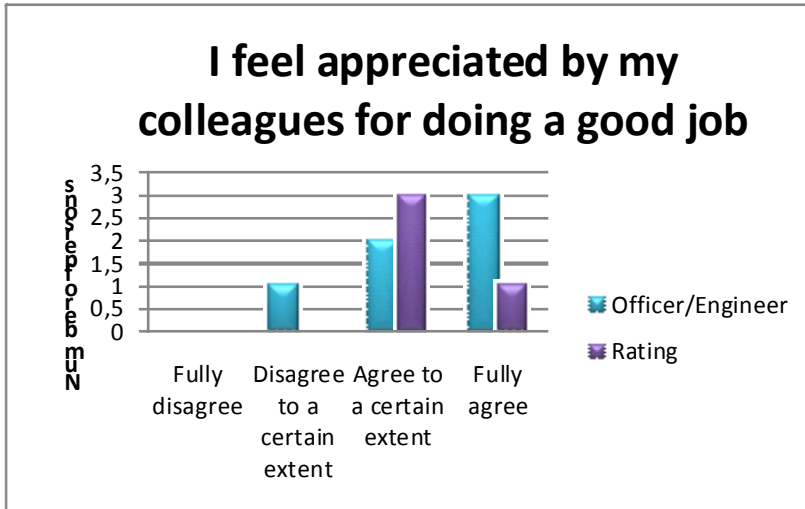
have little possibility to affect how they perform and carry out their assigned tasks, which is also reflected in the adjacent chart. The officers respond that they disagree/agree to a certain extent, whilst most ratings fully agree, which can be explained that the ratings work tasks are less regulated than the officer's.

I feel connected and loyal to Broström

This question generated a wider spread of responses than previous questions. The officers do not feel completely connected and loyal to Broström, however they do not feel completely disconnected and disloyal either. The ratings though differ in their responses, with the overweight leaning to connected and loyal.



I feel appreciated by my colleagues for doing a good job

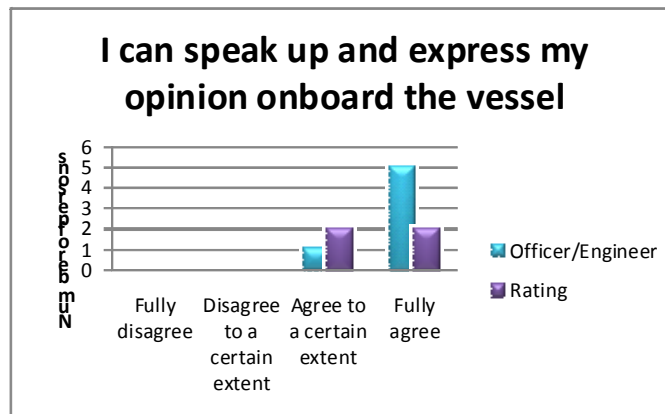


Most crewmembers feel appreciated by their colleagues for doing a good job; something which is of importance to create satisfaction and motivation onboard. There is one respondent which does not have this feeling of recognition, for which reason this study does not cover, however, it

is important to investigate before a sense of dissatisfaction starts to grow and spreads to the other personnel onboard the vessel.

I can speak up and express my opinion onboard the vessel

The communication onboard the vessel, presented in one of the previous sections, are carried out verbally in most cases. Therefore it might be a natural consequence that the crew members at the same time can share their opinions, whilst information is exchanged.



I can speak up and express my opinion towards the shore-based organization

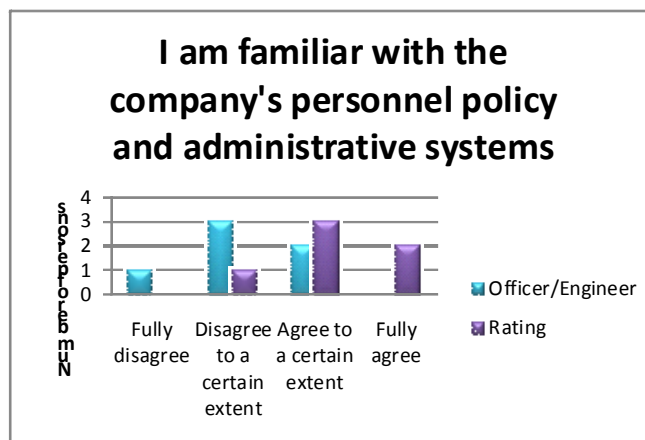


Here, a clear difference is seen when compared to the previous question which related to the vessel. None of the respondents felt that they could completely speak up and express their opinion. There is a difference shown in between the officers and ratings, which might be related to the number of shore-based contacts which each group has. Notable is

that a significant number answered that they disagreed to the statement, something which acquires further attention in the upcoming analysis.

I am familiar with the company’s personnel policy and administrative systems

Out of the seven statements, this is by far the one which differs the most in its responses. As indicated in some of the above responses regarding communication, few were familiar with the policies. There is a notable difference in the awareness between the officers and the ratings, the reason for this is somewhat hard to identify; a reason which will not be further investigated within the limits of this thesis.



Leaving the vessel

.....I did dare to disembark! As the vessel was scheduled to leave at midnight, I had my flight back home re-scheduled. It was an interesting day at the vessel, with discussions, both formal and informal. I felt very welcome and the crew had a positive attitude towards my purpose of the visit. Now it is time for me to analyze the material and opinions I gathered.

5.2 Questionnaires answered by the shore-based staff

Traveling to the office was not as complex as when heading to Hamburg to embark the vessel; now it was just to embark the tram and head for Mölndalsvägen. Since I was working at Broström, the office has changed location but most employees remain the same. Thus, I was warmly welcomed and after some chit-chat I started to hand-out the questionnaires.

The questionnaires resemble the ones responded by the vessels employees to a great extent. However, this survey did not aim to be as extensive as the one conducted onboard the vessel, rather to be a comparison which shows the perspective of the shore-based employees. Below, the results of the questionnaires will be presented.

5.2.1 Perception of organization

The sketches of the employees' perception were generally poor; some only contained a general idea of Broström with several sub-departments. Although, there were a few which described the organization with a textbook example, as they described their level of understanding; there are posters of organizational schemes posted around the office. Out of the respondents to the questionnaire, only one mentioned the vessels.

5.2.2 Internal and external communication

This section will focus on both the internal communication at the office, as well as the external communication with the outside of the organization.

5.2.2.1 Internal communication at the office

The responses regarding the internal communication channels at the office are very clear-cut. All respondents have answered that they have an everyday communication with almost all departments at the office. Most information seem to be exchanged verbally. Furthermore, information is exchanged via e-mail and often via communication tools such as yahoo messenger and office communicator, which allows for a fast and easy flow of information and communication.

5.2.2.2 The office's external communication

The external communication varies between the respondents. Some have a lot of contact with external parties, while others have few contacts outside the office. The ways of communications seem to be via telephone or e-mail.

5.2.3 Motivational factors

Reasons for choosing a career at Broström

The aforementioned reasons why the respondents on the vessel chose a career at sea focused mainly at Maslow's physiological needs such as, leisure time, salary and freedom.

When asking the correspondent question to the shore-based employees, the responses point in a different direction, or more correctly at a different level. Common reasons are such as nice colleagues, interesting work tasks, interesting market, challenging work, historically a renowned employer.

Changeability

The questionnaires raised a couple of questions regarding what would make the respondents want to change work tasks, change department, change company and change profession totally. Again, the answers were very uniform; also here they differ from the ones given at the vessel.

5.2.4 Valuation of statements

The responses from the valuations have been measured and are in below figure presented with the mean value for each question:



As can be seen in above figure, all valuations have a relatively high value. Generally it can be stated that all respondents agree to a certain extent or almost fully agree that the statements apply to them. However, when using a mean value there are always exceptions that are not seen, for example a few disagreed to a certain extent that they were familiar with the company's personnel policy and administrative systems.

Thus, this section of the questionnaire proved to follow the same pattern as the former questions, a great uniformity in the answers.

5.3 Conclusion of interviews and questionnaires

The perception of the organization differs a lot between the crewmembers and the shore-based personnel. The crewmembers has a satisfying understanding and knowledge about the organizational structure, and places themselves as one of the 'departments' in the organizational charts they drew up. The shore-based personnel however, presented organizational schemes with accuracy, how the shore-based organization is structured, however they all but one omitted the vessels as part of the Broström organization.

Most respondents are satisfied with the communicational channels within the organization. An interest was shown for the crewmembers to take more part of the informal communication and information, such as intranet etc. further, a higher level of common understanding and background knowledge would be beneficial for the communication patterns.

With regards to the motivational factors, great differences occurred in between the two different focus groups, crewmembers and shore-based personnel. In order to be satisfied and focused on the common good for the company, the crewmembers responded that motivational (hygienical) factors such as salary, leisure time and job security must be fulfilled, whereas the shore-based personnel responded that developing work tasks, promotion and recognition would satisfy them and make them focused on striving for excellence. It is important to remember that the fewer distractions, the more freely communication should be able to flow.

6 Analysis

This section is based on the results from the interviews with the employees at Broström AB. The results will be analyzed with reference to the theories introduced in previous theoretical chapter.

6.1 Interviews and questionnaires answered by the vessels crew

The interviews/questionnaires with the vessels crew had the following structure: perception of the organization, communication and motivation, ending with a number of quantifiable statements at the end of the questionnaire. Thus, this section will follow the same structure.

6.1.1 Perception of the organization

The conclusion to be drawn when analyzing the sketches drawn by the crew is that none of the respondents put themselves, i.e. the vessel, as a starting reference. Generally this perspective seems to be linked to a good understanding of the organization they are employed within.

- *All employees shall be made aware of both the Broström Group's and their own company's business concept, vision, financial goals and strategies and have frequent access to information regarding the development and results of the Group and the company.*

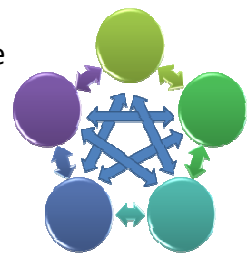
An analysis of the interviews with regards to above statement, extracted from the staff and salary policy, is that the aim has not been fulfilled and that it is something that has to be revised and carefully inform the crew of the vessels, especially after all the organizational changes that has actually taken place.

6.1.2 Internal and external communication

Below section will focus on both the internal communication onboard the vessel, as well as the external communication with the outside of the organization.

6.1.2.1 Internal communication onboard the vessel

The internal communication onboard the vessel can be resembled by the model of 'all channels' described in the theory chapter. It works out well on the vessel since it has its hierarchy and each employees work tasks are very clear cut. Everyone knows who is responsible for what and who needs what information.



Most information also flows easily on board and the crewmembers are in close contact with one another and can exchange thoughts and ideas around the coffee machine on a daily basis.

6.1.2.2 The vessel's external communication

One must not ignore the issue of authority in combination with communication., especially onboard the vessel. Most external communication is handled by the vessels master, both with the shore-based personnel and the other external partners involved during the vessels voyage. Along with his/her profession, the master inherits authority, therefore it is of importance that the employed master is aware of this fact and its consequences, both positive and negative.

The master must also realize that he or she must integrate the 'all channels' network into the 'wheel' model which the rest of the external organization and communication is built around. As mentioned earlier the whole process around a shipping company can be resembled by cog-wheels that have to run smoothly together.

The theory chapter about authority and communication above mentions the importance of making all the employees feel involved in decisions made and information distributed. It is even enough with a suspicion that all information is not being shared, for the employees to feel discontent and unsatisfied, something which is clearly shown by the outcome of the questionnaires. The crewmembers are very clearly stating that they know that their opinions cannot make huge changes, however if just listened to and giving their opinions and involvement priority, they would feel much more content and motivated to strive and engage with extra effort in the same direction along the rest of the organization.

"We are feeling alienated and the 'information' is perceived as directions being passed rather than a two-ways communication taking place"

6.1.3 Motivational factors

When analyzing the responses to why the respondents have chosen a career onboard a vessel, the immediate responses can be classified as physiological needs of 'Maslow's level of needs'. This indicates that these are fulfilled and the respondents can strive to fulfill the next level of needs.

6.1.4 Valuation of statements

When, comparing above valuation of statements with Herzberg's motivational factors, it can be concluded that almost all factors are satisfied; thus, comfort exists. In one sense or another, most of the respondents have responded positively to the statements.

A slight difference in answers can be seen between the officers and ratings, the latter have a slightly higher mean value of their responses. What is the reason for this? This thesis will not investigate the difference on a deeper level; however a not too wild guess is that the ratings have less communication and involvement with the external organization. From the visit and

responses given, all seem to be very satisfied with the organization onboard, might it be so that the communication and sometimes lack of information which lowers the level of the officer's contentment? As said, just a personal reflection, which can be studied further in a subsequent thesis.

The last valuation statement showed that many were not familiar with the personnel policy, something which according to Herzberg's hygiene factor easily can create discomfort. It can be concluded that the employees onboard is very sensitive to the hygiene factors, such as salary, conditions affecting leisure etc. Therefore, focus has to be brought to these factors and make sure they are fulfilled.

6.2 Questionnaires answered by the shore-based staff

The questionnaires answered by the shore-based personnel had the following structure: perception of the organization, communication and motivation, ending with a number of quantifiable statements at the end of the questionnaire. Thus, this section will follow the same structure.

6.2.1 Perception of organization

Out of the respondents to the questionnaire, only one mentioned the vessels. When analyzing this outcome my reflection is that this might be due to the 'fixed' schemes presented at the office, as most respondents mention that they have acquired the information from company presentations and the posted schemes.

What does the organization posted at the office look like? What strikes me the most is that the vessels are not included on any of the organizational schemes. There are several different schemes depending on which level of the company it represents, however for this thesis only the one picturing Broström is relevant.

6.2.2 Internal and external communication

Below section will focus on both the internal communication at the office, as well as the external communication with the outside of the organization.

6.2.2.1 Internal communication at the office

Most information seem to be exchanged verbally, which is further facilitated by the new set-up of the office premises, an open office landscape where most employees are located in the same gigantic room.

Furthermore, information is exchanged via e-mail and often via communication tools such as yahoo messenger and office communicator, which allows for a fast and easy flow of information and communication. It is very easy to type a question and await a quick answer, which might encourage more openness and communication rather than having to lift the

telephone and risk disturbing someone. More questions are asked, more information is shared this way, thus the risk for misunderstandings and misinterpretation decreases.

From the responses of the questionnaire it seems that the communication channels can be categorized as 'all channel' communication, described previously in the theory chapter. However, once again this 'all communication' must identify itself as part of other cogwheels and some are part of 'wheel' communicational networks, i.e. the vessel operator which transfers most of the shore-based information to and from the vessel.

6.2.2.2 The office's external communication

What is striking when analyzing the results for external communication is that a significant number of the respondents mention that they have contact with the vessels, in contrast to the sketches which almost completely omitted the same. Is this one out of many signs that seem to point in the same direction; that the vessel is not regarded as a part of the Broström organization? This will be further developed in the forthcoming section of discussion.

6.2.3 Motivational factors

In the analysis of the mentioned reasons, all of them seem to fall under a different level of 'Maslow's level of needs. Namely, 'social needs' 'Need for recognition' and 'Need for self-fulfillment'. Thereby, the shore-based employees are to be found on another step of the staircase and require different motivational factors in order to be stimulated than those previously described for the employees at a vessel.

6.2.4 Valuation of statements

When analyzing the valuation with the help of Herzberg's research about employees' well-being, it can be seen that many of the motivational factors are fulfilled, thus the conclusion should be that the shore-based employees are comfortable with their situation.

However, there can still be hygiene factors lacking which creates a sense of discomfort. One thing that can be pointed out in above valuations is that the awareness of the company's personnel policy and administrative systems was not completely satisfactory, a factor which might lead to a feeling of discomfort.

The difference might be that the seafarers have actively chosen the career at sea because of the nature of the profession itself, whilst the employees at the office are striving for challenges and want personal development, not risking to be stuck in a rut.

6.3 Conclusion of interviews and questionnaires

Below a brief conclusion of the analysis will be presented, this will be further extended and discussed in the forthcoming section; 6 Discussion.

Both the crewmembers and the shore-based employees have a unified view of how the Broström organization is set-up. However they do not necessarily match each other. The

shore-based personnel do not include the vessels in their schemes whilst the vessel sees themselves as a natural part thereof.

All respondents seem to be satisfied with the internal communication; however, the issue is to create a satisfying and efficient flow of information in between the vessel and the office. This 'issue' can be related to the field of external communication, the ability to interlink the two 'all channels communication'.

The two groups of respondents, the crewmembers and the shore-based personnel, have completely different motivational factors, which must be taken into account. The same applies for the motivational and hygienical factors which differ between the two focal groups.

The aim should be to unite the two groups, vessels and office, in the organization; however they still must be treated separately in order to maintain the motivation and contentment amongst the employees.

7 Discussion

In this final chapter, the conclusion of this thesis is presented and discussed. First a general conclusion will be presented, followed by a discussion with Broström in focus. At last, a proposal for further studies within the area will be presented.

7.1 Shipping in general – from the perspective of a vessel

A clear result of this thesis is that a shipping organization is very complex. Even though, the thesis focuses on tanker shipping, it can be generally stated that most shipping organizations consists of a fleet of vessels and a shore-based organization. The challenge is to unite these two and make all employees see through the same binoculars.

A vessel has its own organization onboard and has a clear hierarchy amongst the crew, which work tasks are strictly regulated in by conventions and regulations. Thus, most vessel organizations are resembling and work in the same manner. What differs is the shore-based organization which may differ enormously from company to company.

Communication is extremely important to make a shipping organization run smoothly. As most external communication on the vessels part is handled by the master or the chief engineer, the rest of the crew may easily be distanced from the ‘outer world’.

As can be seen in section 3, how a typical voyage is performed, the vessel represents the company in ports and is the entity which transports the goods for the customers. Thus, it is important that all members of the crew have an understanding for the organization as a whole in order to perform their work tasks in best possible way and strive for excellence. If the master is a part of ‘the external wheel’, earlier presented in this thesis, it is important that there are routines of how this communication and information is spread onboard the vessel. This is should be fairly easily done with the day-to-day communications, however, the general knowledge of the entire organization is important that each employee receives when being employed. The shore-based crewing department must make sure that this is fulfilled.

In order to withhold an interest and motivate all employees within an organization it is important to identify which factors that motivate the employees. Thus, for an organisation to successfully motivate its employees it should be fully aware and make sure that the motivational factors are in fulfilled and concurrently make sure that the hygiene factors also exist. Furthermore, it must be remembered that these factors cannot be applied unanimously on all employees they may differ from individual to individual, and also depend on what part of the organization the employee work within.

An important feature in succeeding with the above is knowledge and understanding. Not must the vessels crew have understanding of the entire organization, equally important is that it works the other way around. The shore-based personnel must have thorough understanding of how life at sea works. Then communications will hopefully run smoothly and if feeling motivated all employees will almost automatically strive for excellence.

7.2 Broström – from the perspective of a vessel

Following the above general conclusion, with regards to communication and motivation within a shipping organization, focus will now shift to conclude and discuss the results received from the studies of Broström’s organization. Based on the theoretical analysis of the results during presented from the interviews and questionnaires, below conclusions are discussed and some possible practical improvements will be suggested.

How do the employees at the vessel perceive Broström’s organization?

The results from the interviews and questionnaires onboard one of Broström’s vessels showed that the majority had a very clear picture of how they perceived the organization, unanimous drawings and a high level of ‘accuracy’. None of the respondents had the vessel as the starting point, they rather saw their vessel as a part of the greater mass. Below is a conclusion of the crewmembers perception, received through their own drawings. (Figure 9)

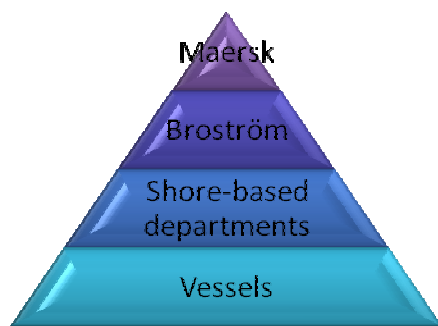


Figure 9 - Broström organization as perceived by a vessel

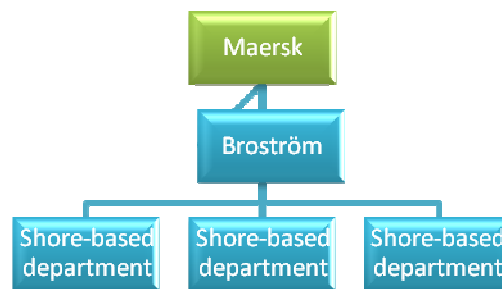


Figure 10 - Broström organization as perceived by the shore-based personnel

When concluding the results from the questionnaires answered by the shore-based employees, (Summarized in figure 10 above) one striking difference occurred. Only one of the respondents mentioned the vessels in the organizational set-up. Thus, as great crevice was identified. How can all employees work together and strive in the same direction, if not all have the same perception of what the organization encompasses?

As the vessels are the company’s ambassadors during the voyages, it should be of importance that they feel included in the organization and from the other perspective is regarded as part thereof.

How is this perception interrelated with the communication with the different departments?

“We do not feel like it is a two-ways communication, rather directives being passes on”, a quotation from the interviews onboard. The communicational and information networks at the office and onboard the vessel were identified to resemble ‘the circle’, which means that all departments/ranks communicate with each other, then these networks must interrelate like cog-wheels. However, the interrelation between the vessel and the shore-based personnel can also be resembled as ‘the wheel’, i.e the communication that shall be passed on to the vessel goes via the operator to the vessel and vice versa. Most of the

communication is passed in between the master and vessel operator, however also between chief engineer and technical department, master and crewing department etc. Therefore, the knowledge and understanding of each other's departments and responsibilities are of utmost importance in order to create a free flowing communication. As indicated by the quotation, this is not currently executed within the organization and thus something to be reviewed and improved.

The crew stated that they wanted to be part of the organization and receive more information, however, not too much information. Many respondents flagged that they were dissatisfied that they did not have access to the company's intranet, a communicational tool which would easily allow the crewmember to receive more indirect information when they had time to sit down and actively take part of this when time allows.

Furthermore, how are the employees motivated to facilitate the communication and strive for excellence together with the other parts of the organization?

When analyzing the respondent's answers and valuations, both crewmember's and shore-based personnel's, of what factors that motivate them, a great difference was identified. With regards to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, as described in the theoretical chapter, the two groups of respondents found themselves on different levels. The crewmembers responses indicated that the needs that motivate them are the social ones, such as salary and leisure time. They are working at sea basically because they value the long periods of time at home, and the salary compensates the time they have to spend away from family and friends. Of course they enjoy the profession as well.

The shore-based personnel however, responded that they are motivated by meaningful and developing work-tasks. They strive forward and need personal development in order to be content. Thus, they find themselves on a different level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This difference is extremely important that the management of Broström perceive, and acknowledge that the different employees needs to be motivated in different manners in order to make the organization work in the same direction; for excellence!

When relating to Herzberg's motivational and hygiene factors; the two respondent groups, crew and shore-based, differ too. The analysis of the shore-based personnel's responses to the questionnaires showed that they are mainly motivated by the motivational factors, such as responsibility for own work, promotion, development etc. Thus, if existing the personnel is motivated, however it does not automatically mean that they are not if the management does not succeed in fulfilling all the factors. However, on the contrary, the crewmembers are first and foremost motivated by such factors as salary, job security and how the work affects leisure time; the hygiene factors. Therefore, the management must secure that these are satisfactory, otherwise it leads to discomfort amongst the crewmembers.

Contentment allows for a more efficient organization, since the communicated information is perceived better if there are fewer distractions such as discontentment. With fewer negative distractions, all parties involved can focus on the common good for the organization and strive for excellence; together.

The crewmembers perceive the organization of Broström differently from the shore-based personnel. They have a good perception of all departments ashore, therewith an understanding for the communicational networks. However, they are to an extent dissatisfied with how communication and information is exchanged, thus interfering with their motivation to strive for excellence.

7.3 Proposal for further studies

This thesis has focused on identifying how the crewmembers and the shore-based personnel perceive the organization. Furthermore, I have also identified the communicational networks existing within Broström and what factors that motivates the employees.

The results show that there is discontentment amongst the personnel regarding the communication between vessel and shore, a further study could look into what can be done to change this. I have pointed out what must be taken into consideration and what is important for the management to focus on. However, next step would be to establish what practical measures that needs to be done in order to improve the situation.

A second proposal to further studies could be to analyze why the valuation of statements differ between the officers and the ratings onboard the vessel? Can it be as I briefly reflected on, that the ratings are less involved in the communication with external parts? The fewer contacts, the less risk for discontentment?

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www.brostrom.com - entered on a regular basis throughout the process

Interviews

Onboard Vessel X: 2010-04-09 – 2010-04-10

Appendix 1 – Diary from a vessel

One day at a Vessel...

I left home with my bag on the shoulder for a trip to Hamburg and a visit to one of Broström's vessel which should be loading there. After a safe flight I was met at the airport by a very kind taxi-driver which gave me a guided tour of Hamburg whilst driving to the airport. What a beautiful city! I felt a sting of envy of the seamen who travel across the world and get the opportunity to see so many places.

STOP! Wait a second... In today's shipping everything is about efficiency and the vessels are built to be loaded/discharged as quickly as possible. Furthermore, most oil terminals are located outside the cities without any immediate connection to the town. Therefore, it is not uncommon for a seaman not to have the time to go ashore, for the entire month he or she is onboard. Thinking about this, a light feeling of claustrophobia comes crawling up on me...

After September 11th 2001, all ports have adopted the ISPS code (International Ship and Port facility Security code) which implements high safety standards. Therefore, one must present oneself at the gate of the specific berth with id. The person at the gate took me for a person who easily speaks German...and I admit, I once was fluent...once being about ten years ago. So after some very brief answers he took me to the vessel...vielen dank!

I am not afraid of heights, however passing the gangway with shaking knees and a convulsive grip around the rail, it came to my mind; no one who is afraid of heights may ever come onboard here. Writing this I am still onboard, what if I do not dare to disembark?

Well onboard it was almost midnight and I was guided to my cabin, a very pleasant one. I took a quick tour and said hello to the few people that were awake. I was informed that breakfast was served between 7.30 and 8. I slept very well, and had a nice breakfast in the morning. After that it was time to get to work. I had prepared questionnaires that I handed out to the crew to fill out. Further interviews with the captain, chief officer and chief engineer were "scheduled".

When flying down the purpose was to stay onboard for the 40 hours the vessel was scheduled to stay in port. However, the latest news is that the vessel be fully loaded already tonight and leave for discharge port. Nothing to be surprised about, all this shifts in shipping, nothing to waist too much energy on...it will have shifted numerous times before I finally leave the vessel.

To be continued... ..

I did dare to disembark! As the vessel was scheduled to leave at midnight, I had my flight back home re-scheduled. It was an interesting day at the vessel, with discussions, both formal and informal. I felt very welcome and the crew had a positive attitude towards my purpose of the visit. Now it is time for me to compile and analyze the material and opinions I gathered.

Appendix 2 - Vessels particulars

Vessels particulars of the three vessel classes which are within the limitations of this thesis

Vessel A-class



Recap level			
Call sign	SJRZ		
Flag	Swedish		
Built	1999 Vigo Spain		
Ice class	1 A		
IMO type	2		
LOA	144.15	meter	
Beam	23.19	meter	
SDWT	16376	tonnes	
SDRAFT	8.70	meter	
Cubic 98% (incl. slops)	19164	m ³	
Hull type	Double Hull		
Coating	Epoxy		
GT	11375		
NT	4913		
Class	DNV		
Cranes	1		
Heating	Heat exchangers		

Source: www.brostrom.se

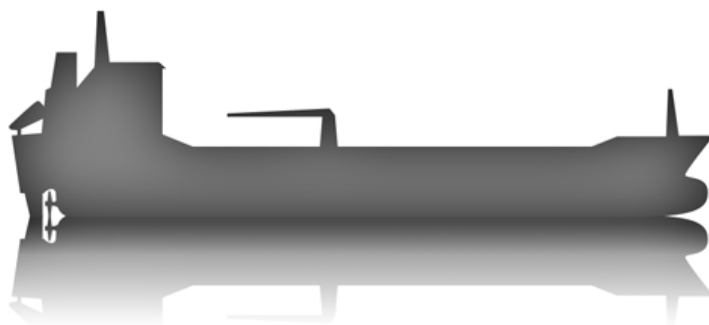
Vessel D-class



Recap level			
Call sign	SHXN		
Flag	Swedish		
Built	2006 Jinling Shanghai		
Ice class	1 C		
IMO type	2		
LOA	146.8	meter	
Beam	22.00	meter	
SDWT	14907	tonnes	
SDRAFT	8.20	meter	
Cubic 98% (incl. slops)	18480	m ³	
Hull type	Double Hull		
Coating	Expoxy		
GT	11344		
NT	4704		
Class	DNV		
Cranes	1		
Heating	N/A		

Source: www.brostrom.se

Vessel J-class



Recap level			
Call sign	SJMQ		
Flag	Swedish		
Built	1999 Qiu Xin Shipyard Shanghai		
Ice class	1 A		
IMO type	2		
LOA	119.92	meter	
Beam	21.00	meter	
SDWT	14359	tonnes	
SDRAFT	9.50	meter	
Cubic 98% (incl. slops)	15296	m ³	
Hull type	Double Hull		
Coating	Epoxy		
GT	8848		
NT	4527		
Class	LR		
Cranes	1		
Heating	Heating coils		

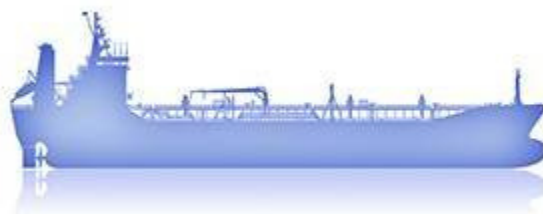
Source: www.brostrom.se

Appendix 3 - Introduction letter presented together with interviews and questionnaires



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND LAW

Management
Spring 2010



Broström AB; **the organisation** ~from the perspective of a vessel~

Carolina Elenbrant

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0702-958495

Good day,

My name is Carolina Elenbrant and I am currently writing my bachelor thesis in management at the University of Gothenburg; School of Business, Economics and Law. The thesis will be written in the form of an organizational analysis, with focus on communication and motivational factors. This report is initiated from me as a student and not from Broström AB.

My experience of shipping is that I have studied shipping and logistics for three years at Chalmers University of Technology. During my studies I was employed as a pilot coordinator for the port of Gothenburg. Thereafter I have been working at Broström as claims negotiator for 2½ years. And since September 2009 I am employed at Chalmers as an assistant lecturer at the department for Shipping and Marine Technology.

The thesis has the following main question to be answered:

What is the image of the organization from the perspective of the employees at the vessels? How is this image related to their ways of working and communicating with the office departments at shore, and how is it related to their motivation for different work tasks?

Therefore, I would very much appreciate to visit Your vessel and interview You as well as Your colleagues during a voyage in the near future. The purpose of this interview is to find out what communicational networks there are within the vessel and between the vessel and the shore based parts of the organization.

In order to receive an as broad as possible source of information I will, apart from this interview, send out questionnaires to a number of vessels and interview shore-based personnel. The answers from the interviews and questionnaires will be handled with confidentiality, and the results will be presented in the report securing anonymity.

I am looking forward to meet and hear your contributing opinions!

Interview with crewmember onboard Vessel

If you speak/write in Swedish, please feel free to answer the questions in Swedish if you prefer to do so.

Personal information

Position: Officer/Engineer Rating

Age: years

Time within shipping:.....years

Time within Broström:.....years

Reason for working at sea: _____

Organization

1. What is your perception of the organization – Broström AB? Please draw a sketch of the organization on attached blank paper.

2. How have you received this information / acquired this understanding?

3. Are you satisfied with your level of understanding/perception? Or would you like to have a broader understanding of the organization?

4. Please also draw a sketch of the vessels organization.

Internal communication

5. Which persons do you communicate with onboard the vessel?

6. How do you communicate with them?

External communication

7. Which persons/departments do you communicate with outside the vessel?

8. How do you communicate with them?

9. How often do you have this contact with each person/department?

10. Do you feel that all communication is relevant? i.e you understand the purpose of it?

11. If you answered No in above question, why so?

Motivational factors

12. What would make you want to change work tasks?

13. What would make you switch vessel (with in the same company)?

14. What would make you switch company?

15. What would make you switch to another profession?

16. Would you like to add anything other than above questions have asked?

Statements

Please assess below statements on a scale from 1-4.

1 = Fully disagree; **2** = Disagree to a certain extent; **3** = Agree to a certain extent;

4 = Fully agree

Example: I have worked within shipping since I graduated

1

2

3

4

I am satisfied with my work tasks.

1

2

3

4

I have possibility to affect how I perform my work task.

1

2

3

4

I feel connected and loyal to Broström AB.

1

2

3

4

I feel appreciated by my colleagues for doing a good job.

1

2

3

4

I can speak up and express my opinion on board the vessel.

1

2

3

4

I can speak up and express my opinion towards the shore-based organization.

1

2

3

4

I am familiar with the company's personnel policy and administrative systems

1

2

3

4

Many thanks for your time and co-operation! It is highly appreciated.

Appendix 4 - Broström organizational chart

