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Ledarskapets påverkan i en processorienterad organisation

En fallstudie inom Vägverket

Filosofie magisteruppsats inom Företagsekonomi

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Handledare: Hall, Annika

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Leadership affection in a process oriented organisation

A case study within Vägverket

Master's thesis within Business Administration

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Magister uppsats inom Företagsekonomi

Titel:	Ledarskapets påverkan i en processororienterad organisation – En fallstudie inom Vägverket
Författare:	Wenbrand Claesson, Johan Nilsson, Berndt
Handledare:	Hall, Annika
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Sammanfattning

Bakgrund

Fokus på processer inom organisationer började under 1990-talet och har sedan dess varit den dominerande ledarskapsmetoden. Det främsta målet och fördelarna med processororienteringen är kundfokuseringen samt ökad flexibilitet och effektivitet. Det finns inte mycket forskning beträffande ledarskap kombinerat med processororientering. Med denna uppsats vill vi bidra med en undersökning. Förändringen till ett processororienterat synsätt innebär en drastisk förändring och ledarskapet har en nyckelroll i samband med implementeringen.

Syfte med uppsatsen

Syftet med denna uppsats är att öka förståelsen för hur ledarskapet påverkas, på högsta chefsnivån, med anledning av implementeringen av ett processororienterat synsätt.

Metod

I denna uppsats har vi använt en kvalitativ metod och ett hermeneutiskt tillvägagångssätt för att öka förståelsen av hur ledarskapet påverkas av processororientering.

Vi har genomfört en fallstudie av Vägverket som genomfört en processororientering och intervjuat sex chefer på deras huvudkontor.

Slutsats

Vi har tagit fram en modell som säger att en ledare inom en processororienterad organisation kan jämföras med en turguide. Modellen är baserad på våra fem viktigaste områden om hur ledarskap påverkas vid en förändring till ett processororienterat synsätt. Dessa är : att leda förändring, uppnå mål, ökad teamwork, ökad kommunikation och ökad helhetsyn. Detta kännetecknar en ledare när man förändrar till en processororienterad organisation.

Master's Thesis in Business Administration

Title:	Leadership affection in a process oriented organisation – A case study within Vägverket
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Abstract

Background

Focus on processes within organisations emerged during the nineteen nineties and has since then become the most dominant management method. The main aim and positive features of process orientation is the customer focus and increased flexibility/efficiency. There is not much academic research conducted to leadership combined with processorientation. With this thesis we will minor that gap. The change into a process oriented approach makes a drastic change and the leadership could be a key factor or problem when implementing it.

Purpose with the thesis

The purpose of this thesis is to increase the understanding of how leadership is affected, on a top managerial level, as a result of implementing a process oriented approach.

Method

In this thesis we have used a qualitative method and a hermeneutic approach to increase the understanding of how the leadership is affected of process orientation.

We have made a case study on the Swedish Road Administration, Vägverket who has done a process orientation. We have made six interviews with topmanagers at their headoffice.

Conclusion

We have come up with a model that states that a leader within a process oriented organisation can be compared with a tour guide. The model is based on our five key findings of how leadership is affected by changing into process orientation. These are: lead change, achieve aims, increase teamwork, increase communication and increase holistic view. These characteristics applies on a leader when changing into a process oriented organisation.

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1 Introduction

In this chapter the background, problem, purpose and delimitation of this thesis are presented and discussed. It also states the reasons for why the chosen subject is interesting and to whom

1.1 Background

This thesis aims to increase the understanding of how leadership is affected, on a top managerial level, as a result of implementing a process oriented approach. The definition of a process is:

“Course of events that involves some kind of change or development” (Nationalencyklopedin, 2006).

Process orientation is one of the latest fashions within management. Focus on processes within organisations emerged during the nineteen nineties and has since then become the most dominant management method. Increased competition and globalisation are mentioned as main reasons for this new approach (Nilsson, 2003).

The main aim and positive features of process orientation is the customer focus and increased flexibility/efficiency. The process orientation focuses on processes within a company or organisation and creates the basic conditions to fulfil those aims and features (Nilsson, 2003). The increased competition and globalisation factors demands an increased customer focus and flexibility within organisations, hence the need of integrated processes has increased (Rentzhog, 1998). A research conducted among Swedish companies (more than 200 employees) shows that 87% find themselves process oriented to some degree (Bengtsson, Lind & Samuelsson, 2000).

There is plenty of existing literature, preformed by consultants and management authors, however not much academic research has been conducted within this field (Nilsson, 2003). With this thesis we will minor that gap.

Scientific research on leadership started at the twentieth century. Much of the research was focused on the determinants of leadership effectiveness. Scientists have studied what traits, behaviours, abilities, power, or aspects of situations that determine how well a leader succeed to influence followers and accomplish task objectives. (Yukl, 2006.)

An extensive work of renewal has taken place within many companies and organisations in the last few years. All with their aims set on an increased focus on customers and organisations consisting of groups/teams rather than single working personnel. This fact sets higher requirements on leadership (Ellström, P-E., Eklund, J., Kock, H., Hasselhorn, T., Fogelberg-Eriksson, A., Andersson, A., Elg, M., 2003).

Also the Swedish government has shown great interest in process orientation and sees it as an effective approach to meet the public demands of efficiency, legal security, increased collaboration and citizen focus (Stigendal & Johansson, 2003). Working with processes and process orientation is a key factor when striving for development within an organisation. (Lindvall, 2001) In June 2000 the Swedish government presented a program of act consisting of a plan to increase the demands for better premises for Swedish citizens called ‘administration in the service of democracy’ (Stigendal, 2003). Several governmental authorities have applied the process oriented approach and we are studying one of them, the Swedish road administration, Vägverket.

As we stated earlier there is a lot of research conducted and presented within process orientation. Almost all of the existing literature concerns the implementation phase and what effects process orientation will have on an organisation. However, when you connect it with leadership and steering/controlling methods the research is almost none existing (Nilsson, 2003). That is what this thesis will cover, the linkage between process orientation and leadership issues. This makes this thesis both interesting and unique.

1.2 Problem

The given background information makes this subject interesting. There is plenty of literature about process orientation and what it means to an organisation but “the next step”, how the organisation and the managers experiences the change is almost non existing. Literature within leadership connected to process orientation and how the leadership is affected when performing this organisational change has been left behind.

The change is vital because an organisation that shifts from a task oriented approach into a process oriented approach makes a drastic change and the leadership could be a key factor or problem when implementing it. It is of great importance that the new approach is implemented throughout the organisation and the way that managers use leadership affects how this is carried out. The process orientation has become a major factor in organisations and is used to such an extent that this subject is interesting. That is why this is a field that we want to explore and provide information about in order to make leadership issues public and bring it up for discussion.

How is the leadership, within the top level manager positions, affected in a process oriented organisation?

1.3 Purpose

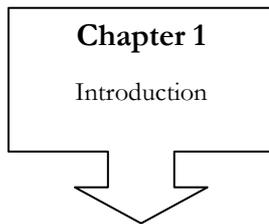
The purpose of this thesis is to increase the understanding of how leadership is affected, on a top managerial level, as a result of implementing a process oriented approach.

1.4 Delimitations

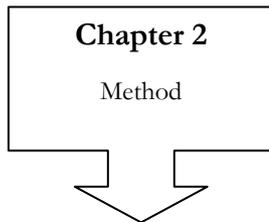
We have limited this thesis to top level managers in one company only. We have chosen the top level managers because we feel that we can find the most interesting facts here, they treat the most important leadership questions that affects the whole company and can be seen as rule models for the rest of the organisation.

The fact that it is a governmental administration could affect the result of this thesis because it is not an organisation with the same demands of economic results as a private company. However we feel that by focusing on the leadership the findings of this thesis is not influenced too much by that fact.

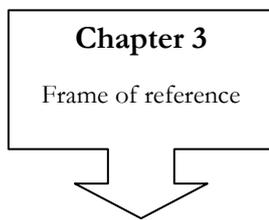
1.5 Disposition of the Thesis



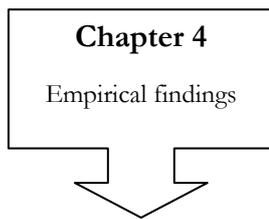
In this chapter the background, problem, purpose and delimitation of this thesis are presented and discussed. It also states the reasons for why the chosen subject is interesting and to whom.



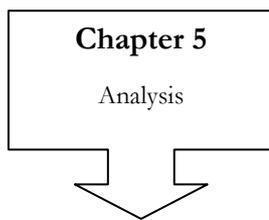
This chapter presents and explains the method chosen in order to fulfill the purpose of this thesis.



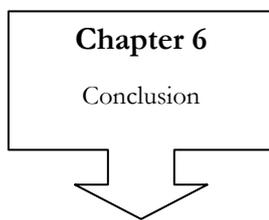
This chapter intends to present and describe relevant theories regarding to the purpose of this study. It aims to use the theory found for interpreting the empirical observations obtained. The chapter starts with a description of theories regarding process orientation and ends with a presentation of common leadership literature..



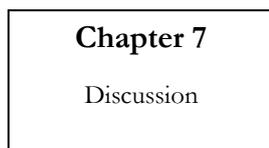
This chapter describes the chosen company and presents information obtained from the conducted interviews.



This chapter intends to analyse the empirical findings with relevant theories. It will start with presenting the structure of the analysis, followed by the analysis of the information obtained .



In this chapter the thesis is concluded.



This chapter discusses the outcome of the study conducted.

2 Method

This chapter presents and explains the method chosen in order to fulfill the purpose chosen for this thesis

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to describe increase the understanding of how leadership is affected, on a top managerial level, as a result of implementing a process oriented view. This will be carried out from the perspective of top level managers within one company in order to get indebt information and increase the understanding within this area.

A case study will be conducted by interviewing six top level managers within Vägverket. A company who has implemented a process oriented view in their organization.

2.2 Positivism and Hermeneutic

Within scientific research there are two main approaches or visions. These are positivism and the hermeneutical view (Wallén, 1996). We will present these below and describe which one and how it is used in this thesis.

The basic idea in positivism is that there is one true reality; information can be achieved through observations. If a statement should be considered as scientific it must be expressing something from the real life, something existing. The requirement within positivism is that the researcher produces facts with a high degree of certainty and that it is independent from the researcher, the result should be able to obtain by someone else performing the exact same research. The scientific research should be objective (Patel & Tebelius, 1987).

The positivistic view on knowledge can be described as follows. Scientific knowledge should provide us with enough information to make predictions of future occurrences. Such predictions should be able to state in probability terms which are based upon logical analyses from a natural environment. The knowledge should further be translated into an empirically based scientifically language and be defined by possible and observable operations (Patel & Tebelius, 1987).

A positivistic research approach is therefore based upon prerequisites of strict premises, definitions and clauses. Positivism is also criticized for its strict rules that set a limit on innovation and creative discoveries (Eriksson & Wiedersheim, 1997). The researcher's attitude within positivism is characterised by that he/she sees the research objective from an outer perspective and be objective. This does not fit with the hermeneutical view where the researcher constantly increases experience and knowledge and ads it to the research (Patel & Davidsson, 1991). That is why we have not chosen to have positivism as our approach.

The hermeneutic view has its roots in the Renaissance, two parallel and partly interacting currents of thought- the protestant analysis of the bible and the humanist study of the ancient classics. The interpretation of texts, exegesis, is thus the starting point. From the very beginning a main theme in hermeneutics has been that the meaning of a part can only be understood if it is related to the whole. Conversely, the whole consists of parts, hence it can only be understood on the basic of these. We are therefore confronted with the hermeneutic circle: the part can only be understood from the whole, and the whole only from the parts (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000). See Figure 2.1.

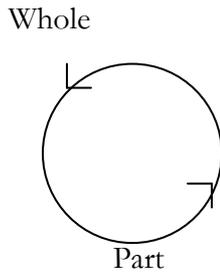


Figure 2.1 The hermeneutic circle: original version (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2000).

Hermeneutics solves this apparently unsolvable contradiction by transforming the circle into a spiral, see fig 2.2, (Radnitzky, 1970; Eriksson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 2001), you start in one part, try tentatively to relate it to the whole, upon which new light is shed, and from here you return to the part studied, and so on(Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2000).

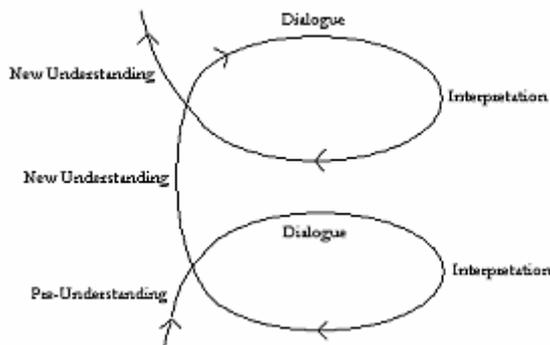


Figure 2.2 The hermeneutic spiral (Eriksson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 2001).

Unlike positivism, the hermeneutical research is subjective and the researcher uses consciously his/her values in the scientific process. Previously obtained knowledge and experiences are used as a base for understanding. Without this knowledge and experience there can be no interpretations of information or material. The understanding can be both rational and compassionate. The rational foundation consists of knowledge about human conditions and the compassionate is about an individual’s ability to emotionally picture another individual’s situation. The interpretation is made from a historical perspective and in its context (Patel & Tibelius, 1987).

Within positivism the researchers have a logical, analytical and objectively attitude; the researcher has an outer relation to his/her research objective. A hermeneutical researcher has more feelings, values and subjectivity in his approach to his/her research objective. The researcher is a part of the reality that is under research (Patel & Davidsson, 1991).

A researcher starts a hermeneutic research process with some kind of understanding (Eriksson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 1997). This thesis is closest to the hermeneutical approach because the purpose and problem is to present deeper understanding within the leadership – process orientation field. We have gained a pre-understanding of these both from specific information about Vägverket that made us interested in performing a case study about them and with our own personal, more general, knowledge and experiences. With this as background our journey on the hermeneutical spiral started. Our understanding for the subject increases while we study relevant literature, perform interviews and analyse the outcome. Our understanding of the subject gets deeper and deeper through out the research

process. We interpret our findings from the background we possess which makes us less objective but that is what the concept of the hermeneutical approach is about, to gain your own understanding within a subject.

2.3 Induction, deduction and abduction

Induction and deduction are two separate explanation models. An inductive model takes a number of single observations as starting point and claim that a connection that have been observed in all of these makes it generally valid. The weakness of this model is that consideration to the underlying structure and situation not are taken, only a mechanic external connection. A deductive model takes a general rule as starting point and claim that this explains a single observation of interest. Induction starts with empirical findings and deduction from frame of reference (theory) (Alvesson & Sköldbberg 1994).

According to Artsberg (2005) a deductive approach is based upon an existing theory and seeks to test this to strengthen, invalidate, adopt or develop it. The inductive approach has its starting point in the empirical findings and aims to build up new knowledge that will contribute to new theories.

Abduction means that a single case is interpreted with a theory that explains the case. The interpretation ought to be confirmed with new observations. Abduction is therefore a kind of combination of deduction and induction and is often used at case study based investigations. Because of emphasis on underlying pattern abduction is separated from the other approaches and includes understanding. Abduction lies closer to deduction and it assume to empirical facts, like induction, but do not turn away theoretical ideas. Under the research process one is alternating between theory and empirical findings and both are reinterpreted by each other (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 1994).

A hermeneutic researcher would say that abduction means, an interpretation of facts that when already have a pre-understanding of, a kind of hermeneutical spiral. But there is no direct connection between abduction thinking and the hermeneutic approach according to Alvesson and Skölberg (1994).

In hermeneutical research the importance is to see that the holistic view is emphasized. That view differs from the natural science approach where one disapproves of the thought to gain knowledge by induction (Patel & Tebelius, 1987).

Our research is hermeneutical and originates from existing theory in leadership and process orientation. Therefore the inductive method is not relevant in this thesis. The abductive approach is most relevant for our research. The theories gave us an understanding of the area and a ground for empirical study and when making additional theoretical considerations. We have altered between frame of reference (theory) and empirical findings to increase our understanding within the area, in other words we have used an abductive approach.

2.4 Qualitative method

There are normally two different approaches of data collection identifiable, qualitative and quantitative (Lundahl & Skärvad, 1999). The diversity of the two methods lies within what they are based upon. A quantitative research is based on statistical or other quantifiable measurement whilst a qualitative research is based upon making observations of non-quantifiable measurements, observations of “soft” data, such as attitude, values etc. (Lundahl & Skärvad, 1999; Ghauri, Grönhaug. & Kristianslund, 1995). Miles and Huberman

(1994) describe the difference as qualitative data is usually in the form of words and the quantitative in numbers. We have chosen a qualitative method because we are making observations of non quantifiable measurements.

This thesis is based on interest in a process, effects on leadership after a re-organisation, an approach that Merriam (1998) states is well suited with a qualitative method. She claims that is a fact due to the insight and deepness that this method brings through observation at the phenomenon's natural environment combined with an unsystematic observation approach.

The main idea with a qualitative method is to collect information that provides the researcher with a deeper understanding of a subject whereby the researcher can see the completeness of a predetermined problem (Holme & Solvang, 1997).

Holme and Solvang (1997) further argue that a qualitative analysis is not adequate to draw general conclusions, however its purpose is to give a deep understanding of a problem/phenomenon it can raise interesting questions and findings regarding this matter.

According to Svenning (1997), there is a risk connected to a qualitative method, when conducting interviews for example, that the information from the respondent is believed to be the only truth and that the researchers own analysis are 'coloured' by this fact. We have chosen respondents with different roles within the organisation to get different perspectives and thereby trying to avoid being coloured by getting similar information.

A qualitative data collection method provides a deeper description of a problem than in a quantitative method. It is also suitable when one wants to understand and explore fields that have not been studied so much before. A qualitative study emphasize on the understanding of theories, to gain closeness to data and provide a subjective 'insider view' (Ghauri et al, 1995). This is why we feel that this method is the right for our thesis where the purpose is to increase the understanding of how leadership is affected, on a top managerial level, as a result of implementing a process oriented view, which has not been researched to a great extent before.

By using a qualitative method we feel that we obtain observations at a natural environment and therefore achieve indebt information. This information is soft intangible data, non quantifiable, and cannot be measured through a quantitative analysis. We would also like the respondents to answer independently with a low degree of standardization. Since we write this thesis in accordance to the hermeneutic spiral we find it natural to approach our purpose with a qualitative method. We aim to increase the understanding of a context by having some pre-understanding, collecting more knowledge through relevant literature, then conducting the study and at the end gaining a deeper understanding of the subject.

2.5 Case study

One form of a qualitative approach is the case study. It basically means to examine a few cases from many aspects, which is the opposite of a statistical research where a few aspects are examined in several cases (Eriksson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 1999). The case study is one of many ways of conducting research. Other ways are for example experiments, surveys, histories and analysis of archival information. Case studies are the most suitable when you want to answer to questions like why and how. Performing a case study is also a well suited choice when you are trying to explore a field that has not been properly examined earlier. The case research strategy is well suited for knowledge contribution when it comes to indi-

vidual, organizational, social, political and similar phenomena's. Case studies arise from the desire to understand complex social phenomena's (Yin, 2003).

The case study is normally based on thorough descriptions of individual cases; these are compared to each other in order to find patterns and connections (Merriam, 1998). A case study is a useful tool to describe and illustrate a problem to gain a deeper understanding of a problem /phenomena (Eriksson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 1999).

If the word describe is used in the purpose and problem in a research a case study is preferable. When two or more cases are examined, the prospect of comparison and reliability increases and therefore also the possibility of generalization (Eriksson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 2001).

In case studies only a single or a few cases are studied thoroughly, this can affect the possibility of generalizations. Generalizations in case studies might instead be labeled *petite generalizations* since they are generalizations that regularly occur in the specific case but might not be complete for a whole population of something (Stake, 1995). A small number of observations can be justified by the fact that it provides a 'thick description' of the problem that probably would not be possible in cases of numerous observations (Ghauri et al., 1995).

From our point of view we see Vägverket as a case and that we examine it from several different angles through interviews and collected material to gain a deep understanding and broad perspective of the problem/phenomenon. We are conducting interviews with top level managers with different roles and alignments within the organisation that involves the main process, parts of the process and supporting processes. This provides us with a broad perspective at the level where the main leadership questions are dealt with which gives this thesis deepness.

We think that a case study is the best suited for us when conducting research within this field. This mainly because of the fact that we are focusing on a limited number of cases which gives us a deep understanding and insight of the problem. Another reason is that the selected field of focus is complex and by choosing a case study approach we can interpret the interviews in a way that we feel reflect the reality.

2.6 Data collection

2.6.1 Primary and secondary data

There are several alternative methods to collect primary data, Svenning (1997) suggest researchers to use interviews, observations or participate in the studied process. In this thesis we used interviews to obtain the primary information. According to Andersen (1998) this is the most common way of gathering information when researching with the qualitative method.

The secondary data, which according to Andersen (1998) is literature and other written sources of information, make up the frame of reference of this thesis. The frame of reference was constructed by studying literature covering leadership and process orientation/organization. We used secondary data from Vägverket that the respondents referred to at the interviews and by Vägverkets internal net for example internal evaluation and descriptions of business and organization.

2.6.2 Choice of company and respondents

When a problem have been defined it is possible to choose what unit that will be analyzed (Merriam, 1998). We choose to investigate Vägverket in our thesis because it is a big authority and are relevant for our research because of the fact that they have implemented a process oriented approach recently. It is a well established organisation and has got a lot of experience within both leadership and process orientation that can increase our understanding within the chosen subject. We have good access to Vägverket because one of us writers works in one of Vägverket's regions. This has given us a pre- interest and understanding of both the subject and problem. With our hermeneutical approach it is natural that the personal knowledge and experience is included in the interpretation and is not considered as a problem that will affect this thesis negatively.

It is crucial to choose appropriate respondents in order to get the appropriate information for the purpose of the study. If the "wrong" person is being interviewed there is a great risk of losing valuable insight and understanding regarding to the chosen topic. Non probable selection is the most common used method within qualitative case studies. It is a method where you choose your objects to study that you believe will give the most relevant information that you need to fulfil your purpose. This could either be done by yourself or through a discussion with someone that has more information about who is suitable and not. The respondents are not selected through any statistical or random selection. You must make your selection in a way that make that you learn as much as possible (Merriam, 1988).

We have used a not probable selection and a selection based on both personal knowledge and others recommendation. We have discussed our own proposals for respondents with Thomas Ericsson, Administrative Director for the head office's staff at Vägverket and he gave us his view of who he thought would bring the most relevant information and would be most suitable for the research. This means we used a combination of our own knowledge of the organisation with what the Administrative Director of Vägverket thought and from that we choose six suitable respondents.

Our criterion was that we wanted to study leadership at top management level related to process orientation. We have studied top level managers at the head office of Vägverket. It has been important to get managers with different aspects and views of the subject. Everyone have their own background and understanding of the context. The chosen managers are very experienced and their information will increase our understanding within the field and bring this thesis with relevant information. Increased understanding of the whole is thoughts in the hermeneutics and our selection of good respondents will contribute to that. The six managers within Vägverket we have chosen and their positions during the period we have investigated are showed below:

- Lena Erixon, Economy Director, Suport process owner for economy and business development and Deputy -General.
- Janeric Reyier, Main process owner for journeys by citizens 2003 with a background as Road Director and 2006 manager for the Business steering department at the head office.
- Gunilla Lundberg, Information Director and Support process owner for communication.
- Thomas Ericsson, Administrative Director for the head office's staff

Method

- Leif Pettersson, Deputy Personal Director and responsible for manager development in Vägverket.
- Hans Rode, Road Director for Stockholm Region 2003 and manager for the new development department at the head office 2006.

The organization in Vägverket and the change under the investigated period is described in 4.1. We want to clarify their place in the organization below. Our respondents are placed at the head office in Borlänge, Stockholm Region and one respondent is also Deputy Director General.

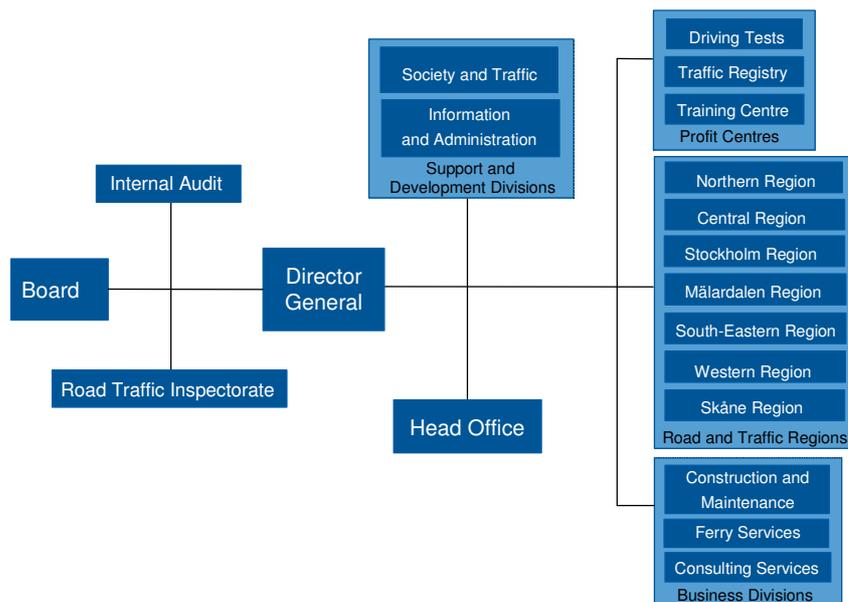


Figure 2.3 Vägverkets organization 2003 - 2006

The process owners are placed at the head office and the administrative manager is placed at the head office’s staff.

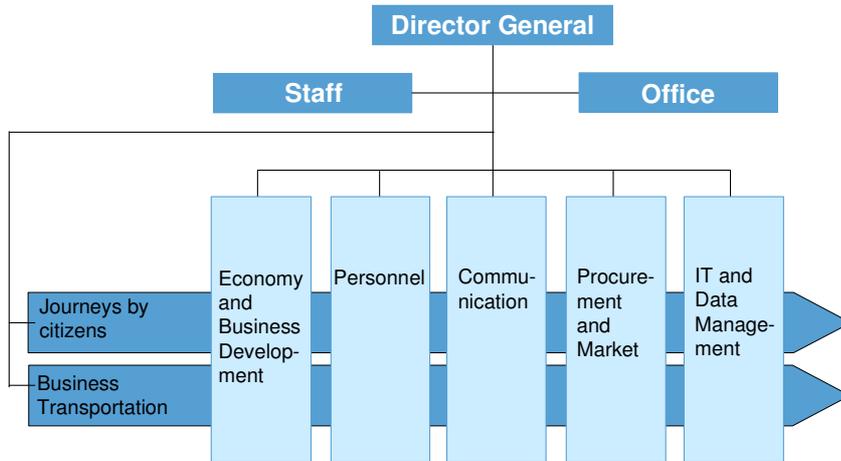


Fig 2.4 The Head office organization 2003

The organization was modified 2006 and then two of our respondents, Reyier and Rode, get managers for the departments operations management and development.

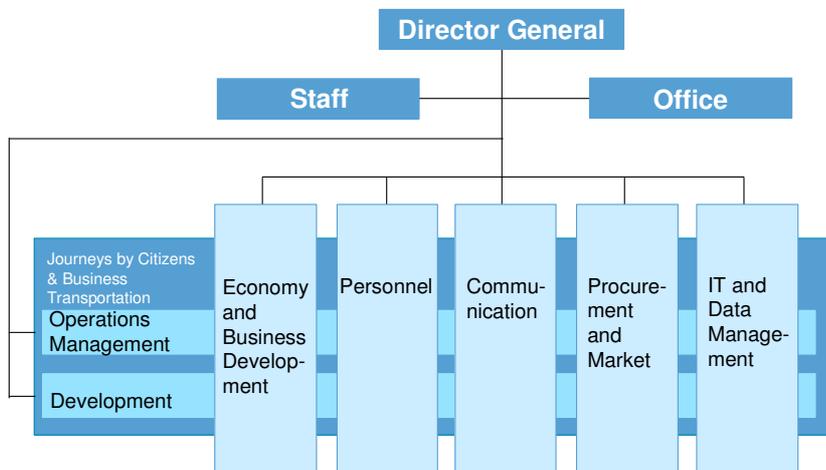


Figure 2.5 The Head office organization 2006

2.6.3 Interview

We have chosen a qualitative case study and for that the most common source of data collection is through interviews (Merriam, 1998).

The investigation design is about how to get theories and problems from an abstract to an empirical level (Svenning, 1997). In our research it means how to constuate our interview questions in a way to obtain the most accurate and important information. How this was done will be presented later in this part.

When using interviews to collect data, Patel & Davidsson (1994), states that researchers need to consider the degree of standardization and structure of the study. A totally standardized interview means that the questions asked are very precise and narrow, no follow-up questions. If you have several respondents everyone gets exactly the same questions in the same order. The respondents are not given the freedom to speak free within the subject. A less standardized interview is the opposite and gives both the interviewers and respondents freedom to speak and ask follow-up questions.

We had twelve pre-decided questions (appendix 1) when conducting all of our interviews. We believe that these were quite open questions and would lead us into a discussion with the respondents. This flexibility means that we used a low degree of standardisation to give both ourselves and the respondent's freedom to speak and ask follow-up questions. We wanted the interviews to be low structured like this in order to gain a broad perspective in the given answers. We believe that when using a qualitative method, the interview should preferably be of low or semi degree of standardisation and of low structure which will help us to focus on finding the depth of the studied problem. The respondents has through this approach been able to describe the subject in a deep way through their own words based on personal experiences without feeling that we have been steering them and their answers.

Interviews that are conducted in an explorative way or as preparation for a research study to gain basic knowledge of the subject have a low structure and standardization (Andersen, 1994). Our research has the aim to give a basic description of a complex context and have therefore chosen a relatively low structure and standardization. We had enough knowledge about the subject to be able to form the basic questions (appendix 1) and during the interviews we complemented with follow-up questions, we can therefore say that this thesis has a semi degree of structure and standardization.

Ericsson and Wiedersheim-Paul (2001) emphasizes the importance of preparing for an interview in order to receive relevant answers. It is vital to plan the interview carefully and make a list of questions – a catalogue of variables. It is also crucial to have a well developed pre-understanding in order to avoid lack of competence that would occur during the session. We have prepared by studying relevant literature within leadership and process orientation. We have also read some internal documents from Vägverket about the implementation to gain more specific information about the case of this study.

Further more it is important to stay on the track and not go into irrelevant directions when conducting interviews. Positive aspects when making a personal interview are the facts that the person who makes the interview can use relatively complicated questions, avoid misunderstandings and have the possibility to follow up with related questions. Another positive issue is that the interviewer can interpret the person being interviewed and see whether the person is well skilled within his/her subject or not. A disadvantage on the other hand could be the situation where it can be hard to ask sensitive questions because of the lack of anonymity (Ericsson and Wiedersheim-Paul, 2001).

We held our interviews over the phone and they took something between 45-60 minutes each. The ideal situation would have been to meet with our respondents in person. This was not possible though because the respondents have very limited time resources and the head office is located far from our home base. However we feel that the conducted phone interviews went well and we had the possibility to have a good dialogue with the respondents to gain deep information from them. The persons we interviewed approved to be taped so we could go back and listen to the interviews again. To try and avoid not thought through answers we gave the respondents our base questions in advance. By doing so we

believe that we at least made them reflect on the subject and through our follow-up questions they were not too prepared and able to have dictated answers.

After the interviews we listened to them again several times to not miss out on any important information. We also printed out the interviews on paper in order to easier see connections between the respondents for further discussion and analysis.

According to Merriam (1994) ethical questions are relevant when collecting data and publishing the obtained results. When we invited the respondents to participate in the investigation we described the purpose and problem of the thesis. The Information Director of Vägverket got an early version of our empirical findings and got the possibility to decide if Vägverket and the respondents wanted be anonymous in the research. They choose not to. It is positive for our thesis that we got permission to use the names because it increases the emphasis of the thesis.

The analysis of the provided information from the respondents could awaken some ethical problems because the researcher is the primary instrument for gathering information. The information is being filtered through the researcher's values. There is a risk that information is excluded because it is not consistent with the researcher's perceptions (Merriam, 1994). We have throughout the whole work with this thesis strived towards complete neutrality, honesty and accuracy of provided information. We have no interests in affecting the results of the thesis for any personal gaining's and objectives.

2.7 Empirical findings and analysis

From the obtained primary data we identified several themes that we use in the empirical findings chapter to make it easier to read and understand. It can be seen as a first phase analysis, to put information in themes that we feel increase the presentation of the information. The themes in the empirical findings are basically consisting of information and quotes that have similar meaning among the respondents.

The analysis chapter is the second phase of the analysing this case. From the perspective of our purpose we choose, out of the empirical findings, the most relevant information and analysed it to answer the problem question of the thesis. A third phase analysis is made in the conclusion chapter where the purpose and problem of the thesis once again is used to draw more detailed and specific answers than in the analysis chapter. An analysis of the analysis one could say.

2.8 Choice of literature

The interest for this thesis was awakening because one of the authors works at one of Vägverkets regions. We have read a report from the Swedish state quality and competence department (2003) that involved case studies with public authorities that has implemented process orientation. There is not a lot of existing literature about leadership connected to process orientation according to Ellström et al (2003). That is why we feel that this field was interesting to look further into. These pre studies gave us a pre understanding of the subject.

We decided to search for literature within the two main fields, leadership and process orientation in order to gain deeper knowledge within them. There was plenty of existing literature within the both two fields. When we tried to search for literature of them combined we found almost nothing. We have used the JIBS (Jönköping International Business School) library as a base for our research. We have mainly used search engines like, Julia,

ABI/Inform, and Emerald fultext. Examples of words we have been searching for are; process, process orientation, process organisation, organisation, leadership, management, leadership change, organisational change etc. We have searched for these words both in English and in Swedish and used them in a lot of combinations to get as exact hits as possible.

We have also used the literature we found as a base for further research by looking at their references.

2.9 Reliability/Validity

Two crucial concepts in doing research are reliability and validity. These concepts are generally used when doing quantitative studies but they are also important in qualitative studies. According to Lundahl and Skärvad (1992), reliability is the extent to which a measurement procedure yields the same answer however and whenever it is carried out. Validity is an instrument to measure what you are intending to measure.

In qualitative studies validity is an issue of whether the researchers see what they think they see and how they interpret their findings (Kirk & Miller, 1986). True reliability can only exist if another researcher would draw the same conclusion in another time and place using the same research method (Eriksson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 2001). We have described the background to our research, presented theories, which our respondents are and to what context. This gives the results a meaning of consistency and dependency. It is an alternative to demand that a neutral person will get the same results (Merriam, 1988).

A case study is normally based on one or a few cases and this can affect the possibility of generalizations. Generality in case studies might instead be labeled petite generalizations since they are generalizations that regularly occur in a specific case but not totally applicable for the whole population. The essence of a case study is instead particularization. A particular case is selected and carefully studied, the primary object is not to see how it is different from others but what it is and how it is done. To be able to tell what is unique with a specific case, knowledge about other cases is needed (Stake, 1995).

To increase the possibility to draw more general conclusions we have, according to Merriam (1988), described the context where the research has taken place in order to do so. This will also increase the readers ability to make his/her own judgement if the outcome can be applied in a similar looking situation. This thesis is built upon one case, to make generalizations for Vägverket and organizations with similar structure. It can therefore be thought of as petite generalizations.

Robson (1993) suggest that the terms credibility and confirmability are used with a qualitative method. Credibility concerns the trustworthiness of the conducted research and the amount of information provided in order to make a replication of the study easier.

Confirmability is about if we provide enough information about the study to determine the sufficiency of the process and then to evaluate whether the findings flow from the data or not. It is an equivalent concept to objectivity in order to make it possible to analyze the findings of this thesis (Robson, 1993).

We are providing the reader with as much relevant information about the conducted research as possible to gain a high level of credibility. In order to achieve high confirmability we have tried to analyze the gained data in an as neutral way as possible so that other researchers will come to or close to the same conclusions as us with the same data and information provided.

3 Frame of reference

This chapter intends to present and describe relevant theories regarding to the purpose of this study. It aims to use the theory found for interpreting the empirical observations obtained. The chapter starts with a description of theories regarding process orientation and ends with a presentation of common leadership literature..

A process is according to Nationalencyklopedin:

“Course of events that involves some kind of change or development” (Nationalencyklopedin, www.ne.se, 2006-03-20).

This is a good way to introduce the process orientation approach because that is what it is all about, to develop/change events by using processes.

3.1 Process orientation

Process orientation focuses on customer orientation, flexibility and efficiency. During the last fifteen years the process orientation view has rooted itself and become a very used theory on organisations all over the world. It has even been called the dominating management method (Nilsson, 2003).

Reengineering has been a common expression within business management theory over the last twenty years. It basically means a radical change of the companies' processes in order to achieve radical improvements. The key word in the definition is process, a complete chain of activities which together creates a value for the customer (Hammer, 1996/1997).

Before recent years most focus was paid on the single activities and not what they created together. By high lightening the processes itself you change from a traditional vertical organisation to a more modern horizontal organisational perspective. One could almost say that you 'lay' the company down from having a top-down decision making approach to a more equally spread responsibility approach (Hammer, 1996/1997).

The vertical organisation is no longer sufficient because of several facts. Ostroff (1999) mentions; too much focus on internal tasks rather than looking at delivering an external value to the customer, loss of important information while it travels up and down the organisation through departments and persons, expense added for coordination between departments, unused human resources in low levels of creativity and initiatives of workers.

The main idea with a horizontal organisation is to form a small number of end-to-end work, information and material flows. This creates tailor made core processes which helps the company to reach its competitive peak (Ostroff, 1999).

Fundamental principles of the horizontal organisation Ostroff, 1999.

- Concentrate on core processes, not tasks or functions.
- Managers responsible for a whole process.
- Create teams
- Reduce hierarchy within the organisation
- Exclude non value added work
- Authorise decision making for people closely connected to processes
- Promote creativity among employees

- Measure performance by customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction and financial contribution
- Company culture based on processes, collaboration, openness, improvement, responsibility and well being

The use of processes demands a different way of thinking in form of; working tasks, employment, working skills, payment system, career paths, managerial roles and strategic options. An organisation that wants to do well during the twenty first century needs to be process oriented (Ostroff, 1999).

The need for companies to streamline has become imminent over the last decades due to increased international competition and customers increased awareness and demands. This means that companies need to look at how to meet these new demands; to lower costs while at the same time increase productivity, flexibility, quality and service. Hammer (1996/1997) states that the only way to meet these demands is to change the company into a process oriented view.

The organisational structure over the last two hundred years has been based upon work tasks, not the whole process. The difference between a task and a process is that a task is an element, an activity that is normally accomplished by one person. A process is a group of tasks that joined together creates a value for a customer. One task alone does not mean anything for the customer but a well working process chain does. An example to make it clearer: transportation of a product has no greater meaning for a customer as long as the product arrives as he wants it. This means that the single tasks have no meaning while a well working process chain has for the customers' satisfaction rate. Activities create 'completeness' which equals the value of a process. A change into a process oriented view means that some tasks are abolished, some are joined with other and some changed places in order to be more efficient (Hammer, 1996/1997).

The process oriented view does almost never fit into the old organisation where the task oriented roots are too strong; the task manager's integrity becomes threatened. The new organisation demands creation of teams that handles processes instead of tasks. This is not an easy change because a process oriented approach demands a high degree of individual decision making, something that the old 'workers' are not used to and often not thought to be capable of making. Process orientation is not mainly structural; it is more about changing perspective, the way to look at things, in order to make the primary (tasks) and secondary (processes) change place in priority. This has to be carried out through the whole company, not only the board room, to achieve full concentration on processes. The process oriented view is a lot about breaking boundaries, not only be focused on one area. For example personnel from research and development need to be involved in more than just developing products, for example answering questions that customer support does not have the possibility to answer (Hammer, 1996/1997).

Keywords are: Group, together, result and most importantly customer.

The process oriented approach focuses on end products, not what it takes to make them. The most essential in a process is the input and output, everything in between is of secondary interest. The word worker is no longer proper, executer is more appropriate. The team is important, it consists of a group of people who has common goals and aims (Hammer, 1996/1997).

3.1.1 Steering and steer methods

An organisation has goals and aims that it strives to achieve. These often have different characteristics. Some are explicit and are monitored by one or several actors set for the whole organisation and some are less explicit and on a smaller level than the whole organisation. For example through personal set aims and goals. Steer methods is about how to achieve the aims and goals through influencing behaviours. Influencing behaviour, not in individual moments and cases but as a general way to think and act.

Definition of steer method:

“Those processes where managers and co-worker actions, based in any form of intention, in its turn affects managers and co-worker actions in the company” (Nilsson, 2003, p 33).

The influence that steering constitutes of is the origin cause of effects. The effects affect the behaviour internal in the organisation. The organisations efficiency can be measured in how well the aims and goals are achieved (Nilsson, 2003).

Nilsson (2003) divides steering methods into three categories; steering through aims, rules and values. The aim based steering method is based on setting up aims and then it is up to the individual himself to achieve them in the best way he/she can. The key to this method is *what* the process should accomplish. The aim could and is often set in form of a specified quantifiable amount of output to achieve during a certain period of time.

The rule based method is as it sounds based upon rules and definitions of how the process is supposed to be performed not only through input and output details. This could be done through work descriptions, manuals, written or unwritten rules etc. The central in the rule based method is *how* a process is carried out.

The latest addition to steering methods involves culture and values. It is a lot more complex and advanced than the two other. The main aim with value based steering is to affect the behaviour. The creation of joint values among employees in an organisation. The basic intention is that the employees are going to behave and act in line with the values. The value based method is a bit deeper than how and what and is more related to *why*? Steering with values intend to create meaning.

A leadership change in either of these directions could create a positive participation within the organisation. The discussion about adapting steering to achieve process orientation and integration is founded in the assumption of a connection between organisational structure and steering (Nilsson, 2003).

These methods could to some degree be used simultaneously, with one of them being the most dominant creating a base for the organisation. There is a danger with a mix of them that the combination creates uncertainty because there is no dominant base to rely on. If for example there is a strong rule based steering method there is a risk that it either totally or to some degree cancels the aims and values.

Nilsson (2003) created out of several other theories his own model of suitable steering methods at a given prerequisite.

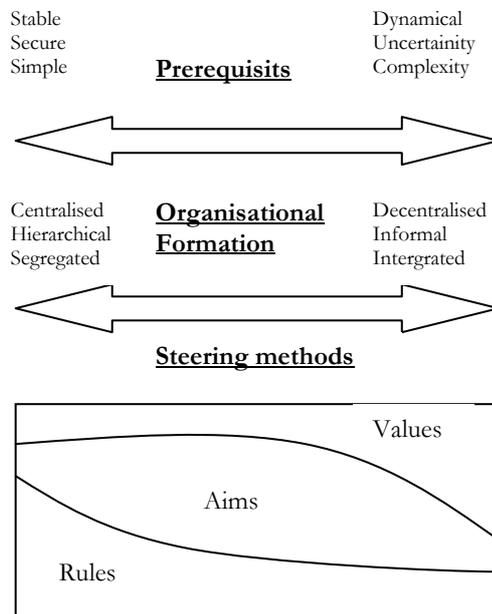


Figure 3.1 Suitable steering methods at different prerequisites (Nilsson, 2003)

The model shows that rule based steering is most suitable during stable prerequisites with a low degree of flexibility and creativity is needed from the employees. When the dynamics, uncertainty and complex ability increase the need for the employees to cope with unforeseen situations also increases. With an aim based steering method the freedom to solve difficult situations increase because of the high flexibility. The value based has an even greater freedom because of the fact that here not only the work method but also the aims are set by the employees themselves (Nilsson, 2003).

3.2 Leadership

Scientific research on leadership started at the twentieth century. Much of the research was focused on the determinants of leadership effectiveness. Scientist have studied what traits, behaviours, abilities, power, or aspects of situations that determine how well a leader succeed to influence followers and accomplish task objectives (Yukl 2006). Within scientific research it is important to study how different aspects have affects on one another (Ellström, et al, 2003).

3.2.1 Definition of Leadership

There are a lot of definitions of leadership.

“There are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept” (Stogdill 1990, p11).

Stogdill's (1990) conclusion is that the definition of leadership should depend on the purpose to be served by the definition. Leadership has for example been seen as the focus of group processes, as a personality attribute, as an exercise of influence, as a form of persuasion, as a power relation, as an instrument in the attainment of goals, as an effect of interaction, and as the initiation of structure. The definition can be broad and include many aspects or they can be narrow.

Below we have listed some representative examples of definitions that has been presented within leadership research (Yukl 2006, p3). The sources to the definitions are also taken from Yukl (2006, p3) and are therefore not presented in our reference list.

- Leadership is "the process of influencing the activities of an organized group toward goal achievement." (Rauch & Behling, 1984, p.46)
- "Leadership is about articulating visions, embodying values, and creating the environment within which things can be accomplished." (Richards & Engle, 1986, p.206)
- "Leadership is a process of giving purpose (meaningful direction) to collective effort, and causing willing effort to be expended to achieve purpose." (Jacobs & Jaques, 1990, p.281)
- "Leadership "is the ability to step outside the culture... to start evolutionary change processes that are more adaptive." (Schein, 1992p.2)
- Leadership is "the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of organization..." (House et al., 1999, p.184)

When writing this thesis we can not choose one definition. There are features in many of the definitions that feel relevant for the study. We study leadership on a top managerial level within a governmental authority with a complex organisation that is changing its approach into process orientation. Therefore definitions with features like vision, change, aims etc are closely connected.

Alvesson (2002) states that most studies within leadership focus on how individuals are identified as a leader and how they are behaving or interacting with a group of subordinates. In this study we will come into touch with a larger context than small groups and a majority of our respondents are senior leaders. Therefore the definitions of culture feel relevant in this thesis.

"Organizational culture typically refers to a larger context than a small group it is not something that the typical small-group leader has a significant impact on" (Alvesson, 2002, s 95).

"Senior managers lead, however, entire or large parts of organizations and the situation with regard to organizational culture becomes different" (Alvesson, 2002, s 95).

3.2.2 Management/leadership and manager/leader

According to Kotter (1996) leadership produce organizational change by developing a vision of the future and strategies for making necessary change. They communicate and explain the vision and the leaders motivate and inspire people to attain the vision. Management produces predictability and order by setting operational goals, establishing action plans, timetables and allocating resources. Managers organize and monitor results and solve possible problems.

Mintzberg (1973) conclude that two points should be made in the leader role. The key purpose of the leader role is to affect integration between individual needs and organizational goals. The manager must concentrate his efforts in order to bring subordinate and organizational needs into a common accord in order to promote efficient operations. The other point lies within the leader role and that managerial power most clearly manifests itself. Formal authority sets the manager with great potential power; leadership activity determines how much of it will be realized (Mintzberg, 1973).

Several authors have during recent years proposed a distinction between managers and leaders. Managers are relying on their formal position and working with bureaucratic processes such as planning, budgeting, organizing and controlling. Leaders rely on their personal abilities, work with visions, agendas and coalition building and mainly through non-coercive means affect people's feelings and thinking. Alvesson (2002)

There is a discussion going on about the difference of management and leadership. A person can be a leader without being a manager and a person can be a manager without leading. Most scholars agree that manager in modern organizations necessarily must involve leading (Yukl 2006).

Alvesson (2002) stresses the difficulty of separating leadership and management in practice. From his point of view he allows a combination of the two elements which he believes can be found within the activities of most managers and organisations.

3.2.3 Model of Flexible Leadership

The flexible leadership theory (Yukl & Lepsinger, 2004) was presented to answer the question of how leaders actually influence the overall effectiveness of a large organization. This part of the thesis will explain the model and Yukl & Lepsinger (2004) is the base of the whole piece unless something else is stated.

The theory contains the four components: organizational effectiveness, performance determinants, direct and indirect form of leadership and situational variables.

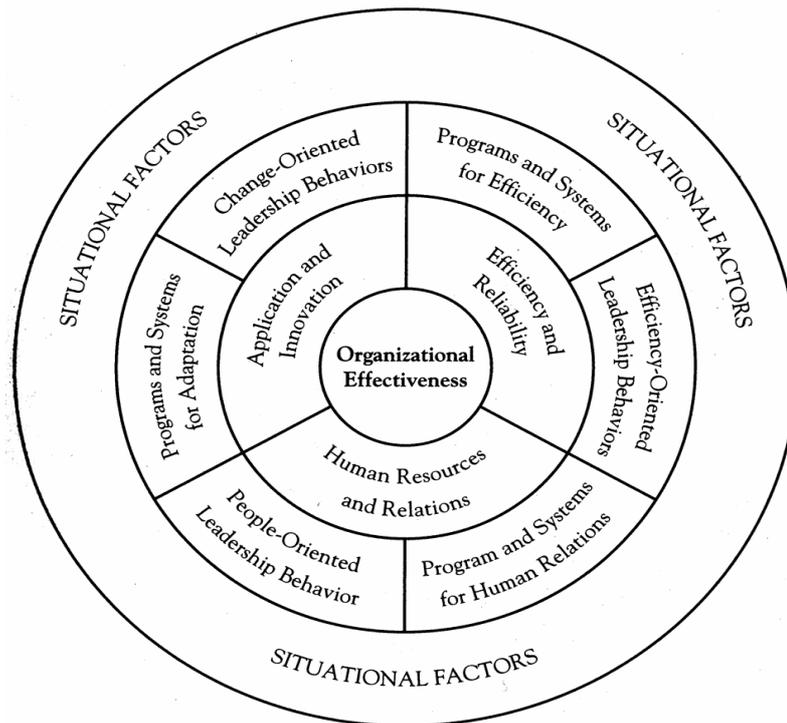


Figure 3.2 Model of Flexible Leadership (Yukl & Lepsinger, 2004)

Organization effectiveness is the first component of the model which can be measured in many different ways for example in net earnings, profit margin, increase in stock price.

The second components of the model are that leaders must be able to influence three key determinants of company performance. These are efficiency, human resources and adaptation and each type provides a unique leadership challenge.

The third part of the model consists of the direct and indirect forms of leadership used to influence the performance determinants. The direct leadership is the use of specific leadership behaviours and the indirect is that leaders can use management programs, systems, structural forms and external initiatives. It is often reserved for top management to initiate or modify management programs and system but to be successful it needs cooperation of managers at all levels of the organization. The direct and indirect form of leadership for influencing performance determinants is complementary rather than mutually exclusive. The direct leadership behaviours are differentiated by their objective, namely efficiency, human resources and adaptation and are listed below under the determinants of company performance.

The last component of the model is the situational variables that determine which challenges are most important to the organization for example environmental uncertainty and nature of competition.

Efficiency and reliability

Efficiency and reliability of work processes includes the use of resources and people to carry out essential operations and minimize cost without sacrificing standards of quality and safety. Process reliability involves production and delivery of products and services.

Leaders at the senior level can implement programs, management system to improve efficiency and reliability.

The task-orientated behaviours are most about improving efficiency and process reliability and includes for example clarifying and monitoring.

Clarifying roles and objectives is to communicate responsibilities and role expectation. Clarifying increase employee satisfaction and performance. Clarifying improves results, motivation and commitment by ensuring that people know how and what to do. It helps to understand how their work supports to the organization's goals and are related to others work.

In a changing environment success often depends on cooperation among people, teams and organizational subunits. Lack of clarifying can result in conflicts among people and departments and important responsibilities can be forgotten because each part believes that the other part is responsible.

Goal setting is an important form of clarifying. It is important to ensure objectives are set for primary responsibilities and tasks and that the objectives are specific, challenging and realistic.

Monitor operations and performance involves gathering information about work activities, checking on the progress and evaluate performance both individual and per unit. Leaders must know what is happening in their units and if it is performing its mission. Effective monitoring is to involve people in developing good measures of performance and progress. It is important to monitor work processes as well as the outcomes.

Application and innovation.

Application and innovation include adaptation to the external environment and responding in appropriate ways to threats and opportunities because of changes in technologies, actions from competitors and changed customer expectations and needs. Adaptation is less important when there is little or no competition and strong demand. This situation often occurs in for example public authorities when there is only one source of a service. Leaders can influence the culture in the organization by the values they espouse and by their actions. To create a culture with innovation leaders needs to demonstrate openness to new ideas, a willingness to take risks.

The change-oriented behaviours can improve adaptation to the external environment:

Monitor the external environment includes collecting and analyzing the external environment to find information about opportunities and threats. This is often the top executive's responsibility but when leaders at all levels are helping to monitor the environment the organization will be better to identify threats and opportunities. Even members of the organization who have contact with clients and other important outsiders should participate.

It is essential to learn about needs of customers and clients and how these changes. The information can be collected for example customer survey and meeting with focus groups.

Successful leaders find ways to involve the organization in the strategic planning which is the process of determining where you are, where you want to be in the future and how you will reach it. Strategic planning is a difficult responsibility of leaders and includes evaluating the need for change in strategy. Even when a major change is not necessary to deal with crises flexible leaders will continue to look for opportunities to improve the organization.

Articulate an appealing vision of what can be accomplished is important to envisioning change. In times of change people look to the leader for direction and signs that the organization have selected the right action.

Building support for change contain explain the urgent need for change, identify the necessary approvals for proposed change and identify supporters to build a coalition and identify opponents and the reasons for resistance. The process of change is a primary leadership role. Implementation of major change is a slow and difficult process that requires consistent attention to succeed.

The relevance of the behaviour also depends on the leader's position. Change oriented behaviour are used more by higher-levels leaders than lower-level leaders.

Human relation and resources

Human relation and resources is about recruiting and developing people with the skills and commitment to do their jobs effectively and maintaining mutual trust and cooperation in the performance of collective work.

Managing human resources and relations is very important when the work is complex, successful performance requires a high level of teamwork and it is difficult to attract competent people. Development and motivation of the human resources has tangible impact on business results.

Relations-oriented behaviours are concerned about improving human relations and resources and includes for example: develop skills and confidence among unit members, consult with relevant people when making decisions, empower unit members to take initiative in doing their work and build mutual trust, cooperation, and identification with the organization

Empowering is about giving responsibility for fulfil important tasks and give resources and information to solve it. Delegation is an important component of empowering. The benefits with delegation are for example faster and better decision, better commitment to implement decisions, more meaningful and interesting job. Delegation involves giving discretion how to do a task. The leader will be concerned about the quality of the output and the capacity of the team or person. The leader must find a good balance between autonomy and control to achieve the benefits of delegation. Too much control will send a message of lack of trust the person's or team's capacity. It is important for the leader to make clear the amount of discretion to be allowed. The grade of delegation will reflect the capacity and the experience of the persons who are empowered.

Processes and competencies for success

Success requires more than making a good mix of behaviours and programs. To facilitate development of flexible leadership and make the direct and indirect leadership more effective examine some processes and competencies. Some of them are described below.

The process build commitment to a core ideology includes shared values and beliefs about the mission. To achieve high performance the actions of the leaders must be compatible with each other. A core ideology makes it possible to reach the necessary level of cooperation and coordination (Yukl & Lepsinger, 2005). It refers to shared agreement about the primary purpose of the organization and how members fit into that purpose (Yukl & Lepsinger, 2004).

Involve and empower people at all levels is important. Most successful organizations have strong culture in which members with shared values are empowered to find ways to fulfil the mission and reach the vision.

Keeping lines of communication open is especially important connected to unpopular decisions to explain the reasons. Communication is important both between leaders themselves and between leaders and members of the organization.

The competences maintain situational awareness involves knowledge about internal and external processes that effect the organization or team. It is important to identify good solutions and causes of problems. To get up-to date information it is necessary to develop network of contacts inside and outside the organization (Yukl & Lepsinger 2005).

Embrace systems thinking is necessary to understand the complexity between performance determinations and effects on the organization. A change in one part of the organization can affect other parts (Yukl & Lepsinger 2005).

Focus on what is really important. Effective leader's actions are guided by clear objectives and priorities.

Lead by example is an important form of influencing that can be used to emphasize the performance determinants. (Yukl & Lepsinger 2005). Maintain self-awareness is about to understand one's own abilities and behaviour (Yukl & Lepsinger 2004).

3.2.4 Leading change

Leading change is an important ability for the leaders/managers. Kotter (1996) summarizes in an eight stage model how to create major change and these stages are described below:

Establishing a sense of urgency include examining the market and competitive realities and identifying and discussing crises, potential crises, or major opportunities.

Creating the guiding coalition is about putting together a group with enough power to lead the change and getting the group to work together like a team. Position power, expertise, credibility and leadership are some important characteristics for the guiding coalition.

Developing a vision to help direct the change effort and a strategy for achieving that vision. Communicating the change vision is to using every vehicle possible to constantly communicate the new vision and strategies.

Empowering broad-based action involves getting rid of obstacles, changing systems or structures that undermine the change vision, encouraging risk taking and non-traditional ideas, activities and actions

It is important to generating short-term wins and planning for visible improvements in performance and creating them. Consolidating gains and producing more change include for example hiring, promoting, and developing people who can implement the change vision.

Anchoring new approaches in the culture is the last stage and involves creating better performance through customer- and productivity-oriented behaviour, more and better leadership, more effective management. And articulating the connection between new behaviours and organizational success (Kotter, 1996).

4 Empirical findings

This chapter describes the chosen company and presents information obtained from the conducted interviews.

The empirical findings from the conducted interviews are presented below. The gathered information has been organised in a way to make it easy to read and understand. The respondents answers are categorised under headlines and similar answers are grouped together in order to make connections and relations more visible. The answers are presented both through extended text and quotations to highlight the key information and to keep the answers as exact as they can.

4.1 Introduction to the process orientation in Vägverket

The Swedish Road Administration is the national authority assigned the overall responsibility for the entire road transport system. Their task is to co-operate with others to develop an efficient road transport system in the direction stipulated by the Swedish Government and Parliament. They have been commissioned to create a safe, environmentally sound and gender-equal road transport system that contributes to regional development and offers individuals and the business community easy accessibility and high transport quality (Vägverket, www.vv.se, 2006-05-30).

The managers place connected to the organization schedule are described in chapter 2 and in this empirical part we use the abbreviation in parenthesis when they are quoted because their roles are more important than name in the research. Their names, roles and dates for personal communication are presented below.

- Lena Erixon Economy Director, Support process owner of economy and business development and Deputy Director-general, personal communication 2006-04-07. (Deputy Director-General)
- Janeric Reyier, Main process owner for journeys by citizens 2003 with a background as Road Director and manager for the Business steering department at the head office in 2006, personal communication 2006-04-07. (Main process owner for journeys by citizens)
- Gunilla Lundberg, Information Director and Support process owner for communication, personal communication 2006-04-07. (Information Director)
- Thomas Ericsson, Administrative Director for the head office's staff personal communication 2006-04-03 (Administrative Director, staff)
- Leif Pettersson, Deputy Personal Director and responsible for manager development in Vägverket personal communication 2006-04-04 (Deputy Personal Director)
- Hans Rode, Road Director for Stockholm Region 2003 and manager for the new development department at the head office 2006, personal communication 2006-03-31. (Road Director)

Below is the development and phases of process orientation within Vägverket briefly described in order to increase the understanding of the reader.

Before 2003

Empirical findings

Vägverket was until 2003 not process organised. Processes had been described within Vägverket during quality work though to describe the work procedures for different projects.

"We have been drawing processes or fish diagrams for 10-15 years and it has been done in a quality work to constantly improve the organisation and find parts to make more efficient, but also to explain for new employees how the work is done in reality" (Main process owner for journeys by citizens).

The period 2003 - 2005

A process organisation was implemented at the head office of Vägverket in 2003. Processes within the organisation were created and a distinct customer focus was taken. The two main processes were the citizen's journeys and trade and industry journeys. Beneath these two main processes several smaller supporting process were created, for example IT/computer, information/communication etc (Vägverket, 2002).

The new concept that followed with the process orientation was the customer focus and that everything was supposed to be seen from the customer's perspective. This was difficult for the organisation to adapt to and the processes felt unclear and strange among the employees. It was difficult to keep the process and organisation separate from each other.

"What the management really meant was to use processes from a customer perspective, the end product is for the customer and starts in needs and demands from the citizens, these demands are combined with the governments transport political aims" (Main process owner for journeys by citizens).

"The process was, from a regional perspective, seen as an own organisational entity and that created a confrontation between regions and the head office, there was a mix-up between the line in the organisation and the processes" (Main process owner for journeys by citizens)

"There was a lack of creating a functional organisation after creating the two main processes, there were two main processes that worked parallel and had almost the exact same tasks but different customers. This created uncertainty" (Administrative Director, staff).

After 2006 and thoughts about the future

A new re-organisation took place in 2006 when the two main processes were replaced by two departments. One has a development responsibility with a main responsibility for customer relations and development of services. The other department is responsible for activity planning with main responsibilities within developing efficiency and conducting national activities (Vägverket, 2006).

As of today Vägverket state that they have a line and staff organization and not a process organisation. The processes are instead used as a tool to make activities more efficient. The development of products and services are still strongly emphasised from a customer perspective (Vägverket, 2006).

"A complete process organisation has a totally different way of handling things on than we have. The process owner is situated in Borlänge and set demands on aims and results of the processes while the actual work takes place out in the regions. This is very hard to carry out and double leadership roles and responsibilities occur. A complete process organisation takes a very long time to implement" (Road Director).

"I don't think that the new re-organisation is a step back. It will only make the organisation a bit clearer in a way of who makes decisions and about what. I think the process orienta-

tion as a tool to develop a more efficient Vägverket is here to stay” (Deputy Director-General).

”We try and pick out the best fruits that process orientation brings in order to create new and better services for our customers” (Main process owner for journeys by citizens).

4.2 Leadership in process orientation

4.2.1 How the process orientation has affected the leadership

The process orientation has influenced the leadership in many ways. We will describe the changes below.

4.2.1.1 Holistic view

All the respondents described an increase in demand of an overall or holistic view.

”It sets new demands on managers, holistic view, to understand the whole journey, not to get isolated in ones own world. To understand how the world around one works” (Development department manager, Hans).

”I think if you are going to work process oriented it is inevitably to not work more and think in a holistic view. This means a palliation of functionality” (Deputy Director-General).

”Process orientation demands a holistic view and that managers participates in the processes as managers and leaders” (Information Director).

”It sets higher demands on a holistic view and that you work across boundaries, the demands for loyalty has also increased” (Deputy Personal Director).

The process orientation approach has brought a more overriding discussion of Vägverket as a whole. Earlier everyone represented their own interests to a higher degree but now they are more or less forced to break boundaries in order to make the processes work. The responsibility has spread a bit among the organisation. This has also lead to that top level managers can focus more or on ‘what’ to do than ‘how’ to do things since that is described inside the processes now.

“You have to see yourself as part of the whole. It sets big demands on the leadership, if you put yourself or Vägverket in focus” (Deputy Director-General).

4.2.1.2 Increased customer orientation

One of the director general’s main points when Vägverket entered a process oriented approach was to increase the customer orientation. It has become a big priority to explain, clarify and point out that Vägverket has a big responsibility to understand the needs of the surrounding world. Vägverket has been one organisation with different looks depending on where in the country they are situated, the regions have had their own way of perceiving things. A new clearly stated focus within Vägverket is that they should appear as one entity no matter where in the country or in the organisation you are. They want to be perceived as a unified and clear structured organisation.

”This sets new demands on managers and their leadership qualities to see how the surrounding world works” (Road Director).

”We want leaders who knows who they are here for (customers), then they can arrange and organise their co-workers in a collective that also knows and understands who they are working for” (Information Director).

4.2.1.3 Increased teamwork

The process orientation sets great demands on increased teamwork. Not only inside the teams (processes) but also between them. The leadership roles become extra important to makes sure that this is possible, all of the respondents talked and agreed to this. It sets increased demands on loyalty within both the organisation and the groups. This means that if there is a decision on something, even if you do not support it you will carry it out anyway in order to get interaction among the teams to work. It is also a very important issue to be able to work through others, to trust co-workers and let them have and share responsibilities. This increases the chance of decisions taken will also be successfully implemented.

“It is important not only to see what happens in my jar, but also what happens in the jars beside mine. To take advice from people around me and share valuable information with the whole organisation. This should come naturally and not be forced through rules. It sets demands on teamwork” (Deputy Director-General).

”A new thing that comes with process orientation is that it cuts into the organisation from another side. New working combinations, not just a hierarchical way to work. You have to broaden your networks, work outside your own field with both what is happening before and after what I am doing” (Deputy Personal-Director).

It can be hard for people to let go of their working fields that they have monitored for years. A territorial thinking is natural for someone that has been doing the same thing for years. This has been one of the hard parts when increasing the teamwork.

”To work with the processes as a toll provides you with a more homogenous view of the organisation, a joined view of the organisation takes away polarization and increases teamwork, one can not be to protective of one’s preserves for this to work” (Deputy Director-General).

“I think there has been a distinct change in willingness to cooperate and share view” (Deputy Personal Director).

4.2.1.4 Increased Communication/dialogue

Process orientation sets an increase demand of communication and having an open dialogue as a result of the previous mentioned increase in team working. The communicative skills becomes important and a pedagogical way of communicating is needed express what you really want. The communication in a changing organisation is much about arguing for what the aims are and express a vision about where the organisation is going to get everyone to understand and accept. This sets great demands on being explicit.

”A good quality in this aspect is to be convincing in your argumentation of why we are doing this change” (Deputy Director-General).

”It is not about pointing with your whole hand” (Deputy Director-General).

It is important to have networks where ideas and thoughts can be discussed and shared to increase the communication skills within the organisation. What Vägverket wants is that their leaders communicate a similar message and to render accurate information down in the organisation. Process orientation also sets higher demands of an increased communica-

tion the other way back up the organisation because it brings a greater freedom and possibility for everyone within the organisation to participate and give ideas. A two way communication organisation.

“It is both about anchor information down into the organisation but also to bring back suggestions up to where it came from. Process orientation demands a better dialogue and communication because of this” (Main process owner for journeys by citizens).

”It is about being able to handle that we do not always have the correct answers from the beginning or that we are always right ourselves, it’s about being able to both take things in and listen” (Main process owner for journeys by citizens).

4.2.1.5 Emphasis on examples and distinguishing features

A very important part within leadership and process orientation is to be a carrier of it. To act as a good example. If the managers do not buy the concept and show this for their co-workers the processes will not work. It is about marketing process orientation within the organisation to gain acceptance. Vägverket has three words to characterize their work to achieve this:

Openness, trustworthiness and creativity.

“By having the three words where us leaders needs to be open, trustworthy and creative to achieve acceptance within the organisation and to act as rule models I must say that I think that we have succeeded with that” (Main process owner for journeys by citizens).

”It is about, as a leader, to be prepared to stand in the front line both as example/rule model and to force the change through” (Main process owner for journeys by citizens).

4.2.1.6 Increased focus on aims and results

The leadership must be distinct and stress the importance of achieving the organisational goals that has been set. It is important that the individuals see their responsibility in achieving the organisational goals. To focus on achieving the aims and goals set by the organisation because without the leaders pushing these kind of questions they are hard to achieve. The focus should be on delivering the end product to the customer in an as functional and effective way as possible.

”The aim and result focus, and the responsibilities to achieve them have been sharper and clearer. Focus is on the delivery to the customer” (Road director).

“I am anxious to set clear aim and result demands. Give my co-workers a great set of freedom to choose in what way and how to conduct their work. The process orientation can be a great help and support. Everybody has a similar way of working to deliver something” (Road Director).

The focus of achieving aims and results is very clear also in Vägverkets guideline, Manager in Vägverket (2006). It is a guideline to stress the importance of sharing the same vision and that everyone knows and understands what being a leader in Vägverket is about. It says that the manager’s most important role is to deliver results together with the collaborators. The guideline was made in combination with the latest reorganisation in 2006 to make the leadership questions clear.

4.2.1.7 Follow up and participate in the process

Process orientation demands that managers actively participate in the process. The demand for follow-up and controlling that the processes are functioning increases, especially in the implementation process of the change. It is of great importance to make sure that the transition between processes work and that nothing falls in between and forgets.

”A manager/leader must follow the course of the process in a new way” (Information Director).

”The leader must make sure that the organisation works from the processes that they have and that the transition between them works, both within and between processes (Administrative Director, staff).

4.2.1.8 Increased clarity

The implementation of a process oriented approach has set higher demands on clarity within leadership issues. At first the regions felt that the implementation of process orientation and creating processes was very unclear. The change brought that they did not know who was responsible for what, and it is out on the regional offices that the real work takes place. The managers needed to make the unclear practically useable and applicable.

“The indistinct responsibilities that the change brought lead to that the leadership on the regions needed to be clearer” (Road Director).

On the head office they felt that the responsibilities had become clearer.

”The leadership and responsibilities has become clearer now when we have a joined structure and process. The leadership has increased its clarity and I think the process orientation is the reason to it” (Administrative Director, staff).

4.2.1.9 Delegate and create participation

It is important to delegate and to follow the process and get the co-workers to participate.

“It is interesting to see how the process orientation set demands on delegation of tasks but at the same time, managers and leaders, are part of evaluating and following the process all the way” (Information Director).

”It is important that co-workers that comes up with ideas and suggestions gets feed back on it and that the top level management makes an effort to take care of these suggestions. To systemize them in order to increase efficiency and to increase the delivery to the customer. It is definitely a leadership question how this is carried out” (Road Director).

4.2.2 The view of leadership roles

“I think I have both a managerial role and a leader role (Deputy Director-General).

It was hard for the respondents to clearly state themselves if they felt that they were managers or leaders. The perception of what was in each role differed but the main perception was that a leader is a bit ‘softer’ than a manager. In the manager perception the stronger word boss could be mentioned as a harder word for manager. This is what the respondents thought of the two roles, most was said about being a leader.

Manager

Within the role of being a manager it is very clearly stated what results to achieve. You have clear and obvious decision making rights. Being a manager is closely connected to having responsibility for staff, managing staff and to represent the employer.

Leader

The leader role is much about communication. To spread a vision out in the organisation. It is also about representing Vägverket both in and outside the office. The leader should be outgoing, role model, responsible for changes being made and having a more long term vision than the rest of the organisation. Being a leader is about taking the organisation to the next level and gathers employees around the same aims and goals.

The leader role in process orientation is about being responsible for the process and not so much the people working inside it and works 'through' them. Giving employees responsibility and there by letting them grow.

4.2.3 Leading change

The leader's responsibility during the examined period was to implement the process orientation approach, so leading change is an important dimension.

Vision

The vision is stressed in the change management work.

"I think that our vision has been of great importance for us when implementing this change. We make the good journey possible has been a good base vision to start from and relate to" (Deputy Director-General).

Target picture

An experience the leaders within Vägverket have made is based on the first phase of implementing process orientation. It was not stated clearly what the organisation really meant with process orientation. It was not clear enough why they implemented it, at least not for everyone.

"We should have used more time to introduce the change and how the combination between processes and line and staff organization should have been carried out. We rushed it a little bit and it became a bit too much process theoretical without us knowing really what it was" (Road Director).

"When we entered the new organisation in 2003 we were not fully aware of what process orientation was. We talked about it in the managerial body and made our interpretation but it was not good enough (Main process owner for journeys by citizens).

"From an afterwards perspective we should have paid more attention on how to carry out the message in the organisation, why are we doing this? What will it lead to? What is it good for?" (Deputy Personal Director).

Carriers of process orientation

An important role within leadership and leading change is to be carrier of the message, to support and be loyal to the decision. If the leaders do not accept the change the organisation will not either.

”The most important individuals in leading change are the managers closest to the ‘workers’ to get acceptance in the organisation. They have to believe in what they do otherwise it is hard to go through with the change” (Deputy Personal-Director).

Take care of advantages

It is very important to take care of the advantages and the positive parts that come with a change. Even if the whole change is not successful. That is exactly what Vägverket has done when implementing a second re-organisation within a short period of time. It is a step back from a process organisation but not leaving process orientation. By using the processes as tools Vägverket feels that they gain from the positive effects that process orientation provides.

“This new change is about picking up the best fruits from process orientation bring to help us develop new and improved services to our customers. It feels good to be able to at least harvest some fruits from all the work we have put into it” Main process owner for journeys by citizens).

According to an internal evaluation within Vägverket (2005) there is a big confidence among managers about having the ability to handle the new changes and that it will work well.

4.3 Positives and negatives with process orientation

The conducted interviews show that the respondents have found the change into the process oriented view both positive and negative. Since the process oriented view has been used since 2003, some of the negatives that followed from the start up are starting to change into positive features. The overall impression of changing into a process oriented view has been positive. The respondents also clearly states that problem areas that occurred during the start up has been developed often into something positive and that the organisation is starting to settle in to the new form of work method. We have also found that the overall impression among the respondents is that the implementation of the process oriented view was a bit hasty and not thought thru. More work could have been done on the higher manager level to avoid these traps and made the implementation easier and more applicable from the start

The positive and negative features when changing into a process oriented view are presented below, categorised and divided into smaller more understandable sub-categories. The negatives are presented first because some of them are connected to the start up processes and are now fading out a bit.

4.3.1 Negative

4.3.1.1 Indistinct leadership and roles

The main problem when introducing and implementing the process oriented view into Vägverket concerns indistinct leadership. Through this indistinctiveness among top level managers, many of the employees below in the organisation did not see the benefits or the use of the organisational change.

”We, as leaders, were indistinct about the whole change and how it was supposed to work” (Administrative Director, staff).

”A great in distinction was spread, indistinct into the organisation, the purpose and use of the process orientation was unclear” (Administrative Director, staff).

”At first it was very abstract for most people to draw the processes and the process flow, it was considered almost as a side activity, did not feel as it influenced the delivery of the product” (Road Director).

This led to a high degree of indistinctiveness and uncertainty inside the organisation who makes the decisions and who is responsible for certain areas and tasks. This was a major problem and many hours have been spent on solving these kinds of questions.

The processes were considered very abstract. The co-workers did not see their part of the process and the processes became a thing on the side of the normal work, something that did not affect how the work was done or the outcome of it. The roles of the co-workers were very indistinct and the customer focus that was the aim for the whole change was not there at all.

”How come that you always have to be so terribly thorough and even make the process vague when describing it, the process does not become simple to understand and that is a problem” (Information Director).

The choice of language could be one of the sources to the problem.

”The language could be a source to the problem, hard to understand unfamiliar words and concepts. That makes the whole thing seem very hard” (Deputy Director-General).

The language has to be adapted to whom you speak to, different people need to be treated differently and the same language does not work for everyone. The message has not reached the levels beneath the top level management at the first stage of the implementation.

4.3.1.2 Parallel responsibilities

Another negative side that is closely connected to indistinct leadership concerns parallel responsibilities. The lack of strong leadership led to unclear roles and parallel responsibilities in the start up according to the answers we obtained in our interviews. There was a mix up between the line and the process in the organisation which further led to confusion about who had responsibility and for what.

”There was a mix up between the organisational line and the process, they were parallel, it was the same thing” (Administrative Director, staff)

In simpler words the situation could be described as two processes running through the organisation with almost the same responsibilities and tasks, the only thing that differed was the final customer. One process was for the private customers and one for the public, but they all use the same roads and the distinction between the processes was not there. They were more or less two processes doing the same thing without being connected to each other. This mix led to a lot of unnecessary work and discussions between the two processes.

The processes were treated as two separate organisational entities, and was from a regional perspective seen as an own organisation and not as a bridge or part of the regions where the actual work was done.

”I have experienced a polarization within the organisation between Borlänge (the head office) and other entities (the regions)” (Main process owner for journeys by citizens).

This created a 'we and them' situation between the head office and the regions which was not good and did not help to solve the current situation, it only made it worse.

4.3.2 Positive

4.3.2.1 Legible leadership

The leadership within Vägverket has become more legible. Although it went through a phase, during the start up of the process orientation, where it was the exact opposite. According to our respondents the leadership has changed from being indistinct to legible, structured and clear to everyone within the organisation.

”The processes gives in increased clarity, everyone works from the same base. This makes the leadership easier, to communicate within the organisation” (Administrative Director, staff)

Almost everyone agrees that this is due to the processes and the way to work with them. The main reason for this is that it has led to a common view, structure and similar work procedures that everyone can feel safe around. This makes the leadership more legible and according to our respondents easier at the same time. With the processes as common ground to stand on the co-workers knows what to do and the leaders can concentrate on leading, not telling people what and where to do things all the time.

4.3.2.2 Increased homogenous/structure

Through the increase of legible leadership there is also an increase in homogenous within Vägverket. A common language and way to operate within the whole organisation has brought the positive effect of a similar looking Vägverket around the country and between the departments within the organisation. This used to be a problem, different regions and departments had their own way of thinking and doing things. The new common approach is considered as a great strength.

”Structure is to recognise the carrying through” (Deputy Personal Director).

It is further stated that the process view feels natural for Vägverket because they are such a wide spread organisation throughout the whole country.

“There must be something that gathers our organisation and processes is a natural way of doing so” (Administrative Director, staff).

4.3.2.3 Decreased narrow-mindedness (increased holistic picture)

Within Vägverket they often talk about drainpipes as how the organisation worked earlier. Everyone did his/her own thing and more or less did not care about what others did. The traffic safety people lived in their own little world and the environmental friendly department in theirs. This kind of drainpipes has been a problem till now but our respondents feel that through the process oriented work way this has become much better. The organisation is now more open and sees the holistic view on a much better way. The problem for the managers has been to describe and explain for their employees their part, to understand the small part they do as a part of the whole process. The gain of a holistic view perspective is a great asset according to our respondents.

The new open minded work way also increases the influence rate of the employees. It has become easier to influence the every day work. Suggestions of improvements and corrections from all parts of the organisation are dealt within more with the new organisation.

4.3.2.4 Customer perspective (effectiveness)

The interviews show that the customer perspective is taken much more into consideration when using the process oriented view. It is also considered as something very positive among the respondents. They feel that they have changed the customer view from inside out to more outside in perspective. The customer plays a more central role now and the delivery of a product is seen from the customer's perspective. It is about delivering what the customer really wants, not just deliver what is best and easiest from Vägverkets point of view.

"The customer in focus, a way to get things structured" (Deputy Personal-Director).

The processes are used as a tool and checklist for the conducted work in order to achieve a high customer satisfaction. There is an increased focus on what and how things are done, this leads to a more effective organisation which is considered very positive.

4.4 Steer/Control methods

When the respondents are talking about aims- results, rules and values as ways of steer/control methods their view is not totally the same. The aim- result method is pointed out as the base but often together with elements of the two others.

"As a foundation it must be aims and results that you work with as steering method and use the values we have as support. It is much about having the same values, that represents Vägverket, and for us to apply them. But the emphasis must be on aims and results" (Administrative Director, staff)

"It has to be aim steered, a bit of order, sometimes called structure but also rules, and some culture on that, then it will be good" (Information Director).

4.4.1 Aims- results

This is what the respondents said about aims- results as steering/control method:

"I think that we have accentuated aim and result steering with the implementation of process orientation" (Information Director).

"The leadership has become more distinct, aims and results have become even more in focus. Ok, we have a lot of tools but focus is on the delivery that we give the customer (Road Director).

"Aims and results came with following rules. Now it is aims and results in focus and process orientation is a support of getting there" (Road Director).

"It is easier to demand results in a organisation with process orientation because you measure the processes, clearer steering signals, it also affects the leadership because an important part is to achieve the demands you have within the processes. The leadership becomes more distinct in process orientation. It creates a common structure that you can also set result demands on" (Administrative Director, staff).

4.4.2 Rules

Our answers regarding rules and steering/controlling by rules varied a lot. Some respondents said it exists within the organisation while some did not think so. A discussion also occurred at a couple of times about that more administrative work could lead to that

some people thought there were more rules even though there were in fact not. Important quotations within this field:

”Process orientation lies within rule steering because it involves how we do things. From the perspective of what we achieve we make changes (Deputy Director General).

”I can not say that it has become more of a rule based steering, it is about the same as earlier” (Main process owner for journeys by citizens).

”We are more steered today, the freedom has decreased. It has moved from planning to follow-up. The following up can be perceived as rule steering but I do not think so” (Deputy Personal-Director).

”If the managerial body is not happy with the result and development then they can increase the degree of rule steering” (Administrative Director, staff).

4.4.3 Values

The value discussion often also involved culture and what that means for the organisation. It was also obvious that working with and develop this field was something that most respondents wanted to and felt that Vägverket at least to a certain degree actively does. The main reason for this is to get a unified organisation with the same values which the respondents believe would make work within the organisation both more effective and easier. The general impression though was that the value based steering/controlling method could never totally be carried out, just be a complement and a tool to achieve the aims- results of the organisation.

”I do not think that Vägverket can ever become a value based organisation” (Information Director).

Lundberg still stresses the importance of values and culture. In order to make work inspiring and exciting it is utterly essential, if not to say decisive, that you have a culture that everyone understands and accepts, preferably characterized by trustworthiness, openness and creativity. (Information Director).

The deputy director-general thinks that successful companies have a well structured structure supported by their ground values. In a big organisation, like Vägverket, the need for a structured steering is even greater than in a small one. The most important is that it’s supported by solid values.

”You can never control peoples values, but base values has a great importance when it comes to how things are carried out and also passed on” (Deputy Director-General).

Both the main process owner for journeys by citizens and the deputy personal director are determined that the introduction of process orientation has not led to a more valued based steering/controlling. The deputy personal director further states that Vägverket never will be but it is good for an organisation to work with culture questions but never to use it as a steering/controlling base.

The main process owner for journeys by citizens on the other hand wishes that the values played a greater role and it is a field that he thinks needs more attention.

”Our organisation is not value steered and it never will be. We can work with culture but always have rules. I do not know any organisation that is fully value steered (Deputy Personal-Director).

Empirical findings

The road director talks, just like the main process owner for journeys by citizens, about the importance of dealing with value related questions in to increase customer focus in order to have it as a base to stand on or something to lean on, to feel a safety in the values.

“Values should be brought up to the surface, why do I think like this and why do I do like that. We need to work more with this within Vägverket. It is good to lean against. Value based questions are important and demands more time” (Road Director).

5 Analysis

This chapter intends to analyse the empirical findings with relevant theories. It will start with presenting the structure of the analysis, followed by the analysis of the information obtained.

5.1 Process orientation and its effects on leadership

Below we have listed findings from our empirical research regarding how process orientation has affected the leadership. They are categorized in groups/themes from what we found are the most important factors based on our empirical findings. We will later in this chapter analyse and discuss the groups/themes into further detail.

Holistic view

Increased holistic view

Increased customer orientation

Teamwork

Increased teamwork

Increased delegation

Increased participation/involvement

Communication

Increased communication

Increased dialogue

Emphasis on examples and distinguishing features

Pedagogical and convincing ability

Aims/Results

Increased focus of aims/results

Increased clarity

Leading change

There is no existing theory connecting these two fields, process orientation and leadership, with each other available. In this chapter we will analyse the subject from an empirical and theoretical perspective. We will mainly use the base theories presented in our frame of reference chapter but also use new complementary theory to analyse fields we have not focused on earlier in order to be able to present increase the understanding of the reader and make the thesis easy to read.

5.1.1 Holistic view

The overall impression of the change into process orientation is positive. Everyone agrees though that there were problems during the start-up regarding how the change was imple-

mented. Indistinct leadership was the main problem according to the respondents. The co-workers down in the organisation did not see the benefits or use of the new approach and that created indistinctiveness. Another area closely connected to this is the lack of communication; the organisation did not speak the same language. Communicating the message down into the organisation failed, it did not reach beneath the top management level. There was also a big problem concerning parallel responsibilities. In the early stage there were two processes with the same objectives, doing and working for almost the same thing, the only difference was the customers. One was working with private customers and the other one with public customers. They are two different customer targets and groups but they still use the same roads which made the only difference between the two processes very fine. The implementation problems that occurred do not come as a total surprise. Hammer (1996/1997) states that a process oriented view almost never fit into the old organisation. The concept was new to Vägverket and not easy to implement without previous knowledge about process orientation. However Hammer (1996/1997) further stresses the importance of spreading the concept through the whole organisation and not only inside the board room. This is an area where Vägverket could have put more attention and thereby avoided some of the mistakes made and perhaps made the implementation phase a bit shorter. However lessons were learnt and the organisation adapted to the new environment. A bit slower than necessary but the positive effects of process orientation eventually broke through.

The former indistinct leadership has turned into distinctive/legible leadership. This is due to that focus has been put on getting the organisation to understand what process orientation is about and what good it can do. The activities create 'completeness' as Hammer (1996/1997) talks about. This has further led to that the process thinking has rooted itself into a common view with the organisation and shifted from a negative to a positive change. The homogeneity within the organisation has increased and created one Vägverket instead of several entities throughout the organisation. The effects of this has created an increased holistic view, created common language, opened up organisation, increased influence for the employees and finally and most importantly led to a more customer oriented approach. This is exactly what process orientation is expected to bring, an increased customer focus (Nilsson, 2003) and increased value for the customer (Hammer, 1996/1997). The processes are used as tools to achieve these positive effects and will positively come if given the time to settle in and adjust to the organisation.

"It sets new demands on managers, holistic view, to understand the whole journey, not to get isolated in ones own world. To understand how the world around one works" (Road Director).

The holistic view in Vägverket has increased. The process orientation has led to that the managers need to see their part from a 'whole process' objective. The process owners feel that through an increase of responsibility for the whole process and connection between processes their ability to improve them has increased. This has further led to that top managers holistic view has increased and can focus on "what" to do from a long term/overall strategic objective when the process owners deal with "how" the processes are developed and implemented. Hammer (1996/1997) stresses the importance of 'completeness', one task alone does not mean anything for the customer but a well working process with a successfully delivered product does. The process orientation view in Vägverket has increased the focus of the delivered product to the end customer. Hammer (1996/1997) further states that process orientation is about breaking boundaries, to work for the whole company not only fulfil your specific task. In Vägverket we can definitely see that this view has

improved. The respondents' talks about being able to work outside your own box and to collaborate within the organisation, the holistic view that the process orientation brings has definitely helped to improve this area. The ambition to create "one Vägverket", the holistic view, has to a great extent succeeded according to Vägverket's own evaluation (Arbetstagar-konsultation AB, 2005). We feel that we can confirm this through our findings and also say that the respondents feel that this aspect is a very positive effect from the process orientation.

It is the top executive's responsibility to analyze the external environment to find information about opportunities and threats (Yukl & Lepsinger 2004). Vägverket has understood the importance to analyse the external environment, to meet the needs of the customer by an increase in customer focus. Increased customer orientation is one of the most important purposes with process orientation. It is essential to learn about needs of customers and clients and how these change. The information can be collected for example through customer surveys and meeting with focus groups (Yukl & Lepsinger 2004). The customer orientation has increased within Vägverket through the process orientation view because customer responsible has been elected for different customer groups and an active dialogue is constantly conducted within this area. The part-process, captures customer needs, responsibility is to gather information about the needs. We have the impression that the process orientation has brought an extra dimension into the development of new products and services, through the increased customer focus.

We think that it is very positive that Vägverket, a public authority, prioritise customer orientation despite that there is no competition within their field of products and services. This rejects the theory that Yukl and Lepsinger (2004) presents about low/no need of adaptation in an organisation with little or no competition. The Swedish government wants to increase focus on the public demands of efficiency, legal security, increased collaboration and citizen focus (Stigendal & Johansson, 2003). Vägverket has taken a step towards these aims and the process orientation has been a good help to take it.

5.1.2 Teamwork

It is obvious that the implementation of process orientation into Vägverket has led to an increase in collaboration within the organisation according to all the respondents. So called teams have been created to handle the processes and networking is a key concept in the new organisation. To create teams is also one of the fundamental principles of process orientation according to Ostroff (1999).

Critical and important factors when implementing the change were the two concepts of loyalty to the decision and protecting of one's preserves. The loyalty to decisions is about how everyone, as a team, must accept and support decisions that are taken. The team is more important than the player. When a decision is taken everyone should accept it and obey it. This was a critical factor when changes were made in the organisation and closely connected to the protecting of one's preserves. An organisation often has strong roots according to Hammer (1996/1997) and these almost never fit into the new organisation. People who have worked within an organisation get used to a way of working, their territory, and when implementing a process oriented view these clash with one another. The support-process manager/ deputy Director-general clearly states:

"one can not be too protective of one's preserves for this to work" (Deputy Director-General).

The fact that Vägverket are implementing an organisational change leads into the creation of new networks to exclude the old roots. Several of the respondents in this study stress the importance of the need for new collaboration methods. Expressions like ‘work through others’, ‘networking’ and ‘not only look in your own pot’ shows the importance of working between boundaries. Hammer (1996/1997) talks about the importance of not only focus on individual areas but also to increase the open-mindedness to other fields within the organisation and thereby increase competitiveness through a gained wide spread perspective. Ostroff (1999) mentions the two principals, authorise decision-making and promote creativity as important aspects closely connected to teams and process orientation. These concepts can be seen in Vägverket and their new way of working. Responsibility and decision making are spread among the employees within the processes in order to speed up the decision making process, working through processes in teams and networks increase this possibility. Breaking boundaries within an organisation increases the flexibility and efficiency.

According to Yukl and Lepsinger (2004) delegation is an important component of empowering and delegation involves giving direction how to do a task. The leader will be concerned about the quality of the output and the capacity of the team or person. The leader must find a good balance between autonomy and control to achieve the benefits of delegation.

“I am anxious to set clear aim and result demands. Give my co-workers a great set of freedom to choose in what way and how to conduct their work. The process orientation can be a great help and support. Everybody has a similar way of working to deliver something” (Road Director).

“It is interesting to see how the process orientation set demands on delegation of tasks but at the same time, managers and leaders, are part of evaluating and following the process all the way” (Information Director).

Vägverket have clear aims and result demand and together with the process orientation we think it increase the possibility for the leaders to increase the empowerment and delegation. The leaders can evaluate the output of the process and give the collaborators direction how to do the process.

5.1.3 Communication

Kotter (1990) stresses the importance of communicating and explain the vision of an organisation. In an organisational change it is important to develop a vision of the future in order to make the necessary change. This is to inspire employees, to make them motivated and work in the same direction. The communication of vision should be stressed in order for the organisation to achieve a collective vision.

According to Mintzberg (1973) there are two important leader aspects involving communication; create an integration between employees and the organisational goals and leadership activities determines realisation of it.

Communication in Vägverket is an important aspect and it takes place in many forms according through our respondents. It is mainly about communicating the message of where the organisation wants to go and achieve. In the long run with long-term goals and strategies and in the short-run why and how is the organisational change going to affect the individuals. It is of great importance that everyone understands this and works towards the same aims and goals. If not the whole organisation will suffer, split into two or several di-

rections, and the implementation could fail. Therefore the dialogue between managers and co-workers are important, to let opinions out in the open and create a joint view. This sets demands on the leadership qualities of the managers.

Our interview objects stresses the following abilities; communication, listening, hold a dialogue, state argues, convincing, anchor ideas and beliefs, to “carry” the concept, act as an example to others. In Vägverket this is believed to be achieved through three key words; openness, trustworthiness and creativity. These follows the directions that both Kotter (1990) and Mintzberg (1973) stresses as mentioned and discussed above. It is hard to determine to what degree they are carries out in Vägverket but just the fact that they are acknowledged within the organisation shows that it must be used to some degree.

From what we have learnt about the organisation in Vägverket and their organisational change the communication has improved through the process. At first problems occurred in the communicating of why the changes were to be made, the organisation underneath the top managers did not see and understand the meaning of the change.

”A great in distinction was spread, indistinct into the organisation, the purpose and use of the process orientation was unclear” (Administrative Director, staff, 2006-04-03).

This created a rift between the head office and the regions. This problem was discovered and brought up to discussion; the communication within the organisation became a subject and eventually got better. There is a focus on the whole organisation, stressing the fact that everyone should “talk the same language”. Vägverket has learnt through trial and error.

5.1.4 Aims

The leadership in Vägverket is clearly aim and result focused. That was obvious from our interviews and the guideline, manager in Vägverket (Skogö, 2006), where it is clearly stated. They have an aim and result steer method because the leadership is aim focused and output oriented.

Aim and result focus is closely connected to task motivated leadership. This leadership style is effective in Vägverket if you make an analysis related to F.E Fiedler’s Contingency model (described in Northouse, 1997). There are three situation variables in the model: Leader-member relations, task structure and position power. In Vägverket the leader-member relations are good according to recent collaborator investigations. The task structure is high which means that the overall task of Vägverket is clear. The position power of the leaders is strong even if it has been a bit indistinct through the process orientation implementation. A task motivated leadership style is preferred and more effective than a relationship-motivated leadership style according to the model.

Another dimension, change oriented leadership behaviour, is rather new, from the early 1980^s. Yukl and Lepsinger (2004) stresses in their model flexible leadership the capability to understand and handle that dimension together with the efficiency- (including task and aims) and people- oriented behaviour. During the implementation of process orientation in Vägverket the efficiency- and change- oriented behaviour has been dominant within the leadership behaviours. There has not been much of human- oriented behaviour. We believe that the human oriented behaviour probably is prioritised on other levels within the organisation. The behaviour oriented leadership involves direct responsibility for the staff and that aspect has not been much affected during the implementation on the top management level but probably lower down in the organisation.

Yukl and Lepsinger (2004) state that it is important to ensure that objectives are set for primary responsibilities and that tasks and objectives are specific, challenging and realistic. They point out the importance to improve efficiency and reliability through indirect leadership, for example through different control systems. Vägverket use the balanced score card control system to set aims and to do follow-ups in order to coordinate different entities and be in control of achieving the overall aims. We think that the aim and result focus has been strengthening through the process orientation and the use of tools that it has brought to Vägverket. The process as a tool to achieve the end product makes it easier to follow and see if something is working well or not. The leader's possibility both to follow and evaluate the whole process has been clearly improved through the implementation of process orientation. This has much to do with the fact that process owners have responsibility over the whole process and can monitor it throughout the process. According to Yukl and Lepsinger (2004) it is important to understand how other part of the organization would be affected of the own units goals and the increased demand of holistic view of the whole organisation and its processes where systems has been created to bring processes together can be a reason to the increase of aim and result focus.

We will now analyse Vägverket through a model presented by Nilsson (2003). According to Nilsson (2003) the three steering methods, aim- value- and rule based, can and most often are used simultaneously. One of them has to be dominant though and create a solid base for the organization. In Vägverket aim steering is the dominant base. The prerequisites for Vägverket are rather stable and the organisational formation quite centralised and hierarchical. With this circumstances the steering with rules and aims are most relevant according to Nilsson (2003). Vägverket primarily works with aim steering combined with rule steering but we can also see an increase in interest of value based steering from our respondents. They are all interested in applying it into the organisation in the future. It is hard to believe that the base steering method will shift though. The second strongest steering method could however easily change from rule steering into value steering. The chances are most likely increasing as the organisation settles down after the organisational change and the need of rules decreases. Although some degree of rule steering is needed in most organisations.

Process orientation focuses on what the processes should produce and how to do it, both aim and rule based steering supports that, values however are less suited for that because if the organisation doesn't have very strong values everyone will do things their own way. Process orientation could be perceived as rule based because it is strongly connected with drawing processes and it could be perceived as rules if to detail.

The value based steering is considered to be a complement to aim and rules steering to unify the organisation and make the work more effective and strong as a team, inspire and make it easier. The process orientation has not led to an increased value steering yet but there is a interest at the top manager level to work more with values in Vägverket and that the structures is supported by solid values.

Our opinion is that it is important to work consciously with all the steering methods in Nilsson's (2003) model. We believe that the different steering methods could be applicable in different levels within one organisation. For top level managers value steering is very important to create meaning and vision to the organisation. Middle managers are under pressure of producing a good result from top level managers, at the same time they need to communicate in a clear way down the organisation of what to achieve and therefore we feel that the aim based steering method works well. The rule based steering, how the processes

are carried out, is a question for lower levels within the organisation and works as a good tool to produce an end product

5.1.5 Leading change

The leadership ability to lead change is important when implementing a process oriented organization. Creating the guiding coalition is a step in Kotters model (1996). It is important that with cooperation between the leaders to create a guiding coalition to lead the change. It is of even greater importance since process orientation breaks the earlier structure of the organisation. It is most often the same leaders who have to implement and lead the change and they are rooted in the old ways of doing things. This demands a holistic view from the leader in order not only to see your own field of interest but the whole organisation.

Vägverket has developed a vision for the future and used process orientation to achieve it, which is according to Kotter (1996) a stage of creating major change. Not being afraid to change is a vital and almost necessary characteristic for an organisation in this world of constantly increasing competition, both domestic and global. Ostroff (1997) takes it one step further and states that not only does a organisation today not be afraid to change it even needs to be process oriented. Vägverket are both and looks as a strong organisation that is ready to meet the future.

Vägverket had some early implementation problems, communication in Kotters (1996) model. They were not totally ready to adopt the change when they first did. However they learned from their mistakes and has moved on as a stronger organisation.

6 Conclusion

In this chapter the thesis is concluded.

The purpose of this thesis is to increase the understanding of how leadership is affected, on a top managerial level, as a result of implementing a process oriented approach.

It is of great importance for managers to be well prepared when implementing an organisational change like Vägverket did. It is not only important to make a thorough decision about whether to implement or not but also to take into serious consideration how to implement the change, to get the whole organisation behind the idea and understand the concept. The communication between top-management level and middle management is both crucial and complicated. It is complicated because top-managers often look at things with a long time/strategic horizon compared to middle managers who has more of a daily work view. This could create a “language” problem where misunderstandings emerge and create problems and in a worst case rifts within the organisation. It is therefore utterly important to make the time-scale and vision clear when describing a change and implementing it down the organisation. A “smooth” application could avoid start-up problems and shorten the implementation process. This highlights the importance of leaders that are able to handle these questions, about communication, and implement the change further down the organisation.

‘Breaking boundaries’ is an important concept to achieve the good parts off the process orientation view. It basically means to be able to work across the organisation and not be locked in your own little world inside the company. To create a company built on teams, with teamwork and team spirit. This demands that the previous statement about communication through the organisation is fulfilled and once again highlights the importance of getting everyone on board in order to get the process orientation sailing. When this is carried out successfully you are at least to some degree process oriented.

Leadership in connection to process orientation gets more aim-focused because process orientation is focused at the output and the aim of the process. Process orientation is therefore a good tool in an organisation that wants to have an aim and result-focused leadership. It contributes to increase the holistic view because aims in different parts of the organizations can more easily be co-ordinated. The leadership can combine focus on aim and result with working with values. This creates a meaning, culture and gives guidance to the whole organisation.

The ability to lead the organisation has increased through the implementation of process orientation. Before the change being a leader was more about being a manager, telling people what do, while now it is more about being a leader and guide the processes through the co-workers. From our analysis we have come up with a model that states that a leader within a process oriented organisation can be compared with a tour guide. The model is based on our five key findings of how leadership is affected by changing into process orientation and can be interpreted with the perspective of a guide.

A guide shows the way, where to go, *leading change*. He takes people to new places and shows them interesting sights; he guides them towards the end of the tour. Sometimes through smaller sights before reaching the main attraction, the *aim*. A guide leads a group of people and makes sure no one gets lost on the way, *teamwork*. The main task for a guide is to *communicate*. Not only by talking, he has to get the group interested and captivated by his stories so they in their turn can tell others of what they have experienced. The guide is

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like a teacher, increases the *holistic view* of people by telling facts and teaching the listener about the surrounding world.

The same characteristics applied on a leader when changing into a process oriented organisation. He needs to lead a change; he takes care of a whole team and creates teamwork. The leader needs to focus on aims and results and to do this he needs to communicate a message. In order to achieve the positive parts of process orientation the leader finally need to increase the holistic view of him self and his co-workers.

These five dimensions of leadership are clearly affected in a process oriented organisation and if the leader can adapt and become a guide it will increase the chances of a successful implementation.

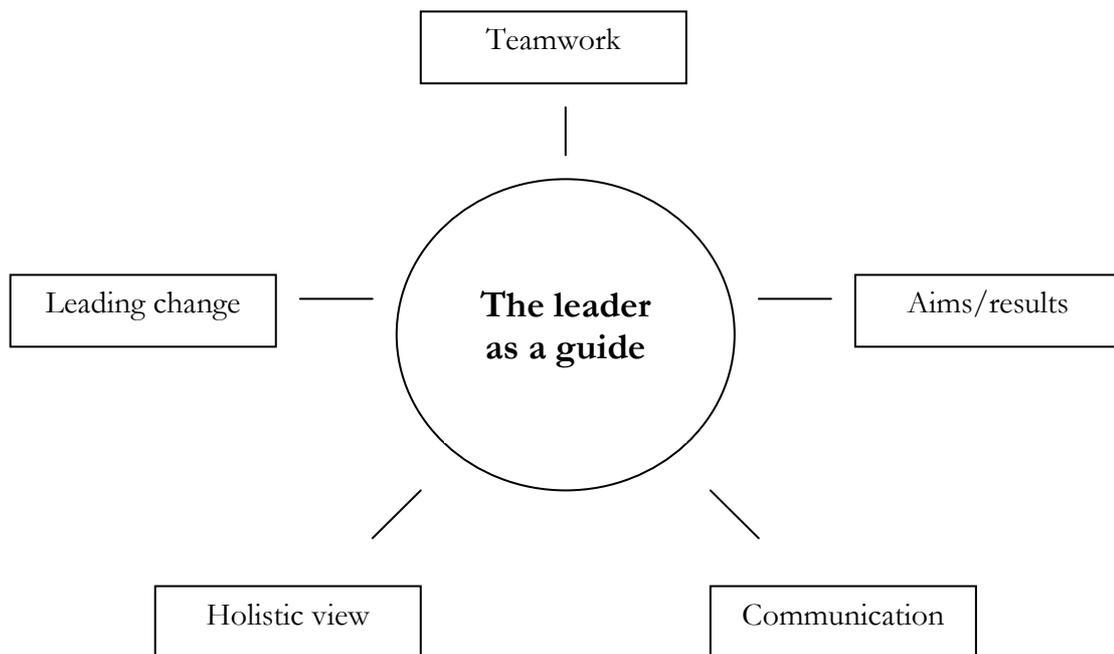


Fig 6.1 Process oriented leadership and its dimensions (Nilsson & Wengbrand-Claesson, 2006).

7 Discussion

This chapter discusses the outcome of the study conducted.

7.1 Evaluation and Critique of the Study

The results of this study originate from one company. The possibility of making generalizations is therefore limited. However the purpose of the thesis is to increase understanding of the subject and this thesis aims for indebt information which we gained through only study one company. The fact that it is a governmental administration could affect the result of this thesis because it is not an organisation with the same demands of economic results as a private company. However we feel that by focusing on the leadership the findings of this thesis is not influenced too much by that fact. The choice of only studying top-level managers is also rooted in the idea of concentrating on one specific level and therefore receiving indebt information.

A great strength of this thesis is the time period that the study focuses. The implementation started in the year 2003. Then the organisation tried to work with the new approach but revised it in 2006. That brings this thesis a current perspective where several phases has been dealt with and reflected upon by the respondents and the information provided about the change into process orientation.

7.2 Final Remarks

It is suggested that companies and organisations who are/or about to implement process orientation take the leadership issues into great consideration. The process orientation will be implemented both easier and faster if information about it is provided throughout the organisation in a satisfying way.

It is also important to consider to what extent one wish to process orient an organisation. What is the aim of the implementation? If it is as a support/tool to the current organisation it is unnecessary to take the process orientation to far and then go back or vice versa. When the aim is decided the grade of process orientation can be decided. The leadership will gain from this and managers will be able to provide co-workers with well thought trough information and a well structured plan of how the implementation will take place, both on short and long term.

7.3 Suggestions for Further Studies

While working with this thesis ideas of other similar studies have occurred. Information gained both from relevant literature and the company studied brings new perspectives and ideas to further studies.

It would for starters be interesting to study all levels within one company to see how individuals feel that they have been affected by the change from different perspectives. This could provide information about if same things are perceived the same way on different levels in an organisation.

Another interesting field to study would be to examine managers, and their view of leadership, in several companies. If research is conducted in one company solely the answers provided are often similar. They talk to each other, read the same material etc. By examin-

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ing several companies information could be found that another organisation have not had problems with or reflected at.

Our last proposal to further studies would be to focus on how the implementation, from a leadership perspective, has taken place practically/implementing the change and not how the leadership has been affected as in this thesis.

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Interview questions

1. How do you look at the process orientation in general and in Vägverket?
2. What was your position within the organisation and how do you perceive your leader role?
 - before the reorganization 2003
 - after the reorganization 2003 related to the process orientation
 - after the reorganization 2006 related to the process orientation
3. Have your leadership been affected of the process orientation
 - In that case, how?
4. Have your leadership affected the processorientation?
 - In that case, how?
5. How do you consider the "level of process orientation" affect the leadership?
6. What demands are set at the leadership at process orientation? Why?
7. How do you describe yourself as manager and leader and has it changed connected to the process orientation
8. What problems within leadership has been solved and what new has occurred during the implementation of process orientation?
9. What demands does the process orientation set on collaboration between leaders?
10. What do you think differ leadership within the process oriented organisation in Vägverket and other organisational forms, out of your own experiences?
11. The evaluation of the organisation points out areas that could be improved, for example questions within process orientation, management and steering and the implementation of change
 - What do you think about leadership questions within these fields in the future?
 - What do you think about leadership questions within these fields when looking back?
12. How has Vägverket seen upon leadership questions connected to the reorganisation?