True Culture and False Values
A case study on the implementation of Fagerhult Group´s organizational culture

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Abstract

Title: True Culture and False Values – a case study on the implementation of Fagerhult Group’s organizational culture
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Key words: organizational culture, core value statements, implementation, communication

Background: To succeed all companies need to formulate practical guidelines for why, how and where they are doing business. Examples of these guidelines include the stated mission, vision, the identity, and overall goals. Companies formulate the mission, vision, goals and strategies in line with their organizational culture. Therefore successfully managing culture and its underlying assumptions, morals and beliefs, is the basis for the prosperity of a company. The organizational culture can be summarized and communicated through core value statements. At its best these can be communicated to employees and serve as a constant reminder, a reinforcement of the most important aspects of the company’s culture.

Purpose: This thesis analyzes how the company Fagerhult Group implements and communicates their organizational culture and how their written core values represent the way the company do business.

The Case: The authors have investigated the company Fagerhult Group and their process of implementing and communicating their culture and stated core values. The authors have specifically focused on how this was carried out in the Polish office. The company entered Poland in 2007 as Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), hence it provides a clear and practical example on how the company’s implementation process looks like.

Method: The authors have conducted a single case study, using a qualitative research method approach, where mainly semi-structured telephone interviews have been used for collecting information.

Conclusion: Fagerhult Group has successfully implemented the true culture, characterized by customer focus, quality, respect and empowerment, into the Polish office. This was done through face-to-face communication and situation-based training. These methods have proven to be highly effective when implementing culture, values and other important messages, since it provides the employees with a practical example on how to act and behave according to the Fagerhult way. However, the written core values; respect, responsibility and enterprise, mainly communicated through annual reports and company web page are found to not be entirely cohesive with the true organizational culture. Therefore these have not had any practical penetrating power and have been poorly communicated to the employees.
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1 Introduction

This chapter provides the reader with a background to the topic, introducing key concepts such as core values, culture and communication and how these are related.

It follows by the problem discussion where the situation is narrowed down to the explicit case; its delimitations and specific criterias and how this study emerged. This leads to the purpose of the investigation and the research questions applied in order to fulfill it.

1.1 Background

To succeed all companies need to formulate practical guidelines for why, how and where they are doing business (Schein, 1999). Examples of these guidelines include the stated mission, the identity, and the goal. These encompassing guidelines are guided by the culture of the company (Schein, 1999). Companies formulate the mission, vision, goals and strategies in line with their organizational culture. Therefore managing culture successfully is the basis for the prosperity of a company (Probst & Büchel, 1997).

The definitions of culture are many. What most have in common is that they describe culture as the ”glue” of the organization or society; what is keeping it together in terms of social norms (Schein, 1999, Deal & Kennedy, 1982).

The organizational culture and its underlying assumptions guide the everyday work of the company and serve as a compass for employees on how to act, prioritize and behave in their work. Therefore it is also important that the culture and values are shared by all employees, thus all working together towards a common goal (Deal & Kennedy, 1982, Wiener, 1988).

With an increasing internationalization and many of today’s markets being global, a company’s organizational culture must also work in an international setting. When entering a new geographical market, national culture must be taken into consideration. The culture, both on the national and organizational level, influences how communication and implementation strategies are designed (Schein, 1999).

Organizational culture and the identity of a company can be expressed through core values. Core values are the most profound shared assumptions of an organization’s culture (Deal & Kennedy, 1982). It is important that core values are representative of the true organizational culture (Blanchard & O’Connor, 1997, Deal & Kennedy, 1982, Gordon, 1993). The true organizational culture is the culture that really prevails within the company; the way they actually do business, interact and behave with each other (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1997, Schein, 2004, Wiener, 1988).
The organizational culture expressed through the core values must not only work in an international context, but it must also be communicated and implemented successfully across language and cultural borders.

There is always a risk of getting “lost in translation” and it is crucial to know that words have different meanings in different cultures. Words may be “charged” with different memories and associations (Das, 2008). It is important that the organizational culture and the core values are clearly defined and communicated adequately to new employees from all cultures so they can act in line with the organizational culture of the parent company (Gordon, 1993).

### 1.2 Company Background

The company this thesis will focus on is Fagerhult Group which is a medium-sized company from Sweden. Their business concepts are to design, manufacture and market energy-efficient lighting solutions for indoor and outdoor environments. The company was founded in 1945 by Bertil Svensson, beginning in Habo, Sweden. Fagerhult’s vision is to retain its top position in the Nordic region and identifies Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark and Eastern Europe as their largest markets (Fagerhult Group Annual Report, 2008: 5). The company’s goal is to be a leading global player within the lighting industry. Fagerhult shall create increased customer benefit, and continuously increase the value for the shareholders (Fagerhult Group Annual Report, 2008).

In 2004 a new CEO took office at Fagerhult headquarters. Per Borgvall brought with him a bolder approach to business and enhanced the entrepreneurial spirit and new energy into the company. Following in 2009, the responsibilities of being Fagerhult CEO were passed on to Johan Hjertonsson. Johan Hjertonsson spent his first months at Fagerhult visiting different departments and offices worldwide to understand the company’s organizational culture. His primary focus was the company’s written core values and how and if they were representative of the Fagerhult’s way of doing business.

In 2007, Fagerhult entered Poland through foreign direct investment (FDI) (Fagerhult Group Annual Report 2007). Since they went in as FDI, Fagerhult tried to impose its organizational culture and values upon the new workplace to maintain the parent company’s vision as much as possible.

### 1.3 Problem Discussion

This thesis will look at how Fagerhult has implemented their organizational culture and core values. The authors contacted the company with a proposal of researching their organizational culture. Fagerhult is currently facing a revision of their written core value statement.
Therefore they were interested in how the former written down core values had been implemented throughout the company. The authors take interest in the international aspects of management, hence the suggestion on looking into how the former core values as well as culture, have been implemented into one of the foreign subsidiaries sounded interesting.

Fagerhult’s entry into Poland will therefore be the case used to provide a practical perspective on some of the issues with implementing culture and values. This specific case was chosen because Fagerhult entered through FDI and they had to start from the beginning with the implementation of their organizational culture.

The authors see it as a good and clear situation to evaluate how they actually work with the implementation of values and culture. This specific situation can provide the investigation with an illustrative example on the matter at hand. Since Poland is a country with a different national culture than Sweden, the intercultural aspect will therefore also have to be taken into consideration.

In order to analyze how the culture and stated core values have been implemented the authors will start to define organizational culture and establish how it is affected by a country’s national culture. The authors will also look into how organizational culture is linked to a company’s written core value statements. Secondly the authors will look more closely on how to manage and implement values and culture. Thirdly, the authors will look into organizational and intercultural communication and the most common modes used when communicating important messages such as values.

Throughout the thesis the words communicating and implementing are used extensively. The authors define implementing as perform, carry out or to apply something. That is the practical aspect of how the implications of culture and values are transferred from one person to another. Communicating is here defined as the oral transfer of information, to notify or talk about something, in this case talking about, or mentioning the values or traits of culture.

The phrases core values and core value statements are also used extensively throughout the thesis. Core values refer to the underlying assumptions of a company’s culture, the core and most profound traits of the culture. Written or stated core values, are the values that are communicated, mainly through written sources such as the company webpage and annual reports. These value statements are not automatically the same as the core values, hence the authors want to make the reader aware of the distinction.

The outcome of this paper will be a set of recommendations for Fagerhult regarding the implementation of their core values and culture. Since the investigation has used Poland as an illustrative example, the international aspects of implementation and communication of values and culture will be touched upon as well.
1.4 Purpose
This thesis analyzes how Fagerhult implement and communicate their organizational culture and how their written core values represents the way the company do business.

1.5 Research Questions
What are the Fagerhult Group core values and how are these communicated and implemented?

Is the written core values representative of the true Fagerhult culture?

What does Fagerhult need to consider when implementing values and culture to a new cultural context?
2 Methodology

In this chapter the chosen methodology is presented and motivated. The authors have chosen to conduct a qualitative case study mainly built on interviews.

2.1 Qualitative Approach

A qualitative study puts emphasis on understanding complex processes and phenomenon in their context without isolating them from other variables, as often done in quantitative methods (Mintzberg, 1979, Yin, 2003). Furthermore this approach aims to reach a deeper understanding of human behavior (Zikmund, 2000). Human behavior is always complex to its nature. Empirical findings on human behavior research are therefore not easily categorized into already prepared and fixed categories of information without a risk of distorting the findings (Mintzberg, 1979, Zikmund, 2000). If the empirical findings become distorted, there is a risk to deform or simplify the reality that is set up for investigation (Mintzberg, 1979). Qualitative research is descriptive to its nature, using words instead of numbers (Yin, 2003).

Our research addresses the complex process of implementing and communicating organizational values and culture. Implementation of organizational culture is a process of interaction and communication between human beings, in other words a product of human behavior (Schein, 2004). Since human behavior is always complex to its nature and findings in this field are difficult to categorize, the authors have chosen a qualitative approach. Further, the authors wanted to investigate a certain phenomena in its original context, and to not face the risk of simplifying or deforming it, a qualitative research method were found best suitable.

Theories within communication, culture, and organizational culture and core values have been used concurrently in order to capture all levels and aspects of the value-implementation process. This has increase the complexity of the study but the authors see is as crucial to try to avoid isolating the hypothesis and findings within only one area of theory. The authors believe a deeper insight and a more truthful picture of reality have been gained when drawing the analysis upon several areas of theory. Since qualitative research is descriptive to its nature, this approach fits well with the chosen field of research; human behavior and interpersonal interaction are better described using words instead of numbers.

2.2 Case Study

Case study research is one of many ways of doing research (Yin, 2003). This strategy is favored when research questions such as “why” and “how” are to be answered.
The research questions focuses on why and how certain phenomenon within a real-life context appears. In this case study, the focus is on the company Fagerhult Group and how they internally implement their organizational culture and core values.

This case study further discusses the circumstances that may impact the implementation phase, both positive and negative, and more specifically, how and why they arise at Fagerhult Group.

Gillham (2001) emphasizes that a particular phenomenon generates understanding of reality which could not otherwise be investigated if it were withdrawn from its original context. This research uses the case of Fagerhult Group as a benchmark to generate understanding of core value implementation strategies. Further, since Fagerhult is an international company, the research also addresses the effects of implementing core values across cultural borders. By investigating the communication and implementation process Fagerhult used in Poland, it generates a deeper understanding of this complexity and the effects cultural differences may have on the company.

This research uses a single case, since it provides an in-depth analysis and a comprehensive description. By the use of a single case study it can lead to a significant contribution to knowledge and theory building. A single case study analyzes theories and tests their degree of truthfulness. Single case studies can capture the circumstances and conditions in a specific situation which leads to informative results (Yin, 1989). By investigating a single company, Fagerhult, this research provides an in-depth analysis of the circumstances presented in order to test existing theory and its validity.

When conducting a case study it is important to have a clear research design (Yin, 2003). The research design used for this case study of Fagerhult have been carefully prepared and acknowledged. After initial contact with the company, prior research within the field of communication, culture, and organizational culture and core values were examined in order to know what empirical result that needed to be collected. The assessment of existing theory also identified what research questions that was most suitable for this specific study. When the research questions and purpose of this report was completed, the information collection phase began. It was collected through qualitative semi-structured interviews with key persons at Fagerhult Group headquarter in Sweden and at the Polish subsidiary. Unlike survey research which relies on statistical generalization, case study research relies on analytical generalization (Yin 2009). This means that the researchers are trying to generalize their results towards broader theory. The empirical findings have been compared to the theoretical framework and analyzed in order to answer the research questions. With the results from this single case study, using a specific phenomenon, the authors seek to test and compare the findings with existing theory in order to confirm its validity.
2.3 Collection of Information

When conducting a qualitative case study several means of information can be collected. The most common are documentation, interviews and observations (Yin, 2009).

The methods chosen for assembling information within this case were semi structured open-ended interviews, in addition to company specific documents and academic literature and articles. The company specific documents refer to annual reports, code of conduct, guiding principles and internal HR policy documents. In this case study, primary data have been used. Primary data is new information gathered by the researcher (Larsen, 2009). The strength of using primary data is that this information is collected with the purpose in mind; hence the information is more specific and directly related to the purpose and research questions of the investigation.

For this research, the main source of primary data has been semi structured open-ended interviews. These have been carried out in order to gain reliable specific in-depth knowledge. The primary data has been assembled both in order to fit the purpose and to be able to answer the research questions of the study (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005).

2.3.1 Interviews

The interview in the form of a ‘guided conversation’ is a significant source of case study information when dealing with the complexity of human interaction and behavior (Yin, 2009). Nevertheless, it is important to take into consideration that the interviewees’ answers may be biased, affected by poor recall or misinterpreted due to language barriers. Consequently, the interview shall always be considered a verbal report that needs to be verified against other sources (Yin, 2009). The authors therefore verify and compare the empirical findings against the theoretical framework.

An interview can be conducted in several ways depending on the purpose and content of the case study. The authors have chosen semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions grouped according to theme and asked in a predetermined sequence (Yin, 2009).

If new questions were raised during the interview, they were answered directly, so the predetermined order of the questions may have been rearranged. As a result, all interviews do not cover the exact same questions, allowing room to tailor each interview to get the most possible outcome from each interviewee (Gillham, 2001). This flexibility is the advantage of the semi-structured outline (Gillham, 2001).

The authors found this flexibility suitable in this research since it allowed for a deeper insight in certain issues. It also let the authors follow up new and relevant leads in order to gain as much understanding of the case as possible. It gave the authors an opportunity to get as much information as possible from each interviewee. Each of the four interviewees has been chosen due to their specific knowledge on the matter.
All four provided a different and relevant aspect to the case at hand, holding key positions during the process that is under investigation. Their unique contribution to this thesis will be described below. Therefore, choosing semi-structured interviews gave the benefit to tailor each interview according to each interviewee’s specific insights. This was done in order to gain as deep understanding as possible of the complex process that are under investigation.

The authors held interviews with four key persons at Fagerhult. The interviewees were Johan Wahlström the former Business Development Manager of Fagerhult Poland current holding the position of Sales Support Manager at Fagerhult Austria, Maciej Liskiewicz the Managing Director of Fagerhult Poland and Arkadiusz Raczynski Lighting Designer at Fagerhult Poland former trainee at Fagerhult Sweden. An interview with Daniel Johansson, the HR Manager of Fagerhult Group at the Swedish Headquarter was also held. All interviewees have given the authors permission to openly use their names, statements and thoughts that came up during the interviews.

Daniel Johansson, HR manager at Fagerhult headquarters provides the authors with a Swedish point of view on the company’s organizational culture and values. In addition to this, he provides detailed information about the core values, their origin and the implementation strategies used within the company.

Johan Wahlström was at the time responsible for implementing the core values and organizational culture at the Polish office. He contributes to this research with hands-on descriptions on how he actually implemented the Fagerhult culture into the new Polish office. He provides the authors with valuable insights on what the practical challenges with implementing values and organizational culture are, and what strategies he used to overcome these obstacles.

Arkadiusz Raczynski, light designer and sales representative at the Polish office. He is also a former trainee at the Swedish headquarter which provides the authors with vital information in the comparison of the Polish and Swedish view on the core values and Fagerhult’s organizational culture. He is familiar with both of the countries, cultures and offices and can depict possible dissimilarities.

Maciej Liskiewicz contributes to this research with the Polish view on the Fagerhult culture and core values and how he, as a manager act to implement them. Also he can evaluate how well the core values were implemented and the results from Johan´s efforts.

Two of the interviews were conducted by telephone, one interview in-person and one by email. Both the in-person and the two telephone interviews allowed for interaction between interviewer and interviewee (Gillham, 2001).
The advantage is the responsiveness and ability to ask clarifying questions when they emerge which helps to prevent fatal misunderstandings and misinterpretations (Gillham, 2001). Since misinterpretations can change the outcome of the empirical findings, the authors found these interactive interview methods the most reliable to use. The telephone interviews are also valid for overcoming large geographical distances (Gillham, 2001).

Since the key persons for this case at the moment are geographically dispersed, located in Sweden, Poland and Austria the authors found the telephone interview convenient for obtaining information.

The interview with Daniel was conducted in person at the Fagerhult head office in Habo, outside Jönköping. The interview lasted for one hour and approximately 50 minutes and took place in one of the company’s conference rooms. The telephone interviews with Johan Wahlström and Arkadiusz Raczynski were conducted through Skype, a software computer application used for voice calls over internet. Each telephone interview lasted for approximately 50 minutes.

Due to time constraints Maciej the MD of Fagerhult Poland, requested an email-based interview instead of a telephone interview. A questionnaire with the questions grouped under different subheadings was sent to him by email. The questionnaire followed the structure of the telephone interviews. The questions sent to Maciej were carefully formulated to give extensive answers; however the authors were not there when he answered them so the possibility to follow up interesting leads could not be done in the same way as with the telephone interviews. This potential problem was solved by the promise to let the authors email new questions after having received his first answers. However, due to the extensive and valid answers by Maciej, the authors did not have to ask any further questions.

In order to not interrupt the flow of the interviews and to be able to go back and listen to the interview several times the use of a tape recorder is recommended (Gillham, 2001). By recording the interviews the authors gained a more natural conversation allowing the interviewers to stay more present and concentrate on what was being said. It also gave the authors the opportunity to follow up interesting leads without losing crucial parts due to writing notes. Another important benefit of recording is the ability to go back and listen to the material several times, and by doing so, discern more information. Due to the complex nature and qualitative approach of the research, the authors believe it is important to have the opportunity to go back and listen to the answers in order to depict details and nuances that may not be fully outspoken. By depicting these nuances a deeper understanding of the topic can be reached. Before using a tape recorder it is important to ask the interviewee for permission (Gillham, 2001). The interviewees were in the beginning of the interview asked if they agreed on having it recorded.
The interviewees all gave their permission to let the authors record it. In addition to the recording, the interviewers sparsely took notes in order to remember an interesting follow-up question or other ideas of similar kind.

As according to Yin (2009) the questions were grouped under several subtopics but were constructed in a way that encouraged extensive answers.

The subtopics for all four interviews were; Personal Information, Personal Background, Fagerhult Culture, Core Values and their Meaning, Communication of Core Values, and Communication International (See Appendix 1-4). The questions themselves however differed slightly depending on the interviewee. As stated previously in this chapter, each interviewee was chosen due to their specific knowledge and perspective and therefore the questions were to some extent personalized to get the most information out from each interview.

Each interview started with a short presentation of the interviewee. In order to fully understand their viewpoint, questions about current and former work position as well as former academic experience were asked. The questions under the subheading Personal Information and Personal Background were the same for all four interviewees.

Then all four interviewees were asked how they perceived the Fagerhult culture. The main question was how they would describe the organizational culture in their own words. They were also asked to describe the communication style between colleagues and managers, how the office was designed and if there were any specific stories or myths flourishing between colleagues and managers. Johan and Arkadiusz, who are familiar with both Poland and Sweden, were additionally asked about potential differences and similarities in the organizational culture between the Swedish and Polish offices.

Under the following subheading, Core Values and their Meaning, the interviewees were asked about the company’s three written core values, stated for instance in the annual reports. Questions on how these three values affected the interviewees’ everyday work and what they stood for in a more practical aspect were asked. Further, questions on what role the core values play in the organization and if the interviewee have had an opportunity to review or discuss them with Fagerhult management. Daniel received more explicit questions about the origin of the core values, and how often they have been revised. Johan and Arkadiusz were asked if the core values had equal functions and if they were perceived in the same way in the Polish and Swedish offices. However, the interviewees were not familiar with the three written core values. The authors had to personally explain the three core values using descriptions from the Fagerhult annual reports. The fact that the interviewees were not familiar with the company’s written core values also led to that many of the questions on core values became questions about the organizational culture instead since the interviewee used core values and organizational culture interchangeably.
The third theme of the interviews was Communication of Core Values. Within this sub-topic the questions were the most personalized, trying to depict each interviewee’s unique perspective. In all four interviews the questions dealt with how the core values and organizational culture were introduced, communicated and practically implemented into the everyday work.

Daniel, as representative for headquarters was asked about the organization’s strategies and directions. Johan was asked about how he had introduced and implemented the culture and values during the upstart of the Polish office. Maciej’s questions focused on how he as a self going MD had continued with the implementation of core values after Johan left the Polish office. Arkadiusz was asked about the potential differences in implementing and communicating the values and culture between the Swedish and Polish Fagerhult branches.

The last theme touched upon during the interviews was Communication Internationally. It dealt with questions about what information and education newly employed foreign co-workers receive by Fagerhult that specifically concerns their organizational culture and values. Additional questions on if they were given information on the Swedish national culture and the Swedish business climate were also asked. Arkadiusz was additionally asked if he had experienced any differences or similarities in the way his Swedish and Polish colleagues communicate and interact with each other and with their superiors.

Gillham (2001) states the only way to study an interview is by typing it out into a transcript. When the interviews are transcribed, they should be revised several times in order to see what the main themes were during the interviews (Gillham, 2001). The answers and statements from the interview should then be classified into these themes. When having classified all the outcomes from the interviews into the emerged themes, the researchers had a good starting point for the analysis (Gillham, 2001). After the interviews were conducted, the transcripts were written. The transcripts are available on request. From the transcripts the authors summarized each interview separately, grouping the answers under four themes; Personal Background, Fagerhult Culture, Core Values and their Meaning, Communication of Core Values and International Perspective. These four were the main themes that emerged during the interviews and therefore the most suitable to apply when structuring the empirical results. When the empirical findings were written, it was emailed back to the interviewees.

It is important that the interviewees recognize themselves, their answers and thoughts in the interpretation of the interview (Larsen, 2009). The interviewees were encouraged to review the summaries of the interviews. This was done in order to avoid misunderstandings and misinterpretations and to make sure that the interviewees’ comments and thoughts had been described in a correct way. A few minor changes were suggested in one of the interviews. These changes were carried out since it was a clarification of an example given by the interviewee and did not affect the outcome of the results.
2.4 Other Sources

In a case study research, using multiple sources of evidence enhances the accuracy of the information presented (Yin, 2009). In this study, in addition to the interviews, several sources of information have been collected through company specific documents, topic-related books and articles. The company specific documents are annual reports, code of conduct, HR policy and Fagerhult’s guiding principles. This information gave general information about the company as well as specific related facts about their organizational culture and core values.

Academic literature and articles were used in order to search for vital information on the related topic. Prior research within the field of communication, culture, organizational culture and core values were examined. This gave the authors great insight and knowledge in the subject.

2.5 Validity, Reliability and Trustworthiness

Validity refers to the connection between the purpose of a paper, theory and its empirical findings. It compares what was meant to be measured with what was actually being measured (Larsen, 2009). This thesis assures internal validity since what the research questions and purpose of this thesis say to measure corresponds to what is essentially being measured. Relevant information on organizational culture and core values were collected in order to answer the purpose of this thesis.

Merriam and Associates (2002) state that the reliability of the paper is the degree that the paper can be replicated. This is difficult in qualitative research because human behavior is dynamic. Replication of qualitative research will not necessarily yield the same results, but this does not discredit the quality of the paper. It is more important to consider whether the results are consistent with the information gathered. In the case of Fagerhult, the company documents and personal accounts are lined up against theory of core value implementation to see how the practical application of these values fits with the theoretical aspects of core value implementation. The approaches to ensure internal validity are also suitable when ensuring the reliability of the research (Merriam and Associates, 2002).

Validity and reliability is difficult to prove in a qualitative research, hence the concept of trustworthiness have been developed. To ensure trustworthiness beyond the validity and reliability discussed above, all the interviewees have given their permission to openly use their names, statements and thoughts as well as recording the interviews. To further ensure the ethical considerations, the interviewees were encouraged to review the summaries of the interviews. It is important that the findings the authors draw the analysis from, are as congruent with the reality as possible (Merriam and Associates, 2002). It is also crucial that the interviewees recognize themselves and their answers and that misinterpretations and misunderstandings are avoided as far as possible.
2.6 Reflections and Possible Reproaches

The process of investigating and writing this thesis have been extensive and a great effort in terms of time and thought. During such investigation it is not easy to stay unbiased and self-critical; hence the authors have pinpointed potential reproaches towards their own investigation.

The research conducted is a case study of Fagerhult Group. Therefore, as all our findings remain adapted to Fagerhult, we cannot claim to have a high level of external validity or generalization.

Human behavior and interaction is a complex area to investigate since it deals with the interviewed key persons’ understanding and experience of a certain phenomena and the authors interpretation of the given answers. Therefore there is always a risk of making an incorrect analysis based on distorted findings. Both the authors and the interviewees have English as a second, or even third, language, which also may distort the findings hence the possible risk of losing or misinterpreting nuances increases.

A final reproach discovered by the authors, are connected with the method chosen. The main method for gathering information was through semi-structured interviews.

Since the investigated phenomena occurred in 2007, there is a risk of the interviewees not remembering all details correctly. If another method such as observation would have been possible, then the outcome of the research may have been different.
3 Theoretical Framework

This section presents the theoretical framework relevant to the topic. The various theories are chosen in order to guide the reader and increase their pre understanding of the phenomena. The theoretical framework will later be compared and evaluated with the findings.

In order to fulfill the purpose, four separate theory sections are introduced. Recall the research purpose:

“analyze how Fagerhult implement and communicate their organizational culture and how their written core values represent the way the company do business.”

To better understand and to create a clear picture of this objective, the four main theory sections involve organizational culture, core values, implementation of core values and communication strategies.

First a definition of culture and more specifically organizational culture is relevant to picture Fagerhult’s internal culture. To understand what may influence and affect a multinational company’s internal business culture, national culture and business climate is discussed. Therefore an introduction of the Polish as well as the Swedish business climate is relevant.

The second section describes organizational culture in-depth and introduces the concept of core values and value systems. Core values represent the shared underlying assumptions in an organization. This segment is highly relevant to describe the way Fagerhult operates and how and if their written core values represent the true culture within the company.

The third section explores implementation strategies of core values and emphasis on how to apply culture and values in an organization.

The final section defines communication strategies and how an organization should communicate important messages such as the core values; both in an internal and inter-cultural context.

3.1 Culture

Culture is the learned basic assumptions shared by a group of people which help it cope with problems of external adaption and internal integration (Schein, 2004:17).

These shared values, attitudes and beliefs create common patterns for solving specific dilemmas, which become social norms and are adopted by the group (Trompenaars, 1997:6). This cohesion helps define and strengthen the cultural identity of the population, becoming a subconscious understanding of moral and ethical practices amongst its members (Hofstede, 1991:8).
The development of cultural values within an organization follows the same model. Most researchers concur that shared values are a vital part of defining an organization’s character and internal culture (Wiener, 1988:534).

Organizational culture is a comprehensive term used to describe a set of historically determined and socially constructed customs within the organization. These traditions are deeply rooted and often difficult to change (Hofstede, 1991: 179). Affected by both the leaders and employees, organizational culture reflects the cultural preferences of all those within the organization (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1997:157).

Culture within any group or organization of a society is affected by several elements. Schein (1999:15) argues that organizational culture is not only defined as “the way we do things around here”, and “the rites and rituals of our company”, but also that culture exists in different levels. The first level of organizational culture describes the artifacts. These represent what you can hear and see during interaction with the company. The second level describes the organizational core values and norms. These espoused values are visible and often communicated in written form. With the third level, it declares the organizational key beliefs related to the unseen, “given” assumptions of the members within that company.

The nature of the first level is that of things which can be seen and heard in an organization (Schein, 1999:15). These become clear during contact with the company and represent for example how the office landscape is designed and how the employees interact and communicate with each other. Knowing that organizational culture is affected by the people within the company, it also reflects the national culture as to where it operates. For a multinational business to understand the development of its organizational culture, they have to identify with the character of the business climate surrounding it.

### 3.1.1 Swedish Business Climate

With a population of just over 9 million inhabitants residing in one of Europe’s largest geographical countries, Sweden represents one of the most sparsely populated countries in the world (CIA World Fact book, 2010). Its people enjoy one of the highest standards of living, helped in part by the numerous welfare initiatives taken by the government (Rabe, 1994:68). Throughout its history of innovations and inventions, Sweden has long been an incubator of businesses.

Swedish managers prefer to employ an egalitarian approach when dealing with co-workers. The power structure itself is quite horizontal in the sense that distances between co-workers are small. A person’s title is not used as often as his or her name in the everyday workings of the business (Trixier, 1994:22-23).

This relates back to egalitarian behavior in the way that the title of a person does not make them more important than any member of the team.
There is less of a requirement for a manager to instruct the employee and more emphasis put on delegation of power in Swedish business society (Trixier, 1994:22). The manager is not concerned so much with the day-to-day activities of an employee as with the employee’s long-term results. They offer advice rather than instruction so as not to insult the employee, who if told what to do directly will feel embarrassed about this perceived lack of trust (World Business Media Ltd). Swedes have a high level of self-discipline which enables them to operate more freely in the workplace. This self-discipline is instilled from an early age (Löfgren, 2003:149). This forms a more informal work environment where unnecessary conflict is avoided. Innovative behavior is encouraged and new ideas and perspectives are welcomed (Hofstede, 1991:111). This creates certain openness in the workplace which facilitates a more efficient exchange of information between departments, allowing for everyone to make informed decisions (World Business Media Ltd).

Consensus-formed decision-making is common in Swedish business practice. Through this the Swedish managers need to improve their interpersonal communication skills in order to deliberate successfully and keep the decision-making process on a horizontal level (Trixier 1994:24). The fact that the hierarchic distance between employees and managers is low makes the discussions more open. Since many tactical decisions are consensus based, it will lead to a simplified implementation phase and the employees involved are more likely to support and agree with the information (World Business Media Ltd).

3.1.2 Polish Business Climate

Poland has a large domestic market of nearly 40 million inhabitants and a central geographical location between Western and Eastern Europe. The Poland market has lately become an opportune for many foreign businesses and investments due to the country’s relatively low production and labor costs. A new middle class has emerged, with preferences for high quality consumer goods, however many Poles have insufficient income to fulfill their aspirations (Kozminski & Yip, 2000: 16). The rate between the salaries of workers and salary of managers can be as high as sixty to one (Kozminski & Yip, 2000: 67).

The salary differences are related to Poland’s business culture where a manager is highly respected for their perceived knowledge and ability to make appropriate decisions.

Employees are dependent on a manager’s guidance and the roles within an organization are seen to be very clear. The imbalance and emotional gap between subordinates and superiors are expressed by a high power distance within a nation (Hofstede, 1991). As discussed by Kozminski (2008), Polish managers are now being faced with an identity transfer. Their role was very authoritarian during the communist period, but is now changing to adapt to the new, open Polish market.
Due to an employee’s dependence on a manager and their instructions, the Polish employee, is normally not associated with a high level of innovativeness. According to Hofstede (1991), the Polish employees prefer clear formal rules and regulations in order to feel confidence and to operate efficiently within their work environment.

To the foreigner, these instructions can possibly be perceived as excessive since they are given in a very direct manner. The communication method in Poland is relatively abrupt and this direct style reflects their business environment where precise and direct orders are the preeminent approach to communicate information (World Business Media Ltd). To understand the Polish business climate, it is important to recognize the value of the polish history which has formed the country. After the fall of communism in 1989, the country underwent a rapid transformation towards privatization of its businesses. Many new firms evolved and the work force quickly realized the need for new and modernized skills (Jeffrey Sachs, 1992). Research show that there is not a well-established Polish business climate that describes the norms of “how business is done” in the country. The Polish business climate is infused in the individual business structure and the local business environment (World Business Media Ltd).

The company structures present in Poland is of three different varieties. The local start-up company which represents the entrepreneurial spirit that may lack the well established processes. Further, the ex-state monopoly enterprise, that may still suffer from the old communism system with many bureaucracy levels and processes. Additionally, since many international companies find the Polish market attractive for growth opportunities, foreign capital subsidiaries will also mirror the business climate in Poland. These branch offices established in Poland will usually reflect the approach of business of the parent company (World Business Media Ltd).

### 3.2 Core Values

Values are an indispensable part of culture at all levels. They work as a perceptual framework that helps us separate right from wrong and good from bad. The set of values, or value system, will shape the behavior and preferences of the individual, organization, or society that holds them (England, 1978).

Schein defines values as basic assumptions; espoused beliefs, norms and rules of behavior that together define and describe the culture both to its members and to outsiders.

He places values on the second level of cultural visibility, that is, they are still open for discussion, and it is possible to have different opinions on them. Once the values have been approved and shared by the entire group they become underlying assumptions. These are taken for granted by the group that holds them and if someone would questions them they are seen as a stranger (Schein, 2004: 25).
In an organizational context the values can be thought of as the attitude that set the organization apart from the others; the attitude that makes it unique (Dean & Kennedy, 1982: 23).

Values are the foundation of an organization’s culture, its identity, and, if shared by all the organization’s members will serve as guide for all decision-making. This includes setting up overall goals, visions and strategies to everyday work tasks (Deal & Kennedy 1982: 21, Wiener, 1988: 535). The most profound shared values of an organization are referred to as the core values. These are the heart or spirit of the organization’s philosophy (Deal & Kennedy, 1982: 24). Even so, they are still only the tip of the iceberg; the observable component of a deep and complex value system.

An organizational value system is then defined as all the common values held by the members of an organization (Wiener, 1988: 535). It directs the goals, visions and strategies of the organization. The value system can be central which means that core values dealing with organization-related behavior are shared by the majority of the members in all units and levels (Wiener, 1988: 535). The value system can span from weak to strong (Wiener, 1988: 535-536). This is determined by the extent to which the members of the organization agree with the values and the extent to which they are shared. “A strong central value system may mitigate the divisive potential inherent in a multiple culture situation” (Wiener, 1988: 535).

Many researchers speak about the importance of the values to be shared by the entire organization (Deal & Kennedy 1982: 21, Wiener, 1988: 534). The values are the common guidelines and should be applicable on all tasks and situations that arise within the organization (Deal & Kennedy, 1982: 21). Therefore the fundamental challenge for managers is to make everyone within an organization share them and act accordingly (Deal & Kennedy, 1982: 24). If the employees are familiar with the values and can identify with them, they will be more motivated (Deal & Kennedy, 1982: 22). Shared values will lead to a higher degree of organizational efficiency and success (Deal & Kennedy, 1982: 10, 21-22). Values are also helpful in explaining and dealing with differences in behavior in an international setting. By having a deeper understanding on how different values may lead to differences in a person’s actions, this will increase the understanding of differences between cultures (Wiener 1988: 535).

### 3.2.1 Values changing

Values are not static and are able to change due to external as well as internal factors (Wiener, 1988: 540). External factors are for example the exposure to new cultures (both national and organizational) in forms of joint venture, mergers and acquisitions or a company’s entry into a new market. Internal factors take form by new employees or a new manager that may challenge the taken-for-granted assumptions of an organization (Schein, 2004: 297-299, 302). The changes of values can be planned by management as well as emerge from changes in other areas such as a drop in sales (Wiener, 1988, Schein, 2004: 293, 302).
Different types and levels of values cope with changes in different ways. If the values are shared and deeply rooted within the organization they are less likely to change without harming the essence of the organizational culture (England, 1978, Wiener, 1988: 535).

Wiener (1988: 536-538) argues that one way of assessing the stability of values is to categorize them by the content or origin. The content of a value is categorized into Functionalistic or Elitist values, and the origin into Organizational Tradition or Charismatic Leadership (See Figure 3.2.1). Functionalistic values are often constructive and work as a behavioral guidance for the members (Wiener, 1988: 538). Elitist values put emphasize on the status, superiority and exclusivity of the organization. They tend to create feelings such as pride or the feeling of being special, in comparison to other organizations. All value systems contain both types of values but normally tend to lean towards one of the them. If the values are derived from Organizational Tradition they have been passed on from generation to generation within the organization and are not dependent upon a certain leader. When the values origin from a Charismatic leader they tend to have a shorter lifespan since they are so connected to a certain person and are not anchored into the foundation, core or soul of the organization itself, and therefore becoming more vulnerable for changes.

![Source and Anchoring of Values](image.png)

Organizations with Functional-Traditional values are already time-proofed and are assumed to have a greater stability and be better to adjust to changes while staying true to the organizational core culture (Wiener, 1988: 537, 539-540).

However, adapting to new values is always a complicated and lengthy learning process (Wiener, 1988: 541). Not only the values themselves but the stage of evolution and the type of organization also matters when discussing about value change.
In larger, well-established organizations it may become more difficult to pinpoint the culture; basic assumptions or values are now shared which makes them more difficult to detect and question. If the organization is performing well there will be little incentive for actively questioning or changing the core values (Schein, 2004: 301-302). However, Schein (2004: 301) argues that the key to success is to have deep insight and understanding of one’s own culture and values, especially in times of organizational changes such as geographical expansion. When entering a new country it is good to know how one’s own culture and values stand in comparison to the new cultural context, in order to assess what parts that are compatible, and which ones that may clash. It will also help when formulating a strategy; whether it is to try to keep the organizational culture intact or to integrate some parts from the new culture (Schein, 2004: 301, Schein 1999:173-184).

As stated initially, drivers of value change can also come from within the organization. In large and medium-sized geographically spread out organizations, subcultures will develop (Schein 2004, 301-302). This makes it difficult to maintain an overall and integrated organizational culture. Schein (2004: 309) questions if it is worth to put in the effort, time and money needed to maintain an unified culture, or if this only will be counter-productive. He further discusses, that it may be necessary that evolved changes occur in culture, to make the different divisions, offices and countries within the organization perform at its best (Schein, 2004: 309). Then again, if different subcultures and values exist side by side, there may not be an advantage gained from being one organization. Wiener (1988: 535, 540-541) argues that a strong central value system is key to success. This is gained through maintaining the value system as unified and integrated as possible.

### 3.3 Implementing Core Values and Organizational Culture

A common thought among several researchers is the importance to connect the written value statements to the authentic, real life culture. The true culture of an organization is expressed in myths, shared success stories, symbols and the use of certain phrases, language or expressions (Wiener, 1988: 536). The communicated values in core value statements, code of conduct and mission statements must reflect the actual culture and underlying shared assumptions that exist within the organization (Blanchard & O’Connor, 1997). In order to create such ‘true’ value statements the organization must have deep insight about its own culture (Schein, 2004).

The next step is to frame the communicated values in a way that makes them feasible for decision-making at all levels (Blanchard & O’Connor, 1997: 25-27). The aim is that they can serve as a guide for both overall goal and strategy planning as well as for everyday work tasks. Management By Values (MBV) is a practical management approach on how to work with core values as guidance for all organizational activities (Blanchard & O’Connor, 1997).
MBV is described as a three phase process; first clarify your values, second communicate your values continuously, preferably on a daily basis, and third coordinate the daily practices with the values (Blanchard & O’Connor, 1997: 39). The third phase is an ongoing task which can be organized on an individual, team or organizational level. According to Blanchard and O’Connor (1997) the outcome of the MBV approach is a coherent organization that knows its priorities and therefore is more efficient.

Another way of retaining the values in order to make the organization successful and coherent is by Wiener’s three functions (Wiener, 1988: 541). According to Wiener (1988: 541) the first to consider is to make sure that all new employees who are hired already share, or at least, are inclined to adapt the core values of the organization. An individual’s underlying assumptions and values are difficult to change (Wiener, 1988, England, 1978, Schein, 2004). If the personal beliefs are in line with the organization, the organizational culture will more easily be internalized by the individual. The second step is to transmit the organizational core values to the new employees, to make them internalize them. This is referred to as organizational socialization (Wiener, 1988: 543). Functional values represent practical behavioral guidelines and their nature is often more in line with common societal values which make them easier to transmit and adapt (Wiener, 1988: 543). If the values are elitist, origins from charismatic leadership or if the new employees possess very dissimilar values than the organization, the socialization process must be more intense.

Organizational socialization also applies for the third step, maintenance and incremental renewal in already existing value systems (Wiener, 1988: 541). According to Trigaux, (2006) the maintenance, or organizational socialization, is best done by communicating the values at all time and in all types of situations. Deal and Kennedy (1982: 169) also state that it is important to communicate the values on an everyday basis and in day-to-day actions.

When implementing values into another cultural context, the key to success is insight into the own culture and its underlying values (Schein, 1999: 175). Common among the value implementation models are the focus on communication and to create opportunity for cross-cultural dialogue. Schein suggests a cultural self-assessment before entering a new country or culture (Schein, 1999: 179). It is especially important to know which values or underlying assumptions that is particularly significant to the own organization, and that are not negotiable. Deal and Kennedy (1982: 175) propose transitional training when implementing values into a new cultural context. People need time to understand and internalize new values (Deal & Kennedy, 1982: 175, Wiener, 1988: 541). By giving them the time needed and providing training in the form of an exchange between the different cultures, the implementation of values are more likely to become successful (Deal & Kennedy, 1982: 175-176, Schein, 1999: 179-180).
Schein (1999: 179-180) proposes a reflective dialogue with representatives from both cultural groups with the intention to look at the differences and similarities of each group’s shared values and assumptions. The aim is mutual understanding.

3.4 Communication

Communication is, in its most basic definition, an exchange of information between two or more entities (Trompenaars & Hampden Turner, 1997: 74). The interaction can be seen as an ongoing and dynamic process where abstract symbols are used to create and interpret meanings (Dimbleby & Burton, 1995:8, 27). Fiske (1990:2) elaborates that all communication is a social interaction in which people relate and behave towards each other.

The interpretation of symbols differs from person to person. Every individual has their own frame of reference which creates a filter for how the message is perceived. This filter determines a foundation of how to organize and relate the symbols and is dependent on, for example, culture, gender, and age differences (Fiske, 1990:164). With a similar frame of reference it becomes easier to understand the meaning of the message (Fiske, 1990:3).

Everything that distorts the understanding and meaning of the message between sender and receiver, such as the culture, gender and age differences mentioned above, are referred to as communicational noise (Fiske, 1990: 8).

Organizational communication is the communication and interaction within an organization (Dimbleby & Burton, 1995: 135). According to Dimbleby and Burton (1995: 147), organizations with well-informed members experience less distrust or disagreements between ‘us’ and ‘them’. By keeping the staff constantly informed of current matter the organization generates a more engaged, productive and loyal work force. Most organizations make great efforts in keeping their staff informed since it strengthens the relationships within the organization (Dimbleby & Burton, 1995: 147).

Clampitt (2005: 61) argues that storytelling is an effective way of communicating culture. Stories provide a practical example on what to do or how to act in complex situations. Sharing stories unify the employees and make them feel part of a common group.

An organization can communicate a message through many different channels. Communicating effectively is to make all people involved identify with the message and recognize its meaning. Managers need to choose communication strategies where the message cannot be misunderstood and misinterpreted by the employee (Clampitt, 2005:3).
The channel chosen by the manager must be individually matched to the receiver. The manager needs to find a fit between the purpose of message, channel choice and the attitude of the receiver. The alternatives of channels are, for example, face-to-face, email, company web page, company intranet, and memos and letters (Clampitt, 2005:105).

Face-to-face communication provides instant interaction between the parties and gives more personal indication of vocal tone, body language, and eye contact. The manager immediately becomes aware of the employees reaction, if they agree, disagree, are angry or satisfied (Clampitt, 2005:107). A message suitable for face-to-face communication is those that share emotional and complex information (Clampitt, 2005:120). Training, teaching, managing conflict and analyzing difficult problems are best handled through face-to-face communication (Clampitt, 2005:107). One of the major advantages with face-to-face communication is that it shares knowledge and not just provides information to the receiver (Clampitt, 2005:120).

E-mails and web pages are, on the other hand, effective tools to provide information but they are less suited for sharing knowledge. Knowledge is more complex than information and therefore requires a richer channel (Clampitt, 2005:107). Emails should be used to update the employees on routine matters and when the message is brief. The company web page is also most suitable when sharing routine information (Clampitt, 2005:120).

A company’s intranet is another well suited channel for sharing knowledge. The intranet page often captures knowledge through discussion groups and by publishing internal documents. It enhances the internal communication between employees from different department and locations within the company (Hills, 1997:53).

Memos, letters, brochures and other information that is written communication creates a sense of formality and credibility. In general, managers use written documents to illustrate authority and accountability (Clampitt, 2005:114). By using documents as a communication channel it allows the manager to reach a larger number of receivers and the message presents legible information (Clampitt, 2005:120).

For a message to be successfully implemented, the manager needs to form a communication strategy which creates a balance between the purpose of the message and the receiver. Well formed communication strategies involve repetition of the message and redundancy. Repeating the message will increase the likelihood that the employee understand the message, remember it and act according to its meaning. Repetition indicates that the message is serious and should be taken into consideration by the employee.

Repetition also reduces the possibility of errors in the message and decreases the risk of unnecessary information being communicated. A good communication strategy also identifies and utilizes opinion leaders. Such leaders are often respected by their expertise and experience within the company.
For incentives to be implemented, management must have support from opinion leaders who serve as an important role in the employee’s social structure (Clampitt, 2005:272).

### 3.4.1 Intercultural communication

“Culture is communication and communication is culture”

(Hall, 1959: 169).

Intercultural communication is the communication that takes place between people from different cultures (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1997: 74). This added dimension presents new challenges for those involved. Many have researched and contributed to intercultural communication, enriching the field with different perspectives (Mattock 2003, Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner 1997, Hofstede 1991). One thing all can agree upon however is the fact that there is no easy solution to solving intercultural communicational problems. The main theme within intercultural communication is the understanding of cultural differences. This includes an open attitude towards cultural diversity, willingness to accept cultural differences, and having knowledge and understanding of both the own culture as well as the culture of the counterpart (Schein, 2004: 301, Schein, 1999: 175-180, Shuter in Asante & Gudykunst 1989: 401).

On a more practical level, one of the most obvious issues is the language barrier. Crystal (2003:13) argues there are essentially two options available to a business in this situation; they could employ translators to act as intermediaries or they could learn the foreign language themselves. What has actually happened, for the most part, is an adoption of English as a common business language (Crystal, 2003: 13). However, with the solution of one problem comes another. Words and phrases in one language may take on another meaning in another, or sometimes have no direct translation at all. Das (2008: 45) states that translation is not simply converting one word to its lexical equivalent in another; words are “charged with memory, associations and literary echoes” and therefore their meanings are often difficult or impossible to convert to another language completely. This difficulty can develop into misunderstandings through misinterpretation by one or both parties involved.

The frequency of contact is another important issue to consider. Mattock (2003: 52) points out that because of the geographical distance between co-workers and management this can result in formal meetings which take place less frequently. This can contribute to a loss of direction if the communication is not clear. His suggestion for clearer communication is devoting at least 51% of the time at these meetings to local problems, following up to make sure the discussion was understood and holding formal meetings at least four times a year.
Intercultural communication is generally associated with misunderstandings and misconceptions (Stephan & Stephan in Gudykunst & Mody, 2002: 127). Clashes in intercultural communication occur more frequently if the two cultures are very dissimilar. However, even small dissimilarities will affect the communication, but maybe not to the extent where it is impossible to overcome.

Having an understanding of the cultural differences is one of the keys for successful intercultural communication. People judge other people’s behavior through their own framework of values and culture (Stephan & Stephan in Gudykunst & Mody, 2002: 127). This may result in cultural stereotyping and preconceived notions of the people to justify a self imposed exclusion from the culture.

Wiseman concludes that there are three components of successful intercultural communication: Knowledge on how to interact with different culture, motivation in forms of having a positive mindset towards the other culture, and skills in how to behave in the correct way in terms of the other culture (Wiseman in Gudykunst, 2003: 191-208).

Mattock (2003: 56-57) argues that it is the role of the HR manager to ensure that the previous issues are managed successfully to make communications between the headquarters and the local branch flow smoothly.

3.5 Summary

Culture is the glue that holds a group of people together. It is defined as the shared values, attitudes and beliefs which create common patterns of solving specific dilemmas. These shared assumptions become social norms and are adopted by the group. Therefore, culture is what distinguishes one group of people from another, and can furthermore distinguish the members of one organization from another. The organizational culture contributes to key characteristics of the company, identifies its rites and rituals as well as how the company operates.

Culture within a multinational organization is affected not only by the character of its members but also by the business climates surrounding it. During an internationalization process the company needs to understand, increase their knowledge and adjust to the new business climate they are faced with.

The foundation of organizational culture is usually expressed through the company’s written down core values. The key element of written down core values is that they have to reflect the true culture that exists within the company. The core values represent the underlying assumptions and reflect the attitude that makes the company unique. They are often stated in internal and external business documents in order to inform stakeholder about the norms and morals that represent the company.
These values symbolize the most profound assumptions and are reflected in the company vision, mission and goal statement. The core values further direct decision making and should guide the everyday work tasks within the organization.

For core values to be successful in a multinational company, they will have to be shared by all members across all borders. It is important for a company to identify its core values and to know where it stands in comparison to the new cultural context.

To implement core values effectively to its members, the company needs to clarify the values, continuously repeat the values on a daily basis, and coordinate the daily activities with the values. Communication in an organization can be done in many ways for example through face-to-face, emails, company web page, company intranet, and memos and letters. The most suitable channel choice when communicating complex and important messages such as core values is face-to-face. This approach emphasize on sharing knowledge instead of just providing information to the receiver.

By continuously repeating the core values and coordinating them to the daily activities, the organization generates a more engaged, productive and loyal workforce. Repetition also increases the likelihood that the employees understand the message, remember it and act according to its meaning.

Intercultural communication is often faced with misunderstanding and misinterpretations. A multinational company needs to address cultural differences that may occur between global branches. It is necessary to understand that people in different cultures communicate and interact with each other differently. One obvious issue in intercultural communication is the language barriers. For most international companies, English has become the common business language.

Successful intercultural communication is demonstrated through the knowledge on how to interact with different cultures, motivation in forms of having a positive mindset towards the other culture and skills in how to behave in the correct way in terms of the other culture.
4 Empirical Findings

In this chapter the primary data which has been collected is presented. Starting with a review on Fagerhult’s three written core values and other company specific documents which all provide guidelines for how to act as a Fagerhult employee. Further, the four qualitative semi-structured interviews conducted are presented. This section represent each of the interviewees individual perspective. The authors seek to show the interviews own thoughts and viewpoints and therefore each interview is grouped under each individual’s name and position they hold at Fagerhult.

The result from the interviews is also grouped under several subheadings. These were the main themes that stood out and were mostly touched upon during the interviews. The authors have used these headings both in Empirical Findings and in the Analysis chapters. This structure was chosen since it is relatively cohesive with the structure of the Theoretical Framework, and is logical for the reader to follow. At the end of the chapter a summary of the interviews is presented. In the next chapter the findings from the interviews will be compared against the theoretical framework.

4.1 The three stated core values

Fagerhult Group’s three stated core values are Respect, Responsibility and Enterprise. These words guide the company’s visions and are something they want all employees worldwide to embrace (Fagerhult Annual Report 2007: 30).

The first core value is Respect. Fagerhult expects loyalty from their employees at all times. The individuals are expected to show respect towards the company, other employees and the business’s internal and external surroundings. By respecting the business practices it becomes easier to focus on common goals and to achieve successful teamwork (Fagerhult Belysning, 2010).

Responsibility, the second core value, describes the company’s central concern of offering a high quality product. Fagerhult emphasize the employee’s individual responsibility to produce and deliver a safe and highly qualitative product that meets the customer needs. Responsibility focuses on excellent workmanship and the employee’s personal role in meeting customer requirements (Fagerhult, 2008: 14).

Enterprise, the third core value, describes the company’s drive to move forward. Fagerhult believes in a continuous internal and external development of the company (Fagerhult, 2006: 36). The internal development at Fagerhult is demonstrated through its organizational culture of innovation and openness to new knowledge. The company’s knowledge based approach places a large focus on employee training where the members are taught to be proactive and make individual decisions aligned with the company’s goal and vision (Fagerhult Annual Report, 2006: 31).
Since 2004, the company has rapidly advanced into new markets such as the UK, Australia, China, Poland and Austria displaying strong external development. By embracing a diverse organization, Fagerhult has created synergy and coordination in business activities between all international operations. This has lead to greater efficiency in purchase and production which enables the company to meet customer demand and increase the customer satisfaction level by offering a high quality product at competitive prices (Fagerhult, 2008:14).

These three key words are printed in Fagerhult’s annual reports, the company webpage and in their internal HR policy document. The HR policy is handed to new employees during initial meeting with the company. Other information that is presented to the employee is the Fagerhult Guiding Principles.

The Fagerhult Guiding Principles serves as a base to form both the company’s and their employees’ attitudes towards the environment, quality of the products, delivery time and finance (Fagerhult, 2007:22). The principles work as a tool to achieve growing operation and profitability. The primary value described in the guiding principles is the importance in meeting customer demand and Fagerhult put ‘customer first’ as one of their main priorities (Fagerhult, 2007:22). This concept provides a benchmark where customer focus is present by assuring quality of the products, meeting delivery times, having accurate pricing methods and respects towards the environment.

In, 2009, with the entry of a new CEO Johan Hjertonsson, an extensive work of revising the company’s core values began (D. Johansson, personal communication, 2010-04-19). Johan Hjertonsson’s first months at Fagerhult were spent visiting departments and offices worldwide. After getting to know the company and its employees he brought his impressions back to the headquarters. Johan Hjertonsson felt the current core values; respect, responsibility and enterprise did not fully capture the essence of the company and started the process of revising them. Johan Hjertonsson, with support from several Managing Directors, developed a new set core values which are planned to be implemented during 2010 (D. Johansson, personal communication, 2010-04-19). During the interview with Daniel Johansson these new core values and how they are going to be implemented were talked about. Since Daniel uses the new values and the way they are being implemented to make comparisons with the old ones, the authors have decided to keep it in the empirical findings, referring to it as the new core values. The authors felt the need to include this part of the interview since the company here demonstrates deterrent examples on lessons learned from past situations. However, due to the purpose and specific focus in time of this thesis the authors will not further elaborate upon the new core values.
4.2 Daniel Johansson, HR Manager, Fagerhult Group

Daniel has been with the company for three and a half years and works with HR related questions at Fagerhult. His main regions of responsibility are Sweden and Europe, but with the growing internationalization of Fagerhult he is also involved with HR throughout the entire Fagerhult Group. Daniel has a university degree in financial economy and marketing and part of his studies were carried out in the U.S. He has previous working experience within sales and marketing, as well as recruitment and organizational development.

4.2.1 Fagerhult Culture

The Fagerhult organizational culture, according to Daniel, is structured around a few shared common values. On top of these, every country, every department and every office builds its own culture.

The first trait that comes to his mind when asked about the company’s culture was expressed with his own words, that they had fun at work. Daniel believes that having fun at work influence the way they do business.

The Fagerhult way of doing business is flexible and, while operating within the range of law, adjustable to the local situation;

“Business is always local, that’s the Fagerhult way. And we try to have high ethical standards and say no to various things that feel wrong.”

Fagerhult has an entrepreneurial way of doing business; it is up to the Managing Director and his/her subordinates to structure everyday work. This empowering of co-workers is encouraged by the Fagerhult Group;

“We try to decentralize sales decisions as far as possible and I think that attracts people who do want to have and take responsibility for their own day to day business.”

Every country or office gets marketing materials and quotas from headquarters, but how to use them is decided by each individual office. Fagerhult does not want to be too detailed in the directions that apply to day-to-day decisions. This, according to HR manager Daniel, is because that may not attract the independent and self-going people that the company wants to employ as co-workers.

Daniel believes the heritage of Nordic culture is transparent in Fagerhult’s organizational culture. He perceives the Fagerhult co-workers as very polite and says that this could come from the Nordic ethics. He hopes that politeness comes across to everyone who comes in contact with Fagerhult; customers, students and other stakeholders. Daniel believes that treat people politely today will pay off if not directly but in the upcoming years, he sees it as an investment for the future.
A good example of the culture and the way to behave as a Fagerhult co-worker is the company founder Bertil Svensson. Bertil and his way of doing business, was unique in many ways and still has, made a big impression on the group. Daniel describes Bertil Svensson as a self-taught entrepreneur. Bertil started out with nothing but his bare hands in the 1940s and by using unconventional methods he skipped the wholesalers and did business directly with the customers. By building his own delivery network, he created a successful company. He was also warm and friendly. Bertil revolutionized the business and took a different path than his competitors. Crucial for Bertil was the customer focus, which is why he cut out the wholesalers. It is important to note that Fagerhult still work in this way;

“The effect is still today, to go past the roads that our competitors have gone many, many years. Think different, think customer value.”

Daniel compares Bertil’s leadership style with Ingvar Kamprad [the founder of IKEA]. He says that all people who met Bertil still remembers him as kind and warm, yet he was a strong leader who was not afraid to make tough decisions when needed.

The communication and interaction style at Fagerhult headquarters is open and everyone is allowed to have their own opinion; it is ok to take a different stand. However, Daniel points out that as in every organization, there are a few people who have difficulties to interact with each other. In Fagerhult it is mainly an issue of having different agendas. For instance the company faces internal competition on several projects during a year which can lead to tough discussions. However, Daniel reasons that some amount of internal competition is always good as long as it is communicated respectfully. Overall, the company tries to keep decision-making as decentralized as possible.

Another aspect of the Fagerhult culture is shown in the way offices are designed. The offices in the factory facilities and in the sales offices are planned as open landscapes and the employees and managers try to employ an open-door policy.

### 4.2.2 Core values and their meaning

According to Daniel, the three core values were first stated and written down somewhere around 2002. Due to the management trend at the time, the managerial team held discussions and tried to sum up what Fagerhult represent. They came up with the three values; Respect, Responsibility and Enterprise. These three values and Fagerhult as a company were, at the time, highly rooted in the Nordic culture. They also expressed [the company founder] Bertil’s way of doing business. However, Daniel says that it could likely have been ten additional words that would describe Bertil’s and Fagerhult’s way of doing business. Bertil had, for example, a very strong emphasis on creating customer value. Why it became just these three words; respect, responsibility and enterprise, Daniel does not know. However, he believes it was a good idea to write them down in a clear value statement. The core values have not been revised in the last six to ten years.
The aim is to use the three core values as guidance in every day work but that is sometimes easier said than done;

“I would want to say I always think of them [the core values] and I always have them in my back pocket when I work with Fagerhult, but it’s not how I work, it’s how I learn.”

Daniel says he tries to reflect and if needed, work backwards to see how the values can guide him in a specific situation. Daniel hopes that the two first core values, Respect and Responsibility, are values which all co-workers at Fagerhult possess by nature. Respect, according to Daniel, means to do the right things every time in every situation, stick to promises and be aware of that if you treat people with respect they will respect you too. In a more practical sense, it means not to be late for a meeting, and to stick to your word. For example, if he has promised to call on Friday he will make that call on Friday. Daniel says that it might sound simple, but that it is easy to forget to be respectful and avoid difficult calls and discussions. In his role as HR manager Daniel sometimes has to deal with difficult conversations i.e. when closing down production facilities and letting people go.

Then he finds it convenient to remind himself of the core values and what they actually stand for. Daniel says that the core values for him work as a sort of support in hard times.

The words respect and responsibility mean almost the same to Daniel, at least in a more practical sense. Daniel describes the practical outcome of responsibility to be the drive to deliver what is promised, but also to take responsibility for the entire business. This means responsibility, not only for his own part, but a responsibility to help colleagues as well. Responsibility is also about knowing your own limits; to say no to various activities at an early stage, knowing that there is not enough time or that you do not have the knowledge required.

Daniel says that enterprise stands for entrepreneurship. He defines it as doing things differently or to think in new ways or to try new paths. In order to keep up with competition, what is done today has to be done faster and smarter tomorrow;

“I always think we are here to have fun, to spend time with colleagues, to meet people, but our main objective is to create customer value at every point in time. The day we sit down and relax that’s the day when our competitors will just drive past us in the left lane.”

Daniel says that in order to prevent that, a fighting and entrepreneurial spirit is needed.

According to Daniel, in harder times Fagerhult goes back to and seeks guidance from the core values. Due to the economic recession, competitors are getting closer and the margins are becoming smaller. Daniel says that the three core values are therefore used more than ever.
In order to make everyone keep their job it is crucial to go that extra mile, to visit that extra customer so that the salesmen and factory-workers can keep their jobs.

Other situations where Fagerhult applies the core values is by asking themselves in what way the company wants to conduct business and with whom. By always striving to go back to respect, responsibility and enterprise the company avoids dubious situations, bribes and corruption.

During the interview with Daniel, the company’s plan of introducing new core values during 2010 was discussed. Daniel briefly gives information about this procedure. In 2009, along with the new CEO Johan Hjertonsson, a new set of core values were identified. Johan Hjertonsson’s main mission during his first six months was to create a new strategy and vision. His first month, Johan Hjertonsson spent visiting all the sales department and factories. His impression was that the three present core values, respect, responsibility and enterprise were not enough to cover what Fagerhult and its employees are about. Instead Johan Hjertonsson saw a strong customer focus, passion for technological innovation and entrepreneurial spirit. He brought up discussions about the issue with group management and the highest executives, asking for everyone’s opinion on the matter. From these discussions a new set of core values emerged.

The idea is to let the new core values be more inspirational and easier to use as an everyday guidance. Daniel hopes that the new core value statement will inspire the employees to do something extra. With these new values Fagerhult wants to make it clearer to all co-workers what is expected of them, and what is the reward if you reach your target. Daniel says that if someone knows what is expected, and know what to do and how to reach the goal, the result will be better.

The implementation process of these new core values has only begun. They were introduced at a conference where eight Managing Directors within Fagerhult Group participated. The aim of the conference was that the attendees would bring back the information to their countries and departments and talk it through with their co-workers. However, Daniel is aware that it is a long process and further discuss the case of Poland; “We want [the values] to be part of the day to day business, but that’s not going to happen by showing a Pole a power point presentation that lasts four minutes. That must be supported in different ways.”

If any of the new core values Daniel hopes will be well received, it would be customer focus. The second focus according to Daniel should be on entrepreneurship and that innovation will be adopted not only by the engineers but the salesmen too. Not only new products but new business, new customers and new areas for existing products is present ideas within the company. Overall, Daniel hopes that the new core values will better serve as everyday guidelines for management and co-workers than the old ones.
The idea is to move the values respect and responsibility from the old set of the core values, into the code of conduct. Daniel hopes that the meaning of the words will become clearer by doing this.

The old value enterprise is still included in the new line-up of core values. The difference between the new and old values is more a question of focus:

“The biggest difference is that Johan [Hjerténsson] talks about this [the core values] on a day to day agenda with his managing directors, because you can make decisions based on the core values, they can be used as guidelines when it’s unclear whether I should do business with a customer or not.”

4.2.3 Implementation and Communication of Core Values

The official language of Fagerhult Group is English and the company tries to hire people who can speak and understand the language. However with the internationalization there is sometimes a need to translate documents into the local language or to use translators.

Sometimes one word cannot be translated directly; it lacks meaning, or has a different function in the other language. Words can also be interpreted differently in different cultures.

Fagerhult operates in different countries and different cultures but do not have a clear policy to turn to if such cases would appear when communicating core values to their global offices. However, when such problem appears the company tries to solve it through communication, professional translators or by applying situational based training, all in an attempt to describe the intentional meaning of the word in a more practical way. Daniel says that these clashes do not appear very often within Europe since it is more similar to the Swedish culture, but have appeared in China at their Chinese office. Daniel further discusses the case with Fagerhult Poland where he believes it may only have been minor clashes;

“So no there were no clashes what I heard about, but you must ask our Polish friends about that and they might say I’ve never seen these [core values].”

When implementing and communicating the old written core value statements; respect, responsibility and enterprise, there was no official strategy or plan on how to do it.

Daniel says that by then, the core values were put up on a board and that was about it. However, Daniel says that with the new core values things will be done differently. The company will use all tools available which would for example be the internet, and power point presentations. Daniel also believes that this time the core values will be worked through and more time and effort will be spent to make a tool for problem solving on a day to day-level.
During the introduction of new employees, a meeting with HR department is included. In this meeting the core values and code of conduct and HR policy are presented along with more administrative information. When asked if the core values respect, responsibility and enterprise have been repeated or reintroduced to the employees after the initial HR introduction, Daniel answers;

"Nope, yeah I know, but to be honest at this point in time no."

If the core values are reintroduced it is only due to initiative from a local manager and not by the request of headquarters. Daniel says they have had a poor focus on the core values in the past but with the new CEO priorities have changed. The new core values will the next couple of years be part of the company´s highest priority, to make sure that they are understood and used.

The Fagerhult Group also recently implemented a revised code of conduct, and that gave ideas on how to implement the new set of core values. The HR department had meetings with several department managers and these managers then sat down and discussed it with their co-workers. Daniel thinks it was a successful way of implementing the code of conduct and that it reached a broader audience in the organization. He says that if he had the time he would want to go visit all the departments and offices to introduce them face-to-face, but due to time and logistical constraints that would not possible. However he is aware that the key to make the message stick is to continuously repeat it through all available channels.

Daniel says the communication and implementation are two of the most difficult things to do. People are busy with their everyday tasks and this could draw away their attention from HR initiatives. The implementation is made even more difficult by the fact that there are only two HR representatives working with this at the Fagerhult Group level;

"But we try, we learned from some mistakes we´ve done and we continue to work with and improve [the implementation of] the core values."

4.2.4 International Perspective

Daniel says that the Fagerhult Group core values are shaped by Nordic culture, but Fagerhult has no conscious intention to impose Nordic or Swedish national culture to their international departments. However, by putting Swedish managers in key positions, some parts of Swedish culture may rub off. Nevertheless, the international co-workers and managers perceive them as being very Nordic.

"But for example during international introductions, people come from all over Europe and the view of the core values is, from people from Europe, that they are very Nordic."

Daniel says, many people cannot see a clear difference between the words respect and responsibility and use them interchangeably.
In the attempts to communicate the organization’s core values, Fagerhult uses ‘culture-carriers’ from Sweden.

“Every time we interact we do affect people. I think we do want to bring the core values but in order to do that, it might be that we put a Swedish manager or co-worker in the office. Such was the case in Poland. Johan [Wahlström] has been working here for many years. He’s a ‘Fagerhulter’ as we say here. It’s 20 percent water and 80 percent Fagerhult in his body. So by doing that, he’s a carrier of our culture.”

This has proven to be a good strategy. Johan did affect the culture in Poland in a positive way and Daniel says it was difficult for the Polish office when he transferred to Austria. Daniel thinks it will be difficult for Austria too, when Johan moves on, since he has such a solid knowledge about the company and always know what to do when something unexpected happens.

4.3 Johan Wahlström Business Development Manager Poland

During his time of employment at Fagerhult Sweden, beginning in 1988, Johan has been involved in two internationalization processes within the company. His current position at Fagerhult is Sales Support Manager, working in Austria. During the entry into Poland, Johan held the position as Business Development Manager. He was in charge of communicating and implementing Fagerhult’s way of doing business into the Polish office.

Because of Johan’s extensive work experience at Fagerhult, he was sent to Poland to demonstrate the company’s mode of operation and to provide solid knowledge about the company’s culture. His main responsibilities of implementing the company’s values were also supplemented with his task of introducing a new business system at Fagerhult Poland, where top management saw a great starting point for this endeavor.

4.3.1 Fagerhult Culture

When asked about the internal culture, Johan says

“The culture is one of our biggest advantages.”

He points out the company history as the main contributor to the business traditions. Many of the employees have been working at Fagerhult for many years. This has created a great knowledge base of product supply and has built a common understanding about how to conduct business within the company. A change in the company culture was witnessed in 2004, when a new CEO took office, succeeding the former CEO and founder of Fagerhult Group, Bertil Svensson.

The new CEO Per Borgvall, had according to Johan different ideas and changed the company from being a Swedish influenced business to a more international and entrepreneurial driven company.
The interaction and communication between co-workers and management, is according to Johan, very good. Nevertheless, every company has their difficulties and Fagerhult is no exception. There is not always good cooperation between the different departments and Johan addresses problem areas where for instance the marketing and operation department have clashes due to different agendas.

Johan continues discussing the company culture and how it gets introduced to new employees. He states that during the introduction program, new members are informed about the history and culture of Fagerhult.

Stories are told to participants, for example, about how the founder Bertil Svensson started the business by making a lamp to his mother.

“So we inform them of how we started, how the founder started to do a lamp for his mother for instance. Such stories, we use all the time to implement to the new employees.”

Johan perceives this as being a valuable source to introduce employees to both Fagerhult’s culture as well as Swedish culture, because Fagerhult still want to be perceived as a Swedish company with Swedish standards.

4.3.1.1 Cultural differences in Polish and Swedish offices

Johan’s experience from working in both Fagerhult Sweden and Fagerhult Poland is discussed further and he is asked to explain the differences and similarities in the company and country culture at each of the two offices. He states that in Poland they are stricter and much more hierarchical than in Sweden. For example, the dress code in Poland is suit and a tie, while denim is acceptable in Sweden. The office landscape has a similar design as in Sweden. With only three people operating in Poland it made no sense working in closed offices and he expresses that the communication and relationship between colleagues were exceptional. That being said, Johan explains that the Managing Director in Poland was not as participative and was mostly focusing on his own tasks and responsibilities.

One thing that Johan stressed was the importance of understanding another culture. He says in order to succeed in Poland you need to have an understanding of their history as a communist country and understand their way of dealing with certain things. He says that Poles are very proud and nationalistic people.

4.3.2 Core Values and their Meaning

When Johan was asked to state the core values at Fagerhult he did not use the three key words: respect, responsibility and enterprise since they were not familiar to him. He was however able to describe some of them in another ways. Johan describes respect and responsibility interchangeably as the behavior of employees. It is the aspiration to always show respect towards members within the company as well as during customer interaction.
Johan was asked if he would like to have known the three key words to have had something to focus and lean on when he was communicating and implementing Fagerhult core values to the Polish employees. To this question he said it would have been a good idea and that it would probably have led to more positive than negative when he implemented the way Fagerhult do business.

4.3.3 Implementation and Communication of Core Values

Johan states that the way he communicated the core values was through the daily work routines. He did not use any documents or meetings as a medium for communicating the core values.

“I wouldn’t say that we only use three key words. Respect and responsibility obviously, like we try to teach the employees how to behave when they deal with us and when they go abroad with customers, or when they visit Sweden with customers. Such things we try to implement to new employees definitely. But we do it with not only those separate key words, we do it in a more /.../ deeper way. Because this is really something that is of a big importance for us, definitely.”

English is the corporate language within Fagerhult and one criteria when the Polish employees where hired was that they knew English. All instructions were taught in English. Though, Johan still talks about some language barriers when dealing with supplier, customer and especially people that are above 35 years. Further, questions are raised if Johan felt the need for him learning Polish when working there. He said it was not necessary but would have been an advantage if he was a Polish speaker.

The introduction program for new employees takes place in Habo, Sweden and should be offered to all employees, regardless of in what country they operate. During the introduction new employees meet management from HR, R&D, operations and marketing. The speakers give overall information on company structure, culture and introduce the new employees to the way Fagerhult is doing business. The information on the company core values are given by the HR representatives. The meeting with HR is normally schedule to one hour. Employees are able to meet people from different departments and build relationships which immediately give a good contacts network within the company.

4.3.4 International Perspective

Before coming to Poland, Johan did not get any formal training by Fagerhult headquarter regarding how to implement core values in a new cultural context. When asked if he would have liked to receive such training he said no and explained that he used his own work experience as a reference. He felt that Fagerhult trusted him with this assignment because of his long background in the company. He did prepare himself by reading books about the Polish history, which he felt were useful when working in the country.
One problem Johan has come across is the way Poles interact during meetings. He says that during the first year in Poland, he held meetings every Monday. These meetings were only supposed to last for an hour but usually lasted for several hours since the discussion kept on going and no clear conclusions were ever made. He felt this behavior reflected the way the Polish government is perceived to work;

“They have to sit there and discuss and discuss. That is the way it works in Poland, so it is exactly like that”. Johan relates this to his own situation “…why sit and discuss when we don’t decide anything.”

He also explains that when new products are launched, meetings are held to inform the employees of the new product. These meetings are usually disorganized. The Polish employees tend to talk during presentations and do not necessarily pay attention to the information given.

This leads to them not knowing what is going on in the company and when asked a month later, they have no clue what information was given. Johan felt this was very different from Sweden where discipline is more present.

Another issue is the credit and payment problem. When customers place an order, Fagerhult Poland need to be guaranteed payments before the customer receives the product. The procedure when orders are made is also another big issue that Johan explains. According to him, when customers in Poland are making an order, many documents have to be signed to confirm the request while the process of placing an order could take place over the phone in Sweden. Building on that thought, Johan describes that when to do business and sell products in Poland, it is very important to establish a local office and have native Poles handling the transactions.

One thing that Johan felt positively about the Polish way of working was the creativity of the Polish employees. He said that when problems arise, the Polish employees will not accept that it cannot be solved; instead they are doing everything that they can to solve the issues, in one way or the other.

4.4 Arkadiusz Raczynski, Light Designer, Poland

Arkadiusz started at Fagerhult Poland in 2007 as a trainee. He immediately got the chance to move to Sweden and work at Fagerhult Sweden for six months. The intention was to receive personal experience with the Swedish culture, and to learn how the Swedish headquarters do business. The aim for this exchange was, according to Arkadiusz, to get firsthand knowledge and understanding of the company culture. He further explains that he got introduced to every department at Fagerhult and spent time in production, light design, construction, warehousing, and purchase. The biggest advantage was, according to him, the relationship he built during his stay and believes it is now much easier to contact people within the company.
His position was mainly as a light designer but now, after his stay in Sweden, he also works partly as a sales representative.

### 4.4.1 Fagerhult Culture

Arkadiusz says that the Polish office is given a high degree of freedom and is trusted by the headquarters to plan their day-to-day business activities.

“The sales people here have a free hand let’s say, so we are responsible for that we are doing. Nobody is saying that you should go to this group, or you should take care of that. Of course we have an action plan but we are free, at the same time we can ask for support. We have a lot of freedom, activity freedom we can say.”

The culture within Fagerhult Poland is described by Arkadiusz as not being so strict and he says that the interaction between managers and subordinates is good. They do not use ‘Sir’ when addressing each other at the office and the relationships are, according to Arkadiusz, fairly close. They meet outside work and know each other’s families.

He says that because they are only eight people working at the office, the communication is good and well structured. Though, he continues saying that they still aim to be even more structured in their work.

The office landscape in Poland is described as open, where all the sale representatives are located in one room. The Managing Director and other administrative colleagues such as accountants all have their own rooms.

When asked if he experienced any differences between the company culture at Fagerhult Sweden and Poland, Arkadiusz believes that there is a difference. He says that in Poland the business climate is much faster. This, he mentions, could be because of the difference in where the offices are located geographically. In Sweden, the headquarters is located in a small town whereas the Polish office is located in Warsaw, a very dynamic city. He elaborates that the pace of business is important in Poland. If customers call for an order in the morning, they expect the answer the same day. Decisions have to be made fast otherwise the customers most likely will forget about the order and no business deal is made. Arkadiusz says that the Swedish style of doing business is calmer and there is more time for reaction.

This allows for a better overview of what the order actually involves. Though, the Polish way of doing business is according to Arkadiusz, not a problem.

Overall Arkadiusz believes that since Fagerhult is a Swedish company, established by Swedes and that its head of central European organization is from Sweden, the national culture has made an impact on the company culture.

He further discusses how living in Sweden for his trainee period, and the fact that the Polish office had a Swedish member (Johan Wahlström) have also had an impact on the way they work at Fagerhult Poland.
He states that:

“The Swedish culture has a very good image and it has helped us a lot in the contact with customers because Polish people trust the Swedish quality and Swedes are respected and they can be counted upon.”

Additionally, Arkadiusz discusses the impact Johan had on the culture when working at the Polish office. Johan introduced them to Swedish traditions such as a Midsummer party to show the Swedish way of socializing, eating and having fun together. He says that they learned about the Swedish customs and they taught Johan about theirs.

4.4.2 Core Values and their Meaning

When Arkadiusz describes the core values within Fagerhult he does not use the three key words since they are not familiar to him. When asked to describe the word respect, he explains that respect needs to be shown by the company towards competition and their customers. Responsibility is explained as the company’s aim to be energy efficient and to be responsible towards the environment. Enterprise is, according to Arkadiusz, known through the employee behavior. Employees should always behave in relation to the company image and produce good quality products. He further says:

“I think our customers know that Fagerhult means good quality.”

For example, by not using low cost materials and local Polish suppliers, the company always guarantees their customers good quality by keeping a reliable image of the products.

Arkadiusz has also experienced that the obligation to be honest is important within the company. He says that they should always be honest to their customers and tell them the truth about such things as products and delivery time.

4.4.3 Implementation and Communication of Core Values

Arkadiusz believes the core values and the organizational culture were introduced during the introduction week in Sweden. That being said, he cannot exactly recall the three core values or how they were introduced to him. However, he explains it like this:

“It was maybe a general presentation and information [of the core values] during my stay in Fagerhult so I know our beliefs; we try to have a high standard of the product. So I learned about production that the luminaries are tested and I learned about environment responsibilities. I know how we treat the products, and that we think about their performance.”

During the introduction weeks at Fagerhult in Habo, Arkadiusz had a meeting with HR department. At the meeting mostly administrative practicalities were brought up. Arkadiusz do not remember if the core values were mentioned. After this first meeting Arkadiusz did not have much more contact with HR.
Normally the internal culture or the core values are not discussed or talked about very often in the Polish office but there is a tacit understanding:

“I don’t think we talk about it [the organizational culture], it is very clear for us this kind of behavior.”

During Johan’s stay at the Polish office he tried to implement the Fagerhult way of doing business through situational training. Arkadiusz says having Johan in the office made it easier to get to know the company specifics, both in terms of how their culture and how to conduct business;

“For us it was a little bit easier to get knowledge about core values because we had here a person from Fagerhult as well. Johan Wahlström was here and he was working in Fagerhult for 18 years I think. So he knows everything in Fagerhult and he was living here in Warsaw and he was helping us, and trying to explain to us for example the core values.”

In exchange, the Polish co-workers tried to help Johan with the practicalities of settling into the Polish way of life. Arkadiusz says the team was brought closer together through common interests and discussions were held on a more personal level than only business related topics.

The communication between the Polish office and the Swedish headquarters is done mainly through emails. They also use the company intranet and when needed to talk more directly they have a video conferencing system. The Swedish top management pays a visit every third month where they mostly talk about problems, the future, the business plan and overall view. The intranet is updated daily and Arkadiusz says he and the other Polish co-workers read it every day, making it the quickest way to get updates.

The language of communication is English. Arkadiusz says the Swedish people have a high level of English which make it easier to cooperate.

The closest authority to the Polish office is the Vienna office in Austria. Fagerhult Poland turns to them when they have questions or have the need to discuss issues. The Vienna office will subsequently turn to the Swedish headquarters if necessary. But Arkadiusz says it is still okay to address the Swedish headquarter directly, if needed.

4.4.4 International Perspective

Before coming to Sweden Arkadiusz did not receive any specific information about Swedish culture or business climate from Fagerhult Group, however he read a couple of books about Sweden in order to prepare himself. While living in Sweden for six months, he learned about the Swedish way of life.

“No there wasn’t any training [on Swedish culture], but I got knowledge during conversations at Habo [the location of Fagerhult HQ] or during breaks. I was even trying to learn Swedish;
I had a Swedish course at the folk’s university [Folkuniversitet] in Jönköping. So there was much Swedish culture in such conversations when learning the language. It’s how you learn about traditions and holidays and so on.”

Arkadiusz thinks there are differences between Polish and Swedish culture but does not think that they are too difficult to overcome. Before coming to Sweden Arkadiusz received information about Fagerhult Group together with general information about Sweden as a country from the headquarters in order to prepare himself. Although, no information on the Swedish culture were given.

4.5 Maciej Liskiewicz, Managing Director, Poland

Maciej has been with Fagerhult since the beginning of 2007, acting as the Managing Director for the company’s Polish office. Before joining the Fagerhult Group, Maciej held a position of commercial director at another company. His educational background includes an M. Sc. (Eng) as well as an MBA.

4.5.1 Fagerhult Culture

When asked to describe the company’s culture with own words, Maciej says the Fagerhult culture is made up of three key elements. The first is teamwork, which he says is vital because;

“Without colleague support, each individual is very weak.”

The second is a focus on the environment, and the third of these elements is ensuring reliable behavior towards customers.

When asked about the internal communication at the Polish office, Maciej says that they mainly use email, mobile phones, or have brief meetings. When dealing with customers, they prefer face-to-face contact.

According to Maciej, the office layout is an open office landscape for four the sales representatives and own rooms for the administrative staff. The staff is also provided with a kitchen that all employees can use.

Maciej claims that he can see only one difference between the organizational culture at the Swedish and Polish offices and that is that the Polish employees are;

“More target-orientated than in Western European countries. If it is necessary to win a contract, we do as much as we can do including overtimes and evenings and weekends.”
4.5.2 Core Values and their Meaning

For Maciej, the core values in more practical terms are for communicating the importance of environmental responsibility; a subject that at the moment is very trendy in Poland.

At the organizational level, he feels that the core values provide the staff with motivation. On a more personal level, Maciej feels the core values affect him when it comes to scheduling. He says that he tries to plan his calendar in advance, and that the focus is on meeting as many customers as possible.

4.5.3 Implementation and Communication of Core Values

Maciej was introduced to the core values when the office was being set up in Poland in 2007. It was Johan Wahlström who introduced the values and culture to Maciej. Johan was in charge of the business development and was stationed at the Polish office for 18 months. Johan Wahlström’s main task was to explain the core values and Fagerhult’s way of doing business to Maciej and the other Polish employees. This was done in English and mainly communicated orally through situational training.

However, since Johan Wahlström left the Polish office, the core values have not been reintroduced or repeated to Maciej. It is now his sole responsibility to communicate the core values within the office. Maciej says that the most important when implementing the core values is to act accordingly, providing the employees with a good example on how to act and work as a Fagerhult employee. When he, as managing director, communicates the core values to employees he does it with power point slides and oral information, in both English and Polish.

As for repetition to the employees of the core values, Maciej says he only does it when they behave against, and he feels he needs to remind them.

Core values are present from the very beginning in the recruitment process of new employees. Maciej states;

“Those who do not fit in are not employed.”

This is, according to him, a strategy implemented both by headquarters and by him.

4.5.4 International Perspective

Maciej received a booklet to read on Swedish culture and communication but the internal education at the office was provided by the Swedish manager [Johan Wahlström] who was there during the first 18 months. This education consisted of oral information.

When it comes to interaction between Swedish colleagues and Polish colleagues, Maciej says;

“There’s no big difference, we both are customer orientated.”
Overall Maciej feels that the core values fit well with the Polish national culture and business climate.

4.6 Summary

Fagerhult’s organizational culture is according to the interviewees’ one of their biggest advantage. It is described as very open and friendly and the interviewees’ points out that the relationships between managers and employees are good. The HR manager Daniel speaks about having fun at work to increase motivation, hence employee loyalty. The interviewees believe their strong organizational culture derive from the fact that many employees have worked within the company for many years. This has created a common understanding of how the company is doing business. Daniel expresses this as being a ‘Fagerhulter’. When asked to describe the Fagerhult organizational culture the interviewees refers to words like honest, polite and that they always show respect toward all stakeholder of the company.

Through evaluation of Fagerhult company documents, there are three core values stated in the annual report. These three written core values are described as being embraced by all employees. Respect means that the employees are expected to show respect towards the company, other employees and the business’s internal and external surroundings. Responsibility emphasizes on the employee’s individual responsibility to produce and deliver a safe and highly qualitative product that meets the customer needs.

Enterprise describes the company’s drive to move forward. Fagerhult believes in a continuous internal and external development of the company.

When the interviewees were asked about the three written core values respect, responsibility and enterprise, all interviewees gave different answers. They answered with own interpretation of what the core values represented. All interviewees emphasized on the company’s high quality in production and product features. Further, they also speaks about the company’s strive to offer all customers individual lighting solution and to always meet customer needs. In addition to this, the way Fagerhult is doing business is by give freedom to local offices and departments in their decision making.

The implementation techniques of core values where discussed and since the three written core values were not known by the interviewees, descriptions on Fagerhult organizational culture implementation were instead brought up. A more in-depth explanation on this matter was given by Johan Wahlström since he was in charge of implementing their organizational culture in Fagerhult Poland. He used situational training as a tool of implementing the company’s traditions of doing business.

By relying on his expertise, he was personally demonstrating how Fagerhult employees should behave and act in business situations.
According to Arkadiusz, this was a successful strategy since he felt a great support by having Johan to ask questions in difficult decisions.

Before Johan started working in Poland, he received no cross cultural training from Fagerhult. He however read books about the Polish history which he felt was very useful during his stay in Poland. Johan mentions that it is important to know the Polish history and recognize there may have been a need to speak some Polish during interaction with customers and suppliers.
5 Analysis

This section combines the result from the interviews with the theoretical framework. The authors interpretation of the findings will be evaluated and linked to the previous research presented.

5.1 Fagerhult Culture

According to the findings, Fagerhult’s internal culture is described to be one of their main advantages. The culture has evolved throughout the history of the company which originated from the charismatic founder Bertil Svensson. This is in line with what Hofstede (1991) states about organizational culture being a set of historically determined and socially constructed customs.

Schein (1999) states that the first level of culture describes the artifacts; what you can hear and see, just by entering the doors.

The visible culture in Fagerhult both in the Polish and Swedish offices is manifested by ‘good’ and open communication, where everyone is entitled to have their own opinion. The dialogue between managers and co-workers are perceived as open, polite and honest. This is demonstrated through the company’s open door policy and the offices open landscape design.

Stories about the founder Bertil Svensson are sometimes told to new employees in order to illustrate and introduce the Fagerhult culture. This is in line with Clampitt (2005), who argues that storytelling is an effective way of communicating culture. Stories provide a practical example on what to do or how to act in complex situations. Sharing stories unify the employees and make them feel part of a common group.

The artifacts of Fagerhult reveal a open, polite and honest workforce that share the same stories and understanding of the visible culture.

According to Schein (2004) there is more to an organizational culture than the visible signs. It is always a challenge to detect the underlying assumptions in a certain culture. However through the interviews four characteristics, or traits, were consistently mentioned when asked about the Fagerhult way of doing business and how Fagerhult wants the employees to behave. Since these four traits were pinpointed and described by all the interviewees there is reason to believe that these are the important traits of the ‘true’ Fagerhult culture.

These traits were:
- Customer focus
- Quality in engineering and products
- Respect towards competition, employees and customers and environment
• Empowerment of the employees, high degree of freedom in their every day work – local business flexibility

These will from now on be referred to as the ‘true’ values of Fagerhult culture.

The above characteristics were constantly referred to during all the interviews. Through this, it can be argued that all the interviewees have a coherent understanding of the true organizational culture. This goes in line with what Schein (2004) says about values; when being shared by the entire group they become underlying assumptions. The authors can therefore ascertain that the Fagerhult employees have shared underlying assumptions, in other words a shared culture.

When values and beliefs are shared they will serve as a common perceptual framework which helps the members of the organization to separate right from wrong, cope with problems and serve as a guide for decision-making at all levels (England, 1978, Deal & Kennedy, 1982, Wiener, 1988, Schein, 2004). When the values of the organization´s members are shared it will be easier to put them into daily practice, using them as everyday guidelines (Deal & Kennedy, 1982, Wiener, 1988). If the values are shared by the majority of the members, it can be described as a central value system (Wiener, 1988). Further a value system can span from weak to strong, if the extent to which the members of the organization personally agree with the values are high, the organization has a strong value system (Wiener, 1988). Having a strong central value system indicates a cohesive view on what to do, what to prioritize and how to behave. This often leads to a higher degree of organizational efficiency and success (Deal & Kennedy, 1982).

According to findings, Fagerhult has a strong central value system. All four interviewees described the way to behave and how to do business in the same way. Since the interviewees work in different departments and countries this indicates that the Fagerhult culture and its underlying values are strong and central.

By having a cohesive view on the internal organizational culture, Fagerhult has a workforce with a shared perceptual framework of ethics and beliefs. The shared framework results in a shared behavior which would increase the mutual understanding and lead to a greater team spirit, a higher overall efficiency and success. The main characteristics of the culture, stated above by the interviewees, are together creating a direction when coping with problems and serves as a guide in decision-making. This is supported by Arkadiusz answer when asked about the internal culture “I don’t think we talk about it, it is very clear for us this kind of behavior.” This is evidence of the shared embedded understanding of the internal culture.

As shown in the emperical findings, this shared culture is manifested through the expression ‘being a Fagerhulter’ as specifically mentioned by Daniel.
Being a ‘Fagerhulte’ refers to someone who has been in the company for an extensive period of time, and who knows by heart how to act and do business the Fagerhult way. According to Deal & Kennedy (1982) the shared values of an organization’s members is what sets the organization apart from others: the attitude that makes the organization unique. In matter of Fagerhult, the expression ‘being a Fagerhulte’ is the illustrative example on the organization’s unique attitude, what sets them apart from others, their true identity.

When the interviewees were asked about how to describe the organizational culture at Fagerhult in their own words, a variation of answers were first received. The first description that came to their mind was somewhat differentiated. This initial variation of answers could be due to the interviewees having different positions, backgrounds and set of tasks and responsibilities within the company, leading to diverse viewpoints. Another reason could be that the interviewees became perplexed by the situation and wording of the interviewer. However when answering more explicit questions on how they interact with colleagues, and how they do business, they became more cohesive in their descriptions. Here the four characteristics of the ‘true’ culture; customer focus, quality, respect and empowerment, became apparent. This is a sign of a strong and cohesive organizational culture.

The four characteristics of the true culture have evolved throughout the years of operation. Many employees have been working at Fagerhult for several years which have created a common understanding of how to do business. These true values serve as a clear guidance and have become easy to link to the employees everyday work tasks. This is in line with Wiener’s (1988) categorization of values. Wiener describes functionalistic values as constructive, and therefore practical to use as a behavioral guidance for the members. Further Wiener (1988) defines values deriving from organizational tradition as values that have been passed on from generation to generation without dependence on a certain leader. Wiener (1988) also argues that functional-traditional values are the easiest to put into practice since they are already time-proofed and have an assumed greater stability when exposed to organizational changes, such as the entering into a new market.

Findings show that the company’s true values such as ‘customer focus’ serves as a practical guidance in every day work. Fagerhult has implemented the customer focus into everyday situations such as offering their customers individual and differentiated product solutions. These values are straightforward and easy to convert into work instructions. Therefore it is reasonable to argue that the Fagerhult true values can be categorized as functional values. As Fagerhult’s true values have been passed on throughout the years of operation it is reasonable to believe that these are traditional anchored. The authors interpretation therefore is that Fagerhult’s true values, customer focus, quality, innovation and empowerment, are functional-traditional values.
5.2 Core Values and their Meaning

The core values stated in the annual report are Respect, Responsibility and Enterprise. Enterprise, the first core value, describes the company’s drive to move forward (Fagerhult Annual Report, 2006). Fagerhult believes in a continuous internal and external development of the company. Responsibility, the second core value, emphasizes on the employee’s individual responsibility to produce and deliver a safe and highly qualitative product that meets the customer needs (Fagerhult Group Annual report, 2006). The third core value is Respect. The employees are expected to show respect towards the company, other employees and the business’s internal and external surroundings (Fagerhult Group Annual Report, 2006).

According to the Fagerhult Annual Report (2007) these values guide the company’s vision and are something they want all employees worldwide to embrace. This is in line with theory. The core values should guide the vision, mission and strategies of an organization (Wiener, 1988, Deal & Kennedy, 1982).

However, this is true only as long as the written core values are reflective of the true organizational culture. A common thought amongst researchers is the importance to connect the communicated and written core value statements to the authentic real life culture within the organization (Blanchard & O’Connor, 1997).

As seen in the findings, the descriptions of the organizational culture given by the interviewees are not entirely cohesive with the stated core values, respect, responsibility and enterprise. When asked about the three stated core values, the interviewees could not specify them. They were not able to correctly define the values as presented in the annual report. The authors therefore informed them about the three core values and asked the interviewees to describe them and relate them to their own every-day context. Common for all four was the interchangeably use of respect and responsibility. Even the HR manager Daniel said that these two were difficult to distinguish. However, Arkadiusz described the word respect as the respect towards competition and customers. Daniel said respect stands for doing the right things in every situation and to keep promises. Arkadiusz and Maciej linked the word responsibility to environmental issues. Johan related both respect and responsibility to the obligation of always treating all stakeholders respectfully. Daniel described responsibility as the responsibility of the individual and showing concern for the entire business. Enterprise is described by Daniel as entrepreneurship; ‘think outside the box’ in order to keep up with competition and create customer value. Arkadiusz referred it to the employees should always keep the company image in mind.

The authors have found from the above answers that no one described the three core values in line with how they are presented in the annual report. The interviewees could not remember the three words or describe them cohesively.
The answers all seem to be elaborated in the moment, leading more to the interviewees association or philosophical contemplation over the word itself, rather than knowing what the company’s appointed meaning behind them are. A gap between the written core value statement and the true culture at Fagerhult is identified. The written core values are respect, responsibility and enterprise while the true culture is represented by the four characteristics customer focus, quality, respect and empowerment. Therefore, the authors’ interpretation of this is that the written core values are not entirely cohesive with the true culture at Fagerhult. This is not in line with theory. In order to take advantage of the written core values as guide for decision making at all levels, they have to fully reflect the organizational culture (Blanchard & O’Connor, 1997). Otherwise this gap may confuse the employees in their responsibilities and work related priorities.

5.3 Implementation and Communication of Core Values

According to the Management By Value approach the first step when implementing core values is to clarify the them (Blanchard & O’Connor, 1997). The written core values should be representative of the true organizational culture (Blanchard & O’Connor, 1997). This implies that the written and communicated values should be customer focus, quality, respect and empowerment since these represent the true culture of Fagerhult. However, according to findings the interviewees share the same understanding of the ‘true’ Fagerhult culture. As stated before, the three written core values are not entirely cohesive with the true culture. Since the employees do not identify with these present stated values, Fagerhult needs to revise them and decide on what should be their actual core values.

The findings show that Fagerhult’s organizational culture and values are currently stated in a variety of channels such as an HR policy, the Fagerhult Guiding Principles and Fagerhult’s annual reports provided by the headquarters. Every document describes the culture using different expressions. For example the HR Policy states the three core values respect, responsibility and enterprise, while the guiding principles use a different wording when describing the culture. The code of conduct highlights ‘customer first’ as the primary focus. By not having the same clarified values in all these documents may lead to mixed understanding and create confusion, leaving the employees without clear guidance and focus. The annual reports and company webpage are also used for communication to external stakeholders such as prospective customers. If the company wants to present itself as truthful as possible, attracting suitable customers and future employees it is advisable to describe the company and its culture by using the true values.
When having clarified the core values, the next step is to focus on communicating the values. Many researchers argue that the communication during this phase should be repeated and that the values should be communicated preferably on a daily basis and in all situations (Blanchard & O’Connor, 1997, Deal & Kennedy, 1982, Trigaux, 2006, Weiner, 1988). Dimbleby & Burton (1995) state that keeping the staff constantly informed will lead to a more efficient and loyal work force. This thought is shared by Clampitt (2005) who states that through repetition, the message will be understood, remembered and acted upon accordingly. Repetition also indicates that the message is serious and should be taken into consideration by the employee.

From the empirical findings the authors see that the stated core values are not repeated after the three day long introduction program. During the introduction program, the employee have a first meeting with the HR department, where they are introduced to the Fagerhult culture and the three written core values. This is not in line with theory which argues that repetition is key. By not reintroducing the core values to the employees, the company jeopardizes their work force to be less informed hence being less engaged and productive. Fagerhult risks that the values are not remembered, understood or considered serious by the employees. This could potentially lead to fatal consequences such as employees acting upon individual preferences instead of the company’s goals, mission and vision.

The Fagerhult Group HR manager Daniel says they are aware of it being a weakness that ought to be addressed. However, he mentions that even if the headquarters do not provide any communication strategies on how to implement the core values on a daily basis, it still optional for local offices and managers to repeat them. This is a hazardous strategy. According to Schein (2004) geographically dispersed companies always run the risk of developing subcultures.

Subcultures that, if left to much on their own may build up their own version of the organizational culture and value system. Therefore it is advisable that Fagerhult implement common strategies from headquarters on how to communicate and implement the culture. If leaving the responsibility of forming these strategies to local managers, without proper guidance from headquarters, it could lead to that the uniqueness of the company, the ‘Fagerhult way’ with time becomes dulcorated.

Even if the three written core values are not repeated, the findings shows that the true culture defined as customer focus, quality, respect and empowerment, of Fagerhult is successfully implemented. This successful implementation was clearly shown in Johan Wahlström’s implementation of the Fagerhult culture into the Polish office. Johan implemented the true culture on a daily basis; using every situation to make an example on how to behave and do business the Fagerhult way.
The situational-based training resulted in empowered employees that used the true culture as guidance in their every day work. By becoming empowered and always knowing what to do and how to act, the employees become more efficient and self-dependent.

According to findings Johan relied on his extensive work experience and knowledge about the company and acted as a carrier of Fagerhult culture. Clampitt (2005) argues that relying on opinion leaders and their expertise and social impact when implementing important messages is a good communication strategy. Due to their strong social impact their opinions have high penetrating power. According to the empirical findings Johan was highly relied on and appreciated for his extensive knowledge of the Fagerhult way of doing business. According to Daniel, Johan was always the first to be consulted if anything went wrong. Arkadiusz agrees and adds that Johan was of great help. This lead to Johan having social impact on the Polish employees. Therefore the authors draw the conclusion that Johan possessed the credibility of an opinion leader. By having Johan as a culture-carrier and opinion leader, Fagerhult’s way of doing business has successfully been transferred to the Polish office. The employees consistently associate the Fagerhult’s true culture with customer focus, quality, respect and empowerment even if they are not familiar with the three written core values, respect, responsibility and enterprise. This is evidence of Johan´s credibility and penetrating power as an opinion leader. The authors argue that it is better that the employees are familiar and act in line with the true Fagerhult culture than that they are able to identify the written core values, since these are not cohesive with the true culture.

Johan used face-to-face communication when implementing the Fagerhult true culture into the Polish office. This is in line with theory. Face-to-face communication is the communication channel best suited for emotional and complex information (Clampitt, 2005). Culture and core values are examples on such emotional and complex information. Face-to-face communication has a major advantage in training purposes since it shares knowledge instead of only providing information to the receiver (Clampitt, 2005). Through Johan’s training, the Polish staff gained practical knowledge on how to do business the Fagerhult way in a Polish context. Findings show that the Polish employees have internalized the ‘Fagerhult way’ and are now able to work independently and make decision in line with the organization’s way of doing business.

According to Clampitt (2005) using written communication creates a sense of formality and credibility. Written communication is most suitable when providing direct information rather than sharing knowledge (Clampitt, 2005). The findings show that Fagerhult’s organizational culture and values are communicated through a variety of brochures such as an HR policy, the Fagerhult Guiding Principles and Fagerhult’s annual reports and company web page. Unfortunately, the values highlighted vary from source to source. The annual report, company webpage and HR policy highlight the three core values respect, responsibility and enterprise, whereas The Guiding principles highlights the value customer focus.
Using theses sources of written communication could have increased the credibility of the message provided by the opinion leader, Johan Wahlström. However, since the written message and the oral message are not cohesive this reinforcement of the values and culture do not appear. One aspect touched upon during the interview with Johan was the potential use for written core values to lean on when implementing the organizational culture. For this to be effective the written core values must be reflective of the true culture. As concluded previously the written core values of Fagerhult are not entirely coherent with the true organizational culture and would therefore not serve its purpose.

According to Clampitt (2005) it is important that in every communication strategy find a good fit between the purpose of the message, the channel choice and the attitude of the receiver (Clampitt, 2005). This case study utilize the specific conditions of the company’s Polish office to investigate Fagerhult’s communication of their organizational culture. Our findings are here in line with theory. The findings show that the purpose of the message was to implement the way Fagerhult do business into the Polish office. It was done through the channel face-to-face situational training and carried out by the opinion leader Johan Wahlström. The attitude of the receiver, the Polish employee, is in this case influenced by the national culture in Poland. When communicating the true culture in the Polish office the authors see that Johan found the accurate fit between the purpose of the message and the channel choices. The message, in this case, the ‘true’ values, have been successfully implemented, which is evidence to that Johan found the accurate fit.

The third step of implementing values are an ongoing task (Blanchard & O’Connor, 1997). According to Wiener (1988) this step concerns the maintenance of the values. To fully succeed in the implementation of core values, the company needs to continue to repeat the message, always referring back to the values on a daily basis (Trigaux, 2006, Deal & Kennedy, 1982). The implementation of core values is an on-going process and requires continuous input (Clampitt, 2005, Wiener, 1988). By repeating the message it will increase the likelihood that the employee understand, remember and act according to the message meaning. Through findings, Fagerhult realizes a need to continuously working with the implementation of the values through repetition. However, Daniel acknowledge that this is difficult to do. Employees are busy with their everyday tasks and this draws away their attention from HR initiatives. The continous implementation process is made even more difficult since they are only two HR representatives working at Fagerhult Group level with this matter. In order to succeed with implementing the culture and values, Fagerhult Group at all department levels and in all locations need to focus on this process. They have to realize that implementing their core values is an on-going process and should always be on the agenda.

In addition to the steps of implementation presented above, another way of retaining the values and culture is through the employment process. Individual underlying assumptions are difficult to change (Wiener, 1988).
If the individual values and beliefs of an employee are in line with the organization’s, the organizational culture will then easier be internalized by the employee. If the company make sure that all new employees already share, or at least are predisposed to adapt the most predominant values of the organization’s culture, the process of implementation will be made easier (Wiener, 1988). This is supported by the findings. Maciej says that the process of implementing the Fagerhult culture already begins in the hiring process, “Those who does not fit in are not employed”. Maciej says that this is a strategy used at all levels and departments of the company. The authors believe that with these approach, Fagerhult ‘secures’ their culture; preserving the company’s identity and that the ‘Fagerhult way’ of doing business is kept intact. This could to some degree neutralize the potential risk that not having a common communication strategy impose, as discussed above.

5.4 International Perspective on Culture and Communication

When a company enters into an international setting it faces several challenges. Schein (2004) argues that when a company and its organizational culture is exposed to a new culture, the underlying taken-for-granted assumptions and values are challenged. Schein (2004) argues that it is important for a multinational enterprise to know how their internal culture stands in comparison to the new cultural perspective. By understanding the issues that may arise during an internationalization process, the organization can assess what values that are compatible and what values that may clash with the new cultural context that they are being exposed to.

According to the findings Fagerhult did not assess their own organizational culture when entering Poland. Daniel from Fagerhult headquarters says that Poland is in general very similar in their belief system. He also mentions that the culture differences were not a major problem when entering the country, since both Sweden and Poland are European countries. The company had therefore no intentions of changing any of the company’s cultural values that were implemented in the Polish office.

However, according to World Business Media Ltd, there are a few differences between the Polish and Swedish business climates. The main dissimilarities are the level of hierarchy, nationalistic proudness, and that procedures take longer time. This is supported by the findings. Johan Wahlström says that in Poland the bureaucracy is more problematic. Many documents have to be signed which leads to procedures, such as product orders, take longer time. While compared to Sweden where the customers can place an order over the telephone. As seen, differences in the business climate are present. However, the Polish business climate has no clear and well established norms that describe how business is done in Poland (World Business Medita Ltd). That is why many multinational companies can bring their own culture when they set up a subsidiary in Poland.
In the case of Poland, Daniel was right, because of Poland’s lack of clear and well established business norms, there was no need for an an extensive assessment of the own organizational culture prior to the entry. Fagerhult could therefore easily implement their organizational culture, influenced by Swedish business climate and national culture, into Poland. However, in other countries, this may not be the case and the issue of a cultural self assessment has to be considered.

Findings have shown that it is important for Fagerhult to keep the Swedish standards while operating abroad. The company still wants to be perceived as a Swedish company representing high quality products. Arkadiusz mentions that in Poland, the Swedish companies are admired for their high quality in their products, something that Fagerhult wants to be associated with. During the Fagerhult set up in Poland, the company kept a large part of their organizational culture which has deep roots in the Swedish norms and standards. The approach to do business in the Polish subsidiary therefore reflects the approach of doing business in the parent company.

Schein (2004) argues that organizational culture and values are not static and may change when exposed to new cultural contexts. The empirical findings do not support this theory. The findings show that the true culture of Fagerhult was kept rather intact when implemented into Poland. The four interviewees all describe the same culture; the way of doing business, how to interact with colleagues and customer and how to behave. They all put emphasis on the same key values such as customer focus and to show respect. This may partly be due to the type of values that Fagerhult has. As established previously in the study, Fagerhults true culture consists of four Functional-Traditional values; customer focus, quality, respect and empowerment.

Functional-Traditional values are more stable when faced with changes such as the exposure of a new national culture. That implies that since Fagerhult possesses Functional-Traditional values, their organizational culture can be implemented to another cultural context, Poland, without harming its essence.

Communication across borders is generally associated with misunderstandings and misconceptions (Stephan & Stephan, 2002). That is why the main theme of intercultural communication is the understanding of cultural differences (Schein, 1999, 2004). Adapting to new values and culture are always a complicated and lengthy learning process (Wiener, 1988). Before entering a new culture it is advisable to assess both your own as well as the foreign culture (Schein, 2004). Fagerhult Group does not provide any formal intercultural training. When Johan was positioned in Poland, he did not participate in any preparation, specifically led by Fagerhult, on the Polish business climate. However, Johan did prepare himself by reading books about the Polish history and post communist heritage. This he felt was important to know before entering Poland. According to Sachs (1992) to understand the Polish business climate it is important to recognize the value of the Polish history which has formed the country.
Together with Johan’s pre-existing knowledge of the Polish business climate, he used his long experience within the company as a basis when implementing the organizational culture. However, by solely relying on Johan and his expertise, Fagerhult increases the risk of being dependent on one person’s abilities which could harm the company in future internationalization activities. It is therefore advisable for the Fagerhult Group as employer to provide its employees with such training before going abroad.

Though, Fagerhult Group provides training for the foreign employees coming to Sweden. From the findings the authors see that Fagerhult Group does provide intercultural training through the company’s introduction program held in Sweden. Arkadiusz spent six months at Fagerhult Swedish headquarters during his trainee period prior to start working at the Polish office. The training gave him firsthand knowledge about the company culture as well as the Swedish national culture. Fagerhult is rooted in Swedish culture and traditions. By receiving knowledge about the Swedish national culture, Arkadiusz gained a deeper understanding of the company and its culture as well. This understanding has served him in his contacts with Swedish co-workers and managers. Arkadiusz says that a great advantage with the training was the relationships he built. These relationships made it easier to contact people within the company. These findings are in line with theory. Deal and Kennedy (1982) say that people need time to renegotiate and internalize new values and culture. By providing training in forms of exchange between the different cultures, are a great way to increase the understanding and avoid the misinterpretations and misunderstandings generally associated with intercultural communication (Deal & Kennedy, 1982, Schein, 1999). It is clear that the outcome of the training Fagerhult provides to the foreign employees coming to Sweden are well received. Therefore the authors argue that similar intercultural training should be offered to the employees going abroad.

One of the more practical challenges with intercultural communication is the language barrier (Crystal, 2003). Not only the direct converting of words into another language, but the different underlying meanings associated to the word. Since words are ‘charged’ with memories and other associations they do not translate easily from one cultural context to another (Das, 2008). According to our findings the language barriers does not seem to have been a problem for the internal communication in this particular case. The corporate language for internal communication at Fagerhult is English. The Polish co-workers were all hired on the criteria that they possessed a certain level of English. Johan Wahlström however sometimes felt the need to speak the local language in the external interaction, with customers and suppliers. Even if the language barriers were a minor problem in the Polish case, it is still an important issue to address for an international company such as Fagerhult Group.

Another practical issue to address is the frequency of contact. In order to make sure that the direction is clear, the communication between the headquarters and the local branch must be recurrent.
Mattock (2003) suggests that formal meetings between headquarters and the local branch should be held at least four times a year, devoting approximately half the time on local issues. According to Arkadiusz the main source of contact between colleagues and offices is email. He also points out that the intranet is checked every day and serves as the main source for company related updates. The Swedish top management pays regular visits on a three month basis. This is coherent with the theory and the frequency of contact between headquarters and the Polish office, as well as the contact between colleagues, is well established. There are reasons to believe that this helps the Polish branch to keep the direction and that it also works as a constant reminder of the Fagerhult culture.

5.5 Summary

Fagerhult has a cohesive and strong organizational culture. All employees know by heart how to act, communicate and do business the ‘Fagerhult way’. The Fagerhult culture can be expressed through the expression ‘being a Fagerhulter’. The organizational culture are characterized by the four underlying assumptions; customer focus, quality, respect and empowerment, which represent the true culture of Fagerhult. These true values are defined as functional-traditional values, which imply that they are effective to use as behavioral guidance as well as stable when faced with internationalization.

The written core value statements should always be in line with the true organizational culture in order to serve as a guide for decision making and behavior. Otherwise this gap between true culture and written core values may confuse the employees in their responsibilities and work related priorities. Fagerhult Annual Report states that the written core values, respect, responsibility and enterprise. However, these written core values are not representative of the true organizational culture and are not used in real life. These value statements therefore become obsolete.

In contrary the true culture manifested by the four values; customer focus, quality, respect and empowerment, are without being written down the ones that are applied and embraced by the employees.

Fagerhult needs to clarify what values that should be communicated. As of now it is an abundance of values stated in several documents available for the employees to read. All these sources are highlighting different values. This could lead to confusion on what to focus on and how to work within the company. Not stating the true values could also result in attracting the ‘wrong’ future employees and customers, since these values are communicated through documents that are read both by internal and external stakeholders. Fagerhult should use the four characteristics, earlier depicted by the authors as being the ‘true’ Fagerhult culture. Since these true characteristics is what really has been implemented. After clarifying which values that should represent the company, Fagerhult can start the process of implementing them. When implementing the chosen values, the main thing to consider is that all the documents should state the same values.
Since values are complex information, implementation through face-to-face communication and situational training are preferred as a compliment to written sources. As of now, Fagerhult and Johan Wahlström have successfully applied these techniques when implementing the Fagerhult way of doing business, the true culture.

In addition to the three steps of implementation, it is advisable to only hire individuals that already share the same values and beliefs as the company. This increases the possibility to maintain a cohesive and strong organizational culture. By doing so, also neutralizes the potential risk of not having a common communication strategy from headquarters.

When entering a new country it is important to assess both the own as well as the new culture. It is also advisable to prepare the employees that are faced with an intercultural transition. The preparation can be in form of organized training as well as on the individual initiative of the employee. Fagerhult provides training for foreign employees coming to Sweden, but not for the Swedish employees going abroad. Since transitional training has proven to be valuable, it is advised that Fagerhult should provide such training for the employees going abroad as well.

Fagerhult’s culture and true values have proven to be stable. They were implemented into the Polish office without harming its essence. It is reason to believe that the true values are kept intact due to their Functional-Traditional nature.

Practical challenges to consider when implementing values and culture into an international setting are the language barriers and the frequency of contact between headquarters and the local branch. In the case of Fagerhult entering Poland, both these challenges were mastered.
6 Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze how Fagerhult implement and communicate their organizational culture and how their written core values represents the way the company do business. In order to fulfill the purpose, three research questions were identified. In this chapter these questions are answered. The chapter ends with explaining how the purpose of this study has been fulfilled.

Fagerhult Group’s stated core values are respect, responsibility and enterprise.
Respect means that the employees are expected to show respect towards the company, other employees and the business’s internal and external surroundings.
Responsibility emphasizes on the employee’s individual responsibility to produce and deliver a safe and highly qualitative product that meets the customer needs.
Enterprise describes the company’s drive to move forward. Fagerhult believes in a continuous internal and external development of the company.

These three values are communicated through documents such as the annual reports, internal HR policy and the company webpage. However, they are not successfully implemented throughout the company. After they are orally introduced to the employee during the initial meeting with HR department they are nevermore repeated or referred to.

As discussed in the analysis, the written core values are not recognized by the employees and they could not clarify them according to how the core values are expressed in for instance the annual report. Therefore the authors argue that the three written core values are neither successfully implemented nor representative of the organizational culture.

However, as concluded in the analysis, the employees recognized four other characteristics that were described as the Fagerhult way of doing business, hence the ‘true’ organizational culture. These four underlying assumptions are customer focus, quality in engineering and products, respect towards competition, employees, customers and environment, and empowerment of the employees.

These characteristics represent the true culture that the employees embrace, know by heart and act accordingly. In contrary to the three core values respect, responsibility and enterprise, these characteristics are successfully implemented. This is done trough situational training and face-to-face communication in the daily work activities. This is made visible through the case of Fagerhult Poland where Johan Wahlström was sent down to personally demonstrate how Fagerhult do business. When introducing the Polish employees to the Fagerhult culture, Johan relied on his sound knowledge and expertise. The employees received first-hand knowledge on company’s beliefs, morals and work motions that through situational training was repeated and constantly reintroduced to them.
As discussed in the analysis, situational training and face-to-face interaction is an effective approach when communicating complex information such as culture and values. Since the employees’ interviewed identified the same four characteristic as their organizational culture, this implementation technique has been proven successful for Fagerhult.

To conclude, the three written core values do not represent the true Fagerhult culture. The true culture is better represented by the four underlying assumptions customer focus, quality, respect and empowerment. These values symbolize the way Fagerhult do business, their true culture.

When an international company such as Fagerhult wants to implement their organizational culture into another country it needs to consider several issues. It is important to assess both the own and the new culture when entering a new country. The company needs to compare and identify the fit between ones own culture and the new culture to see if they are compatible. Knowing your own culture will ease the transition into the new cultural context of new standards, business climate and national culture. As discussed in the analysis, Fagerhult did not see any major differences between the Swedish and Polish culture. However, that does not mean that such differences do not exist. The process of implementing their organizational culture into the Polish office was simplified by the fact that Johan Wahlström applied the strategy of situational based training. This was well received and the Fagerhult culture had a high penetrating power at the Polish office. As seen in the case of Fagerhult Poland, this implementation method was effective and contributed to an organizational culture recognized and shared by all employees.

In this investigation we have looked at how Fagerhult stated core values are connected with the organizational culture. We have discovered that the stated core values are not entirely cohesive with the authentic culture of Fagerhult. Further we have discussed the practical implications of having stated core values that are not truly representative of the culture. In addition to this, we have analyzed how Fagerhult implements and communicates, both the true culture as well as the stated ‘false’ core values. We have compared how Fagerhult implements and communicates culture against theory. From that we have come up with practical suggestions on how Fagerhult can implement their culture in the future. Therefore we argue that we have fulfilled the purpose of the thesis.

6.1 Managerial Implications

The managers at Fagerhult have to realize the need for core values that represent the true organizational culture. For core values to be effective they have to be in line with how the company actually conducts business. The first step would therefore be to recognize values that are representative of the way Fagerhult do business.
Thus, clarify core values that identify the company’s underlying assumptions shared by all employees. By choosing values that symbolize the essence of Fagerhult organizational culture, they will better serve as a guide for decision making and behavior in the daily business activities.

Through this research, the authors have come to the conclusion that the four characteristics; customer focus, quality, respect and freedom are highly representative of the true organizational culture at Fagerhult. By having clarified them as their core values, Fagerhult management should start communicate them through several communication channels.

Written communication is useful since it provide scannable information and a sense of credibility. Fagerhult should use their current sources such as annual report, HR policy, the company webpage and intranet as communication tools. However, it is important that they all are cohesive in their wording in order to not create confusion for internal as well as external stakeholders. Other documents such as Fagerhult Guiding Principles also describe how the company operates in a more practical way. The Guiding Principles emphasizes on ‘customer first’ and is more in line with the four depicted characteristics of the true culture where customer focus is one of the main values. The information stated in all written documents should provide the same outcome on how to do business within the company. Even if every source of information (guiding principles, code of conduct, annual reports etc), has its own purpose, the underlying assumptions, the true values of the company, should provide the same outcome.

After revising the core values to customer focus, quality, respect and freedom the information is more unified. Fagerhult should therefore utilize the annual report, HR policy, the company webpage and the intranet as communication channels since they are reliable source for information.

After writing down the core values, Fagerhult needs to start implementing them on a day-to-day basis. Seeing the results from this study, face-to-face communication and situational training have been proven to be effective. A major advantage at Fagerhult is the introduction program where the company invites their new employees to the headquarters in Sweden. This is a three day conference where the employee receives first-hand knowledge on how the company operates. During this introduction, the HR department gets one hour to welcome the employee into the company and inform them about the core values. Fagerhult has to realize that this introduction needs to be given more attention. This is a communication channel that will have a great impact on the new employee, hence it is optimal for emphasizing the organizational culture and values. It is crucial to here make clear a statement that this represents how the company works, and what the organization believes in.

Additionally, written documents need to be handed out in order to create readable and credible information. However, the written documents should be supported by oral communication to increase the understanding of the importance of the message.
The oral presentation can take form as power point presentations and speeches by the HR managers. HR managers would here work as opinion leaders and the information given by them is most likely to be perceived as important by the employee. One issue to address is the fact that since culture and core value are a complex topic it may be more difficult to get everyone to identify with the message. In order to increase the understanding of the meaning of Fagerhult core values, the HR managers need to engage the employees during the presentation and create common divisors that everyone could relate to. The company could apply team discussions and practical exercises to engage the participants. Having an open forum where everyone are enable to express their opinion will lead to a better understanding of what the core values involve.

Further, as discussed in the analysis, at present, it is up to every department manager to continue communicating and implementing the core values. First of all, Fagerhult needs to make sure all department managers understand and know the core values. Through our findings, there is evident that members in top management positions have trouble describing the current three core values respect, responsibility and enterprise. This is expected to change since the four values of customer focus, quality, respect and freedom are more representative of the true culture that everyone works accordingly. Fagerhult needs to follow the same procedure with management team as with new employees and introduction program. It is important that management knows the core values by heart in order to transfer them to their subordinates. Therefore, Fagerhult needs to provide all managers with written documents that clearly confirm and defines the four values. When department managers have written down core values to rely on, they become familiar with what they are meant to educate their team about. Additionally, Fagerhult headquarter need to stress the importance that these core values are passed on to their employees and that it is up to the local managers job to accomplish this.

The best suitable way to educate employees of core values would be through face-to-face communication and situational training. This method is more illustrative and the employees get first-hand knowledge on how the core values work in real life business situation. Fagerhult managers should by their own actions demonstrate as good role models and the core values should always be reflective in everyone’s behavior. Since core values work as guidance in decision making, getting everyone on the same page will only increase efficiency and enhance profitability. Drawing conclusion from the case of Fagerhult Poland, Johan was by situational training and personal demonstrations, successfully implementing the way Fagerhult do business. However, because of his extensive knowledge about the company he was able to demonstrate Fagerhult’s organizational culture without the use of any clear and written down core values. The authors have reason to argue that this may have been propitious to this specific case only. Fagerhult should not solely rely on one person’s abilities and needs to increase the awareness of their core values throughout the entire organization. It is still important that the written core values are used as a communication method to verbally implement and apply the organizational culture in the daily activities.
An important aspect when implementing core values are that it should be seen as a continuous task for managers. By repeating a message, it will increase the likelihood that the receiver understand, remembers it and act accordingly. Through this research, it is confirmed that Fagerhult do not repeat the core values after the introduction program. It is vital for Fagerhult to continuously communicate the core value to its members as a reminder of their existence. It is also important to revise the core values at regular intervals so that they keep representing the true organizational culture.

Since Fagerhult is an international company, they will be faced with difficulties when implementing core values across cultures. It is important for Fagerhult to assess their own culture to understand if there may be any clashed when entering a new cultural context. Another important issue to address is the understanding of the new cultural work standards and business climate. Fagerhult has no official intercultural training for employees going abroad during an internationalization process. As seen in the case of Poland, this had no major impact on the outcome since Poland has similar preferences compared to Sweden. However, the authors see a need for Fagerhult to increase their training facilities regarding intercultural issues.

6.2 Suggestions on Further Research Areas

Our findings indicate that the differences in organizational culture between the Swedish Headquarters and Polish office barely exist, at least not to the extent where it has practical consequences. That indicates that the Fagerhult organizational culture and true values have remained intact when exposed to the culture of Poland. However, in the theories presented in the chapter of theoretical framework one can find arguments for that the organizational culture and its underlying assumptions should be modified when implemented into a new cultural context.

As touched upon in the section of possible reproaches, we have reasons to believe that this dissimilarity between theory and empirical findings, has to do with the choice of method. We have used interviews as method for collecting information. Since the investigated phenomena occurred in 2007, there is a risk of the interviewees not remembering all details correctly, or to deconstruct certain events in retrospect, maybe leading to distorted findings. Therefore it would be interesting to conduct more extensive live observations, both at the Polish office as well as at the headquarters in Habo. What happened in 2007 we cannot find out. But since implementation of culture is an ongoing process, further investigations in the forms of observations could still lead to new discoveries in how Fagerhult implement their culture and core values.

This is a single case study, only focusing on the activities of one company. An interesting area for further investigation is to see how applicable the findings would be on other companies. By studying the process of implementing culture and core values in other companies we could find out to what extent our results could be generalized.
References


Appendix

Questions to Daniel Johansson

Personal
1. What is your position within Fagerhult?
2. What are your specific responsibilities?

Background
3. Former working experience?
4. Former working experience within Fagerhult?
5. Former academic background?

Fagerhult Culture
6. How would you define with your own words the corporate culture of Fagerhult?

Core Values and its meaning
7. Who invented the core values?
8. What do they actually stand for, in a more practical aspect?
8b. What affect do they have on your everyday work? How do you use them?
9. How are these core values reflected in the vision and strategy of Fagerhult?
10. How is the process done when the core values are invented?
11. How often are the core values reviewed by Fagerhult Company?
12. How often do the employees review the core values?
13. Have there been any thoughts on how these values should work in an international context?
14. What role do the core values play in the organization?

Communication of Core Values
15. Who is responsible for communicating the core values across the entire company?
16. Who is responsible for communicating the core values into other countries?
   - And for translating them into the new languages and /or to a new cultural context?
17. How do managers communicate the core values to their staff?
18. How is the core values implemented in Sweden?
19. How are core values introduced to new employees, managers, customers and other external stakeholders?
20. Are the core values reintroduced/repeated actively to older staff members?
20b. How is this done? In which situations?

International
21. What skills and internal education do foreign and Swedish co-workers (trainees) stationed in Sweden get about Swedish culture and communication?
22. What internal information do they get on Fagerhult culture and values?
Questions to Johan Wahlström

Personal
1. What were your specific responsibilities at the time of the Fagerhult’s entry into Poland?

Background
2. Former working experience?
3. Former working experience within Fagerhult? (Years and previous responsibilities?)
4. Former academic background?

Fagerhult
5. How would you define with your own words the corporate culture of Fagerhult?
6. Do you experience any difference/similarities between the corporate culture “the way of doing business” between Fagerhult Sweden and Fagerhult Poland? If so, what are different?
7. Do you experience any similarities/differences in the internal culture “the shared values” between Polish and Swedish Fagerhult?

Core values and its meaning
8. What do the core values actually stand for, in a more practical aspect?
9. How do they affect your daily work? How do you use them?
10. Do the core values play an important role in the organization? What role?
11. Have you had any chance to review the core values, or have an opinion on them before implementing them into the Polish office?
12. Do you see any difference between how they were:
   - introduced
   - applied
   - communicated between Poland and Sweden?
13. Do you think the core values work in a Polish context, at the Polish office?
14. Do you think they fit in with the overall Polish culture?

Communication of the core values
15. When assigned to the task, did you get any specific training from Fagerhult on how to communicate and implement a corporate culture in a new market?
16. Now afterwards, would you have changed anything in the preparation process?
17. How was the core values introduced to the Polish staff?
18. In what language were the core values, code of conducts and other documents/information communicated to the Polish staff?
19. In what way were they communicated?
20. Do you experience any differences in the way you Swedish colleges act/communicate and your Polish colleges?
Implementation Strategy
21. What strategy did you follow when implementing the values?
22. What were the biggest challenges you came across?
23. How did you overcome them?
24. What were the biggest/most unexpected surprises you experienced?
Questions to Arkadiusz Raczyński

Personal
1. What is your position within Fagerhult?
2. What are your specific responsibilities?
3. What were your specific responsibilities at the time of the Fagerhult’s entry into Poland?

Background
4. Former working experience?
5. Former working experience within Fagerhult in Poland as well as in Sweden?
6. Former academic background?

Fagerhult
7. How would you define with your own words the corporate culture of Fagerhult in Poland?
8. Do you experience any difference between the corporate culture between Fagerhult Sweden and Fagerhult Poland?
9. Do you experience any similarities/differences in the internal culture between Polish and Swedish Fagerhult?

Core values and its meaning
10. What is the vision and strategy (core values) for Fagerhult?
11. What do the core values actually stand for, in a more practical aspect?
12. How do they affect your daily work? How do you use them?
13. Do the core values play an important role in the organization? What role?
14. Have you had any chance to review the core values, or have an opinion on them?
15. Do you see any difference between how they are introduced/applied/communicated/used between Poland and Sweden?
16. Is there a difference in understanding the core values in Sweden and Poland?
17. Do you think the core values work in a Polish context?
18. Do you think they fit in with the overall Polish culture?

Communication of Core Values
19. How and when was the Fagerhult core values introduced to you?
20. In what language where they first introduced to you?
21. Are the core values stated in Polish or any other language that you have come across?
22. How does your manager communicate the core values to you and fellow co-workers?
23. Have they been reintroduced/repeated to you? How often? In what way?
Communication International
24. What skills and internal education did you get when stationed in Sweden about Swedish culture and communication?
25. What internal information did you get on Fagerhult culture, ethics and values?
Questions to Maciej Liskiewicz

Personal
1. What are your specific responsibilities?

Background
2. What are your:
   - Former working experience?
   - Former working experience within Fagerhult in Poland and possibly in Sweden?
     (Years and previous responsibilities?)
   - Former academic background?

Fagerhult
3. How would you define with your own words the corporate culture of Fagerhult in Poland?
5. In general, do you experience any difference between the company culture between Fagerhult Sweden and Fagerhult Poland? (“The way you do business”) If so, what are different?

Core values and its meaning
6. What do the Fagerhult corporate core values actually stand for, in a more practical aspect for Fagerhult Poland?
7. How do they affect your daily work? How do you use them?
8. Do the core values play an important role in the organization? What role?
9. Have you had any chance to review the core values, or have an opinion on them?
10. Do you think the core values work in a Polish context?
11. Do you think they fit in with the overall Polish culture?

Communication of Core Values
12. How and when was the Fagerhult core values introduced to you?
13. In what language where they first introduced to you?
14. In what way were they introduced to you the first time?
15. Have they been reintroduced/repeated to you? How often?
16. If so, in what way were they reintroduced/repeated to you?
17. Are the core values stated in Polish or any other language that you have come across?
18. How do you as a manager communicate the core values to the employees?
19. Do you reintroduce/repeat them to your employees? How often? In what way?
20. In which situations?
Communication International
21. Did you receive any internal information/training about Swedish culture and communication when entering Fagerhult?
22. Did you receive any internal information/education about Fagerhult corporate culture, ethics and values when entering Fagerhult?
23. Do you experience any differences in the way you Swedish colleagues act/communicate and your Polish colleagues?
24. If so, do you take special consideration to this in your everyday work? How?

Practices dealing with core values
25. How is the core values implemented in Poland?
26. What strategy do you use when implementing them?
27. Is this strategy planned by the headquarter of Fagerhult or have you been able to plan it yourself?
28. Who have the main responsibility for the implementation of core values in Fagerhult Poland today?
29. During the upstart?
30. Is it implemented in everyday work, and if so, how is this done?