VÄXJÖ AIRPORT – A Learning Organization?

What factors facilitate the becoming of a Learning Organization?
What obstacles can arise?

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Master Thesis: Strategic Management in Dynamic Organizations

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Abstract

This thesis deals with the need for development in contemporary organizations in order to stay competitive. Thereby, we focus on the concept of Learning Organizations, which is a well-known theory of developing for organizations. In the context of this thesis we identify the key factors for the becoming of a Learning Organization in the contemplated organization, which is Växjö Airport. However, this thesis also includes an attempt to improve the situation at the airport.

The thesis at hand is conducted with a qualitative approach due to the need of a thorough understanding about the procedures in the organization. It is important to mention that the thesis is based on a previous study, thus our pre-understanding was influenced by the empirical findings of this study. In this context the most suitable approach is the abductive method.

For the development of our conceptual model the pre-understanding was of utmost importance, since the results from the previous study made it possible to choose the key factors for the becoming of a Learning Organization in the special case of Växjö Airport. The model namely includes the factors systems thinking, groups and teams, shared vision, leadership style and communication. Another important component of this thesis is the practical accomplishment of several meetings, which attempted to improve the main obstacles in the organization.

The analysis capitalizes on the comparison between the model and the collected empirical data, which is based on the interviews with several employees of the organization as well as our observations of the conducted meetings. Thereby, we identify the special characteristics of each key factor. In addition, we highlight the possible obstacles or problems in the implementation.

Due to this analysis we can conclude that our model presents the most important key factors for the becoming of a Learning Organization in the contemplated organization. However, we also realized the difficulty of changing people’s mind and thus the complexity of the implementation. We also discovered that Organizational Learning is an ongoing process, which is never completed.
Acknowledgement

During the last few months we have devoted a lot of effort to develop this study. Now that we are close to the end of our journey we look back and realize that many people have significantly contributed to the process of developing our Master Thesis. We would like to take the opportunity to thank all of them who supported us.

First of all we would like to mention particularly Marja Soila-Wadman our tutor, who has been present for us throughout the writing process of the thesis and who lent us a hand in order to surmount the obstacles so that we could continue our work when we run out of new ideas.

More over we appreciate the support of Växjö Airport which gave us the possibility to collect our empirical data and study the concept of Learning Organization. Especially we would like to thank the CEO, Jan Fors, who was always open during our study and gave us all information we needed. May Rognefall, the HR manager and controller of the company, has been very helpful and deserves our thankfulness, since she always managed to organize our meetings. We also want to thank the employees at Växjö Airport because they offered us their time and gave us very useful interviews which were of great help. Besides we express our gratefulness to each and every participant of our meetings and those who answered our questionnaire.

Last but not least we would like to show gratitude for our dear fellow students in our seminar group who have provided us with precious feedback and advices during the seminars.

We hope the reader will enjoy the chosen topic and be interested in our findings.

Thanks a lot!

_____________________            _____________________            _____________________
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CHAPTER 1
1. Introduction

This chapter shortly presents the background and development of the topic of this thesis, which is Learning Organizations. Thereby, we want to give the reader a first picture about the theoretical development as well as introduce the reader to our contemplated organization. Besides we describe a previous conducted study in order to share our pre-understanding with the reader. This is followed by the objectives and limitations of this master thesis.

1.1 Theoretical Background

In the last years several authors talked about the changes in the environment organizations today have to face or as French and Bell explain it:

“The environment in which organizations operate is increasingly turbulent in an era of global, national, and regional commercial competitiveness.”

Therefore, there is no question about the changes in environment; almost every organization has to deal with increasing complexity due to the continuously proceeding of the globalization tendency. However, in order to manage to stay competitive, the organizations have to develop, which is not a new evolving trend. The need for a change already arose in the beginning of the 20th century, but over the time the idea how to gain competitive advantage has changed.

The development process, which started in the 1930s with Taylor presenting his High Performance Strategy, was more focused on quantitative growth. He developed the idea of scientific management, where the work is broken down into the smallest unit in order to find out the most efficient way to fulfill the tasks. Thereby, the influence of the individual is

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2 Harris, M.C. (1998)
decreased as far as possible. The purpose of this was to increase the efficiency and thereby also the productivity, which Probst and Büchel call quantitative growth.

The concepts about organizational development evolved further, when the researchers educed more detailed theories or strategies of how to improve the organizational performance in the 1950s. However, those theories pay attention to the human factor of an organization and focus more on the motivation and the knowledge of the employee’s, which is also related to the qualitative growth Probst and Büchel mention. All these different kinds of theories can according to Argyris be understood as the ancestors of Organizational Learning, but there are slightly different understandings what is meant by the term Organizational Learning.

Argyris and Schön, who strongly base their understanding on individual and group interactions as well as defense mechanisms, shape one perspective on Organizational Learning. This includes also different stages of learning and the detection and correction of errors in the organization.

On the contrary Senge and Oshry relate Organizational Learning to the concept of systems thinking, a framework of seeing interrelationships rather than the different parts. This means that the organizations need to be aware of the company as a whole and the individuals within the organization. However, the understanding of these authors differs regarding the contemplated complexity. Oshry emphasizes the power dynamics within the organization whereas Senge focus on the forces in the structure and environment.

Due to the changes in the environment and increasing complexity that calls for a flexible acting organization, the organizations today start to implement this long developed concept in practice. As Arie De Geus, who was the head of planning for the Royal Dutch/Shell Group and one of the firsts who actually implemented the concept, puts it: “The ability to learn faster than your competitors may be the only sustainable competitive advantage.”

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1 Taylor, F.W. (1967)
7 Bolman, L.G. and Deal, T.E. (1997)
Senge’s theory still plays an important role in the development of organizations, because his ideas are still the foundation for developing in recently published articles. However, when talking about Senge one always has to place his contribution in context. The author rather writes for practicing managers and leaders than add more theory to the already existing academic literature on Organizational Learning. It is also important to mention the critical points that arise when comparing Senge’s idea to the theoretical understanding. As Leadbeater argues today’s companies concentrate on the long-term growth and the sustainability instead of completely basing the success on the cultivation of the learning of their members. Thereby, the focus lies on developing intellectual capital and knowledge. In this sense, Senge’s ideas, which emphasize the learning and development of the employees fundamentally, are too idealistic, since within most private organizations the driving force is profit.

On the other hand, Senge’s name appears in lots of books or articles about Learning Organization, but one can wonder if it is possible to implement, since it includes theoretical concepts, which not each and every manager knows. Besides, his theory involves many different ideas that can be too overwhelming for applying them in practice. Thereby, one should also bear in mind that the implementation should be adapted to the resources of the organization and be adjusted to its special needs and its culture.

Can the different concepts of Learning Organization be implemented in practice in order to help a company to gain a competitive advantage, which seems to be difficult in particular for organizations that are surrounded by an environment full of changes?

1.2 Practical Background

An environment full of changes is exactly the surrounding an airport has to face and live with, since the airport business is always affected by problems of any kind as for example the Gulf War, which had huge consequences for the oil prices. However, especially in the last few years airports were confronted with a bunch of problems that concerned the whole business environment and made changes inevitable. Especially, the 9/11 incident influenced the

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passengers’ behavior and hence also the airport business. This incident also had implications for the airport security, since they were forced to increase the security standards.

This impression, which we already had in advance, was confirmed by Jan Fors, the CEO of Växjö Airport, who stated that an airport has to deal with lots of external changes and has to adapt to those immediately. 13 Particular in recent years, the regional airports in Småland are under pressure after several years of declining passenger numbers. 14 Therefore, we have the impression that the airport provides a good opportunity for us to apply our theoretical knowledge and help them to become a Learning Organization, which is a possibility for steadily readjusting to the environment.

1.2.1 Presentation of the company
Växjö Airport, which is partly owned by the county council of Kronoberg and the municipalities of Växjö and Alvesta, was opened in 1975 to connect the southern part of Sweden, where it is located, with the other parts of Sweden and some holiday regions across the world. The 32 employees take care of 180.000 passengers a year. In addition to the passenger flights also cargo flights take place at Växjö Airport. 15

The running of the business is divided between the airside, which deals with the planes and the airlines, and the landside deals with the customers of the airport, the passengers. So this part of the organization is responsible for the money the passengers spend, when they are at the airport. In general the task of the airport is to provide a good service for the customers. 16

The CEO of the airport, Jan Fors, is the manager of the whole airport since 1999. Besides him in the administration are five people employed, one manager for the landside and two managers for the airside. In addition, there is one accounting and personnel responsible, who is supported by an economic assistant. 17

13 Interview with the CEO: 2006-02-02
15 http://www.vxo-airport.se/
16 Interview with the CEO: 2006-02-02
17 Interview with the CEO: 2006-02-02
Under the two airside managers there are four group leaders located and the co-manager picks a group leader and four people out of the pool of the 22 fire fighters to form one group. They are responsible for the landings and taking offs of the airplanes as well as taking care of the area. The landside manager is the head of the seven people that are working in the cafeteria. These employees are also responsible for the catering of the planes and running the tax free shop as well as doing the cleaning in the whole airport. For further information please see the organizational chart.

![Organizational Chart of Växjö Airport](image)

**Figure 1: The organizational chart of Växjö Airport**

As one can recognize on the organizational chart, the organization can be divided into three departments, which are the administration, the cafeteria and the ramp.
The airport also owns another company, which is responsible for the marketing, the business development and the performance of the airport in public. The company is named after the brand the whole airport represents, Smaland Airport. This company is also managed by Jan Fors and has only one employee.\footnote{Interviews 2006-03-06}

In this research, we focus on the organization of the Växjö Airport, but the airport uses the name Smalands Airport for the outside.

\subsection*{1.2.2 Previous study of the organization}
By conducting a field study in the airport as a preparation for this master thesis we analyzed the organization regarding their attitude towards Organizational Learning. The purpose of the study was to draw a picture of the current situation at the organization and to develop an action plan, which was created in order to provide solutions for the arisen problems described in the following.

The CEO was very interested in this topic and wished to develop this concept further, but on the other hand he was also afraid that some employees would have not the right attitude for this development. Thus, we felt obliged to accept this challenge and looked for the problems that keep the airport from proceeding in the development and could work as barriers to Organizational Learning. In order to find the problems in the organization we interviewed 13 people in different departments and at different levels of the hierarchy. By conducting the interviews with the employees of the airport, several problems came to light due to the fact that we talked to people with different perspectives on the organization. In the following we shortly mention the most important problems that are connected to the topic of Learning Organizations. These problems are explained in detail in the empirical data chapter.

The main problem concerns the communication between the different departments, but also between the business development and the daily workers. This lack of communication also leads to a problem regarding the vision, since it is created by the CEO in cooperation with the business development employee and the administration. Thus, the other employees are not involved in the vision formulation process. This lights a critical issue considering the leader of the organization, since the employees would prefer if he could listen more to them.


**1.3 Problem Discussion**

As we have described above the concept of a Learning Organization is a well-known theory for the development of organizations in order to gain a competitive advantage, but can it be a tool to solve the problems we have found at the airport? Although there are many existing theories about Organizational Learning and many researchers have dealt with the topic, there is a lack of literature when it comes to the actual implementation of the concept. The more practical orientated books, for example Senge, can still not solve the specific problems an organization has to deal with in practice, since the books can only provide a general framework. Here, one can find a contradiction in Senge’s concept, since he postulates that every Learning Organization is unique, but on the other hand he does not explain how the organization can decide which factor is of more importance for them.

The distinction between the theoretical and practical feasibility becomes obvious, when one visits an organization. There are several critical factors that we discuss in the following, which detain, that the concept of Learning Organization can be implemented in practice. Therefore, the question can arise, if it is really possible to become a Learning Organization.

Already in the beginning of conducting the field study, which can be seen as a starting point for this master thesis, the CEO of the airport mentioned that it could be difficult to create the right atmosphere so that none of the high educated employees feel insulted by the possibility of listening to suggestions that less educated people make. This problem is also covered in the theory. As Argyris writes especially high skilled people do not know how to learn out of their failures or as he puts it:

> “Many professionals are almost always successful at what they do, they rarely experience failure. And because they have rarely failed, they have never learned how to learn from failure.”

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We conclude that one of the problems to become a Learning Organization is to get all people learning. Thus, it is vital to change the attitude of the members in the organization, so that everybody is willing to learn, share their individual knowledge and open for changes.

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INTRODUCTION

Probst and Büchel describe in their theory possible change agents, which are namely individuals, elites, groups and social systems in more general terms. According to them these are the people who can initiate the change process. However, a change is always related to a variation in the culture. Schein states that the leaders have the strongest influence on the culture creation in the organization. Therefore, the leaders have the task to create the right atmosphere that triggers the implementation of Learning Organizations. In order to become a Learning Organization Senge states that the role of the leader has to change. Instead of being a strong, authoritarian leader he should take over the role of a designer or as a steward. In this sense the role of the leader is more related to the tasks of a coach, who guides the employees. However, the concept of managers as a coach is not only included in the Learning Organization theory, but a general development in the leadership theories. As we have found in the previous study the leaders at the airport have to change in order to become Learning Organization leaders. Thus, they should empower the employees, but they are already on the right track and seem to be able to let go some of their power.

Not only the leaders must be willing to change and to learn, but also all employees must be open to the notion of learning. As we concluded in the field work not all employees talk to each other so often and some members of the organization do not see the company as a whole. In our opinion, some of the employees care more about their own department, but if you want to create a Learning Organization seeing the connections between the departments is very important. According to Senge and Oshry, the discipline of systems thinking is one of the important ideas of Organizational Learning. Systems thinking means seeing the whole instead of the parts, which also includes recognizing the consequences of your activities for other departments and for the future. Thereby, one should also consider the difference between closed and open systems, which have different implications for the systems perspective. Common for both views, there must be a shift of mind in the whole organization in order to be open for learning. Is it possible to shift the mind?

Seeing the organization as a system is not enough, but it describes a perspective of how to look upon an organization. This view is connected to another discipline Senge calls building a

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shared vision. A shared vision is an important step to create a corporate identity, but we experience at the airport, that they do not feel as a whole.\textsuperscript{26} As Probst and Büchel explain:

\begin{quote}
\textit{"The development of the vision and mission statement thus helps to give an identity to the system, to create meaning, and to mould or influence the culture of the organization."}\textsuperscript{27}
\end{quote}

Especially one department of the airport, the cafeteria, feels left out, since they do not get appropriate education, which would help to feel valuable and equal to the other employees. Thereby, also the impression the other departments have of the cafeteria must be improved in order to develop a common feeling, so that all employees are equally involved in the business. However, if one thinks about Schein again, the question arises if it is possible that all departments and individuals in an organization share the same vision, since he also mention the concept of subcultures, which implies that each department can have a different culture in the organization culture.\textsuperscript{28} Therefore, one can argue that a shared vision is not achievable.

The separation of the different departments becomes also obvious in the communication process. In our field study we came to the conclusion that the communication in each department does not have to be improved, but there is definitely a need for improvement when it comes to the communication between the different departments and between the leader and the workers. The significance of the communication issue for organizations is mentioned by Rosengren, who states that it is one of the most important processes.\textsuperscript{29}

However, there is also a lack of communication between the business development company, Smaland Airport, and the observed organization. This communication deficit plays an important role, because the concepts for the future which are developed in Smalands Airport are not transferred to the employees in Växjö Airport. Thus, the employees do not have the possibility to be proactive, which is according to Probst and Büchel one requirement for Organizational Learning. Although the organization has recognized the need for future development, this proactiveness is not possible in the whole organization, because the employees do not have enough information about the business development.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{26} Senge, P.M. (1990)  \\
\textsuperscript{27} Probst, G.J.B. and Büchel, B.S.T. (1997), p.130  \\
\textsuperscript{28} Schein, E.H. (2004)  \\
\textsuperscript{29} Rosengren, K.E. (2000)
\end{flushright}
Another problematic aspect in the process of developing a Learning Organization is the factors that trigger Organizational Learning. As Probst and Büchel point out learning can be initiated in situations of turbulence and crisis as well as a result of slack resources. In this context further training of the members of the organization and job-rotation are helpful activators of Organizational Learning\(^\text{30}\), but since most organizations have to cut down personnel, there is seldom the occasion for those trainings. In the airside groups of the airport for example if one single employee drops out in cases of illness, he must be immediately replaced by someone else. All employees have a huge amount of work, thus there is no slack of resources.\(^\text{31}\)

By conducting the previous field study several problematic aspects were brought to light, which arise by comparing theory and practice. However, it also became obvious that one can question the feasibility of implementing the concept of Learning Organization. We have developed an action plan, which is explained further in Chapter 2.2 - unique for Växjö Airport - which includes possible ways of improvement for the main problems in the organization. In this thesis we describe the situation in the contemplated organization and thereby analyze:

**What factors facilitate the becoming of a Learning Organization? What obstacles can arise?**

**1.4 Objectives**

Our main objective with this master thesis is to help the airport to solve some of the problems that bar them from becoming a Learning Organization, which is important for the airport if it wants to survive in the competitive environment. Thereby, we want to analyze if it can be possible to implement the concept of Learning Organizations in practice.

In order to fulfill this purpose we want to solve the most obvious problems by putting the most important part of the action plan of the field study in practice, which are the meetings. Thus, we can create an atmosphere in the organization that facilitates Organizational Learning.

\(^{30}\) Probst, G.J.B. and Büchel, B.S.T. (1997)

\(^{31}\) Interview 2006-03-08
A main aspect in this thesis is to help the organization to improve the situation in the organization. On this account we use meetings as a tool, where the employees talk about the creation of a vision for the whole organization.

Recapitulating the purpose of this thesis is to analyze if our solutions initiating the development of a common vision and for the communication problem have helped to improve the situation in the organization.

1.5 Limitations

However, we want to state that we are aware of the size of this project and that the development of becoming a Learning Organization is a slow gradually process, where the organization will inch towards the aim of being a Learning Organization.

Therefore, the time frame this thesis provides is not sufficient to accompany the airport on the whole process, but our thesis in combination with the field study should help them to continue after we left the organization.

The time that we can spend in the organization is limited, and we, as researchers, are always outsiders in the company. Therefore, we include the important concept of organizational culture in the description of the different departments and the meetings, but we do not focus on the notion of culture, since we can only observe the visible levels of culture.

Another barrier we have to face by proceeding with the project is the curtness of resources. In order to bring the airport further on the way we have to act in the limits of resources they can provide us with, since they cannot spend all their time and money on this project. In this context, we also have to mention that it is not possible to gather all the airside people in one meeting due to their time schedules.

As we have written we want to analyze if our attempt improved the situation in the organization. Thereby, the question of measurement arises. We think that it is not possible to measure this progress with figures and statistics. However, we hand out a questionnaire in order to get one kind of feedback as a result.
We have mentioned that the communication between the business development company and the employees in Växjö Airport is not well developed. However, we choose to focus on Växjö Airport and prioritize the problems in this organization.
CHAPTER 2
2. Methodology

In this chapter we present different methodological aspects regarding the scientific approach and the research strategy. We also clarify our decisions concerning these methodological aspects and describe our research journey. Furthermore, we introduce the concepts, which are necessary in order to create credibility and our strategy to achieve this purpose. This is also related to the process of data collection. In this part we explain how we collect both theoretical and empirical data.

2.1 Pre-Understanding

As Gummesson states the pre-understanding of the researchers can influence their approach to their research and may also affect their understanding and the analysis. He defines pre-understandings as following:

“The concept of pre-understanding refers to people’s insights into a specific problem and social environment before they start a research program or consulting assignment; it is an input.”

Thereby, it is possible to distinguish between two kinds of pre-understanding: first-hand and second-hand. First-hand pre-understanding is acquired through personal experience whereas second hand is gathered through intermediaries. The concept of pre-understanding not only deals with knowledge, but it also implies a certain attitude in collecting and analyzing information. Thus, the researchers have to pay attention that their pre-understanding does not limit the view and that they approach their topic as open-minded as possible.

The authors of this thesis come from different countries in Europe: Sweden and Germany. However, all of them are enrolled in a program with international orientation and have studied

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the topic of this thesis, which is in general “Learning Organization”. Apart from the different backgrounds of the authors, also the previous field study can be seen as a part of our pre-understanding, since we gained deep insight in the contemplated organization in this study, which is the starting point for this master thesis. We attempt to share this previous knowledge with the reader wherever it is necessary for the understanding.

2.2 Research Journey

As we stated above, we conducted a previous study before this master thesis, which strongly influenced our course of action. In the field study we tried to identify the problems that bar the organization from becoming a Learning Organization. The purpose of this previous study was to develop an action plan for this organization with possible solutions how to overcome those barriers.

This action plan is the starting point of our master, since we attempt to improve the situation in the organization and solve the main problems by putting the part of the action plan concerning the meetings into practice. This should help the airport to take a step further on the way of becoming a Learning Organization.

The action plan includes scheduling meetings with departmental groups as well as mixed groups. The idea for this meeting procedure derived from Gustavsen, who emphasized the importance of dialogue for the organizational development.34

In coordination with the CEO we agreed to inform the managers of the organization about our plans first of all. Therefore, the first part of our action plan includes a meeting with the manager group, which consists of the landside manager, the airside manager, his co-manager, the CEO and the HR manager. In this meeting we explained the concepts of Organizational Learning and presented our project in the organization, so that they were the first ones to know what is going to happen in the future. This information meeting for the managers was necessary, because the employees would turn to them with their questions regarding our project and thus it was essential for the success of the project that they could answer the questions.

34 Gustavsen, B. (1990)
After this information meeting we start with the real implementation of our project, which contains the formation of groups. First, we create groups in each department, so that the seven employees of the cafeteria form one group also the employees in the administration are put together in one group. Due to the different shifts at the ramp, we decide to form two groups in this department. After a short explanation of our intentions and plan, the topic of the discussion in the groups should be guided by questions regarding the vision and the motivational forces. Thereby, we mean their understanding of the organizational vision as well as the departmental and their personal vision. Besides this, the groups should talk about their motivation factors and how they see their position and the organization in the future. After the discussion, which is supposed to take one hour, the cafeteria and the administration groups each choose two spokesmen by themselves and the ramp groups each choose one spokesmen.

These representatives present their outcomes of the discussion in a meeting with the other spokesmen. At that mixed meeting they have the opportunity to discuss their different visions and try to create a common vision for the whole organization, which includes the individual visions. This meeting should provide the possibility for them to get closer and to deepen the interdepartmental communication. The outcome of this meeting should be a common vision that can be presented to the CEO in a later meeting. We decided not to allow the CEO to attend the first meeting, because he would possibly intervene in the discussion.

After this discussion the representatives go back to their group and inform their departmental group members about the outcome of the common group meeting and show them the presentation about the shared vision they have developed in the meeting.

As a last step there will take place a meeting of the mixed group again, but this time the CEO attend those meetings and the representatives of the departmental groups make their presentation for them. This presentation can be followed by a discussion with the CEO, so that they can go on with combining the visions.
We will attend all those meetings and help them to start the discussions by created questions but further in the meetings we are not going to participate. Our role in those meetings is to initiate the discussion and then to observe what is going on in the meetings.

On a long-term basis the airport can use those groups to discuss different issues or problems that arise as well as to use the innovative potential of all the employees. In our understanding these groups can act as a tool to improve the communication in the future and to close the gap between the CEO and the employees.

However, by conducting the meetings in this thesis, we realized that in the short time frame it is complicated to change and improve something in the organization. We acknowledged that it is difficult to change people’s minds in the time frame of this thesis. Therefore, we decided to concentrate more on the factors that facilitate the becoming of a Learning Organization for the airport and which obstacles can arise in practice by implementing these factors. Thereby, we focus more on the theoretical frame.

2.3 Scientific Approach

One of the first decisions to make when writing a research study is the selection of a research method. Thereby one has to regard several aspects.

2.3.1 Inductive vs. Deductive Approach

The distinction between the inductive and deductive approach refers to the first steps of writing a research study. The decision becomes visible at the starting point of the study, since it is an essential problem in scientific work how to relate theory and reality. There are two alternative working procedures: the inductive and the deductive approach.

These different approaches show the course of action, from which scientific conclusions can be made. By using a deductive approach, the researcher draws conclusions from already existing theories and tests them with the help of hypotheses, so that the deductive approach

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35 see Appendix 2
37 Andersen, I. (1998)
is the way down or in other words the way of demonstration.\textsuperscript{39} In comparison to the deductive approach the inductive approach shows the way up\textsuperscript{40}, the way of discovering. When using the inductive approach the researcher studies the object of research without using any existing theory. Instead, the researcher creates and formulates a new theory from the experiences and observations.\textsuperscript{41} The picture below shows the course of action for the different approaches.

![Comparison between deductive, inductive and abductive approach](image)

Figure 2: Comparison between deductive, inductive and abductive approach\textsuperscript{42}

The deductive and inductive approach can sometimes be mixed in the process, which can make it difficult to distinguish between them.\textsuperscript{43}

The most suitable approach for this thesis is in our opinion the abductive approach, which is according to Gummesson the combination of inductive and deductive.\textsuperscript{44} We are going to use the abductive approach, since we on the one hand test already existing theories, but on the other hand also attempt to discover new facts. We started in the field, which helped us to identify the important theory and create a model, which is applied to the field again.

### 2.3.2 Positivistic vs. Hermeneutic Approach

Another differentiation that should be made regarding the scientific approach is the selection of either a positivistic or a hermeneutic approach. These paradigms split the society of science in different groups.

\textsuperscript{39} Andersen, I. (1998)
\textsuperscript{40} Lindholm, S. (1999)
\textsuperscript{41} Andersen, I. (1998)
\textsuperscript{43} Andersen, I. (1998)
\textsuperscript{44} Gummesson, E. (2000)
The positivistic approach has its roots in the scientific tradition and claims that true knowledge is available for our minds and senses. The observations should be logical and try able. One idea with the positivistic approach is that the whole can always be studied by reducing it to its parts and studying the parts instead.\textsuperscript{45} By using a positivistic approach, which is also called objectivism paradigm, the research focuses on description and explanation. In this approach the researchers try to be neutral and keep a distance to the object of research. The objective of this approach is generalization and abstraction. Therefore, the result should be the same even though the researcher is replaced.\textsuperscript{46}

The hermeneutic approach, as another perspective, is the science of interpretation and understanding. Here the researchers try to interpret the human actions instead of explaining the occurrence. When doing a research with the hermeneutic approach the researcher tries to see the whole of the problem and the relation between the whole and its part. In doing so, the researcher tries to reach the largest complete understanding\textsuperscript{47}, which is also related to the position of the researcher. By using this approach the researcher is more involved due to their wish to experience the object of study from the inside. This approach concentrates on the specific situation.\textsuperscript{48}

We adopt the hermeneutic position in this thesis, since we rely heavily on the honesty of the interviewees and the participants of the meetings. It is not possible to test, if the material that we gained corresponds with reality. We have to deal carefully with the collected data and analyze the data from a rather critical point of view. Another aspect that argues in favor of a hermeneutic position is our involvement in the process. Since we attend the meetings personally, there is no way to avoid influencing the participants and thus the outcome, which is our data.

\textbf{2.3.3 Qualitative vs. Quantitative Approach}

Regarding the scientific approach, you can also distinguish between the quantitative and the qualitative approach. In the qualitative approach, the researcher collects different types of data in order to create a deeper understanding of the problem. It is also central to understand the

\textsuperscript{45} Patel, R. and Davidsson, B. (1994)
\textsuperscript{46} Gummesson, R. (2000)
\textsuperscript{47} Patel, R. and Davidsson, B. (1994)
\textsuperscript{48} Gummesson, R. (2000)
connection between the problem and the whole. The purpose of the qualitative approach is to explain and gain insight and understanding of phenomena through intensive collection of narrative data. Thus, doing a research with the qualitative approach implies the use of a narrative analyzing method.

In distinction to the qualitative approach, the quantitative approach contains statistics, mathematic, formulas and other statistical measurable data. Here the guidelines are clear in how to do a research and the purpose of the knowledge is to explain the different phenomena. It is important to explain every phenomenon in the research to be able to see if the results are valid for every unit that is researched. Thereby you do not try to interpret the behavior of individuals, but explain it by defining variables that operationalize the studied concepts and develop instruments for measuring.

There is no question that we conduct this thesis by using a qualitative approach, since the chosen topic demands it. The Learning Organization is a broad concept, where the progress in the process is hard to measure in figures and statistics. For us it is vital to gain deep insight and understanding for the problems of the organization, which is necessary if this thesis should describe the improvements.

### 2.4 Data Collection

A research study includes different kinds of data in general, which can be categorized as theoretical and empirical data. An appropriate collection of data in terms of quality and quantity is one of the key factors for the success of any investigation.

We are going to describe how we manage to collect our theoretical and field data. That includes a description of our sources for the theoretical parts and of our procedure for the empirical data collection.

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49 Andersen, I. (1998)
51 Andersen, I. (1998)
2.4.1 Theoretical data collection
The theoretical data consists of literature, journals and Internet research. In order to give this study a strong foundation we use all different kinds of theoretical data. The topic of Organizational Learning is well discovered in books. However, due to our wish to include recent opinions and developments related to this topic we also use articles and research papers that are available with the help of electronic databases, such as Elin. We enlarge our focus to the topic with literature, which mostly provides general theoretical results. However, the general literature assists us in completing the theoretical data that is necessary for this research. Additionally we search on the Internet for the most recent developments and for general information about the company.

2.4.2 Empirical data
There are several ways to collect empirical data, whereby the most common ways are questionnaires, interviews and observations. The choice of the data collection instrument depends on the chosen research approach, for example observations are highly important in a qualitative approach, but of less importance for a quantitative approach.54

The empirical data in this thesis is mainly gathered by observations, since we already gained a lot of information in the interviews we conducted for the field study. Now, we observe what happens in the meetings we scheduled in order to improve the communication. Thereby, we can observe and compare the different atmosphere in the meetings as well as the attitude of the employees, which helps us to identify the progress in the process of becoming a Learning Organization, but also the barriers and obstacles.

As Brewerton puts it "Observation is a highly skilled activity which should not be considered lightly."55 Thereby, the researcher has to consider several technical matters, e.g. the sampling, the method of recording as well as the location of the observer.56 Thus, we explain the setting of our observations closely in order to clarify our choices for the reader. In our case, an event sample is appropriate, since the observations are strongly focused on the meetings and we did not observe the patterns of behavior in the organization in general. We, as researchers, were positioned in the same room during the meetings, but sitting on the side to reduce our

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55 Brewerton, P.M. (2001), p.96
56 Brewerton, P.M. (2001)
influence as much as possible. The participants of the meetings were not able to see the notes, which we have been taken during the meeting in order to record the observations. We created a few questions to guide the discussion during the meetings\textsuperscript{57}, which simplifies the taking of notes, because the questions structured the discussion. However, the participants of the meetings not always stuck to the predetermined order.

In the following picture one can see the setting of the meetings. We - as observers - located in the corner of the room, whereas the participants of the meetings are placed around a table in the middle of the room. The created questions have been written on the board in front of them.

![Setting of the observations](image)

Figure 3: Setting of the observations

In addition, we handed out a questionnaire to see what the members of the organization think about the project and if they can recognize any improvement of the situation due to our interventions. Thereby, we can also find out the strengths and weaknesses of our work.

### 2.5 Scientific Credibility

Credibility deals with the question whether the reader can trust the data. Therefore, it is vitally important to establish credibility, since this influences the recognition of the study. To write a credible and consistent study some requirements need to be fulfilled.\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{57} Appendix 2
\textsuperscript{58} Gummesson, E. (2000)
According to Yin the quality of a study regarding the credibility can be established by the use of four common tests, which are described in the following sections.  

2.5.1 Construct validity  
To construct validity means, “establishing correct operational measures for the concepts being studied”. That means that it is important to show that the selected measures are related to the research question. In this thesis we attempt to achieve this by analyzing critically if something has changed due to our interventions. We are aware that our attitude concerning the outcome should be rather critical than optimistic.

2.5.2 Internal validity  
Internal validity is a concept, which is only related to explanatory or causal and not to descriptive or exploratory studies. In order to create internal validity the focus should be on “the relationship between the independent and dependent variables”. Since our study tends to be more descriptive and interpretative orientated than causal due to the observations, the importance of the internal validity in this thesis can be questioned. However, we try to pay attention to the causes and consequences in this context as well.

2.5.3 External validity  
The third criterion of credibility, external validity, is achieved when a generalization of the case results is possible. In order to create external validity the results must be tested in another environment. If the results are the same or in other words, the findings are replicated, you can argue that the results are “generalizable”. This refers to the concept of replication logic, which is related to experiments as well. Concerning external validity, we have to admit that the results of the thesis are very specific for the contemplated organization. We adjusted the model of a Learning Organization to the needs of this organization in order to solve their problems. Therefore, the thesis is strongly focused on one specific organization, but the problems we deal with can be found in lots of organization, so that some results can imply explanations for other organizations as well.

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60 Yin, R. (2003) p. 34  
63 Graziano, A.M. and Raulin, M.L., p. 418  
64 Yin, R. (2003)
2.5.4 Reliability

According to Yin the term reliability refers to giving consistent results, irrespective of who is measuring. The result of the case has to be traceable for the reader and later investigator. If the same procedure is followed while investigating again, the later investigator must also reach the same results. However, this is not achievable with an interpretative approach, since there the outcome strongly depends on the pre-understanding of the researchers. One condition, which is necessary to allow another investigator to achieve the same results, is the documentation of the research procedures.

Regarding the theoretical data the references should assist in tracing our material. The empirical data is mainly gathered by observations and thus influenced by our own individual interpretations. However, we tried to be as open and neutral as possible and moreover the empirical data contains the view of three people. In addition we had interviews with different employees, so that we were able to crosscheck the answers of different interviewees. Since we used people from different departments, we gained different perspectives. By this we made sure that it is not only the opinion of one person. This should guarantee an adequate level of reliability.

CHAPTER 3
3. Theoretical foundation

In the following chapter, we introduce some of the existing theories concerning our subject. As we already mentioned in the introduction part, there are several distinguished views which differ concerning the perspective how to look on Learning Organizations. To provide the whole picture for the reader we introduce several different perspectives. Thereby, we describe key factors of different authors. This is followed by a part, in which we introduce the disciplines we have chosen to be most suitable for the contemplated organization. The chapter ends with a presentation of our conceptual model of this thesis.

3.1 Organizational Learning

During the last century several scholars have researched and developed how an organization should be improved in order to stay competitive in the market. One of the ideas they came up with is developing towards a Learning Organization.

According to Probst and Büchel instead of being qualitative oriented, companies tend to be quantitative. In order to be able to deal with the increasing complexity companies must increase the knowledge in the organization. For handling challenges in the future, learning is a crucial issue for companies and thus new management principles are needed.66

During reading the literature about Learning Organization one can recognize that different scholars focus on different areas such as systems dynamics, organizational strategy, organizational culture or human resources.67 This is most likely because the theory about Learning Organizations includes many different areas within the organization development theme. Therefore, the authors tend to stress different features of the idea and to concentrate on different enabling prescriptions for its achievement.

3.1.1 Learning Organization or Organizational Learning?

By studying the theories about Learning Organizations we faced different expressions and therefore we think that it is important to explain the differences. According to Rifkin and Fulop there are four distinct fields: Organizational Learning, Learning Organization, Learning Environment and Learning Space.\(^{68}\) In this thesis, we focus on collective learning and consequently we only discuss the terms “Learning Organization” and “Organizational Learning”. These two expressions seem to be mostly used as synonyms. However, during our discussion we came to the conclusion that they have slightly different meanings. For that reason, we want to clarify our understanding for the reader.

We apprehend “Organizational Learning” more as the activity, which is done in order to improve the organization, while “Learning Organization” is a kind of organizations, where learning is emphasized. This understanding is similar to Mirvis’ definition. He states that:

“Organizational Learning is used as a descriptive term to explain and quantify learning activities and events. The term Learning Organization, on the other hand, tends to refer to organizations designed to enable learning, that is, having an organizational structure with the capability to facilitate learning, and to organizations within which learning is already occurring.”\(^{69}\)

Furthermore Mirvis elucidates that Learning Organizations focus on managing chaos and flattening hierarchies, decentralization, empowerment of people, teamwork and cross-functional team network relationships, adoption of new technologies and new forms of leadership and mentoring. On the other hand, Organizational Learning, which is “…the process by which the organization’s knowledge and value base changes, leading to improved problem-solving ability and capacity for action”\(^{70}\), refers to a set of processes that result from management practices and training, and hence can be used to create Learning Organization.\(^{71}\)

Senge looks on the same topic with a more holistic approach, since his ideas cannot only be applied on organizations. Thus, for him Learning Organizations are:

\(^{70}\) Probst, G.J.B. and Büchel, B.S.T. (1997), p. 15
“[...]organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together.”  

Another definition for Learning Organizations is given by Bob Garratt, who states that a Learning Organization is “an organization which facilitates the learning of all its members and continuously transforms itself.”

By comparing these different definitions it comes to the fore, what they have in common. Then it becomes obvious that the different authors all emphasize the fact that Organizational Learning is a process.

Sarv describes the learning process in terms of dynamic effectiveness. To clarify what he means by this he compares dynamic effectiveness to the efficiency, which is closely related to the productivity, as well as to the effectiveness, which is more about the company’s competitiveness on the market i.e. to produce that what the costumer ask for. He states that the effectiveness and the efficiency are measurable in an organization, since those assess the company’s achievements. On the contrary, dynamic effectiveness according to Sarv cannot be measured only through measuring in a given moment; instead it requires a measuring instrument, which includes also the timeframe. Therefore, according to Sarv learning is the key role when shifting to the dynamic effectiveness approach.

3.1.2 The key factors for Learning Organizations

Different authors have described the most important factors for Learning Organizations. According to Argyris and Schön “An organization is like an organism, each of whose cells contains a particular, partial, changing image of itself in relation to the whole.” For this reason the authors state that Organizational Learning occurs when individuals within an organization experience a problematic situation and inquire it on the organization’s behalf. Argyris and Schön, who were one of the firsts, who developed ideas in the context of
Learning Organizations, focus on correcting errors in their theory. This theory of correcting errors was adopted by Probst and Büchel, which will be explained further later on.

Nonaka and his colleagues maintain that Organizational Learning is something more than an organization which collects and uses information. According to them the most important challenge with the stimulation of a Learning Organization is to succeed with the articulation of the tacit knowledge and to understand that all employees in the organization learn through experiences. After that this information has to be accessible for the other members of the organization so it can be tested and be a benefit for the whole company even if the employee leaves the company.

The tacit knowledge has a substantial place in Nonaka’s theory. This kind of knowledge is hidden in the individuals of the organizations and it is difficult to verbalize. There are even some companies, where this knowledge is not recognized at all, since people are not sharing their knowledge with others. Nonaka writes also about the explicit knowledge which is often written and integrated in the system in form of structure, routine and procedures.

Learning implies transfer of knowledge. Through classification how tacit and explicit knowledge can be mediated in organizations Nonaka and his coauthors derive four kinds of learning.

1. **From tacit to tacit knowledge** – The knowledge is spread between people without talking or a consciously attempt to transfer knowledge. This knowledge is limited, because it continues to be tacit, which makes it difficult to control if it is reasonable or not.

2. **From explicit to explicit knowledge** – The knowledge is spread by open information such as an analysis of the market, which gives a new picture about the situation. This form of learning is not so strong, since this is only systematic knowledge, which is already there in the organization.

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76 Senge, P.M. (1990)
3. **From tacit to explicit knowledge** – This is a process, where the individual’s tacit knowledge is articulated verbally or non-verbally and thus becomes available for others.

4. **From explicit to tacit knowledge** – Here the employees begin to use the explicit knowledge and adapt it to their own tacit knowledge.79

Nonaka states that the first two kinds of knowledge transfer occur in every organization, but he assumes that the last two variants are the most effective. It is through these two kinds of learning the company can develop new knowledge and guarantee that it going to be used.80

According to Senge, who developed Argyris’s ideas further, a Learning Organization cannot occur if it does not include people. It is in the human nature to learn and in order to learn an organization has to take five disciplines into consideration:

1. **Systems thinking** - By systems thinking, Senge means that the members of an organization must look at the organization as a whole. Focusing on this, the employees develop understanding for the connections between each part of the organization and can easier create a picture that shows the causes of the problems and how these can be handled or solved in the best way.

2. **Personal mastery** - “the discipline of personal growth and learning” means that the ability and willingness of the individual is an assumption for Learning Organizations. Personal mastery implies that the individual have enough self-discipline to develop and learn new skills and increase the knowledge. According to Senge, people with a high level of personal mastery are very valuable for an organization, since they are more initiative, learn faster and have a deeper sense of responsibility than people with low personal mastery.

3. **Mental models** - Mental models are a tool people use to interpret the world around them. If then the people are able to test and improve their internal pictures of how the world works, new good ideas can be developed in the organization. To be able to use

mental models and systems thinking people must understand how important it is to change the ways of thinking and that changes on the mindset of individuals are necessary.

4. Building shared vision According to Senge, a shared vision exists when two or more people are connected to each other. It is a force in people’s heart that makes it to a vision and in this way a shared vision creates a common identity. It is vital for a Learning Organization that people in the organization strive for a common goal they truly want to focus on.

5. Team learning - there is a need to master team learning in today’s organizations, because the collective IQ is higher in teams compared with the individual IQ. Almost every important decision in the organization is made by teams and to be able to create an efficient team, members in the team must be innovative, complement each other and be able to learn from other teams.\textsuperscript{81}

Senge dedicates most attention to the discipline of systems thinking, since this discipline gives the whole theory the frame. His approach connects the methodology of systems dynamics\textsuperscript{82} with ideas from Argyris’ and Schön’s theory-of-action perspective, which emphasizes the awareness of the importance of the “mental model”\textsuperscript{83}. Senge states that all of his five disciplines are important in order to be able to create a Learning Organization but the organizations should focus in first place on that principle or principles which are most vital in order to develop learning.\textsuperscript{84}

Compared to Senge, Probst and Büchel claim that organizational knowledge is independent of individuals. Individual knowledge is only partly accessible for the organization whereas organizational knowledge and memory can be stored, for example in work procedures. Furthermore Probst and Büchel declare that individual learning is highly important for Organizational Learning because the individuals are the center of learning.\textsuperscript{85}

\textsuperscript{81} Senge, P.M. (1990)
\textsuperscript{82} Senge, P.M. (1990)
\textsuperscript{83} Argyris, C. and Schön, D. (1996)
\textsuperscript{84} Senge, P.M. (1990)
\textsuperscript{85} Probst, G.J.B. and Büchel, B.S.T. (1997)
Probst and Büchel developed several conditions that must be fulfilled in order to take the step from individual learning to Organizational Learning. These conditions, which are communication, transparency and integration, build the transformational bridge between individuals and Organizational Learning.\(^{86}\)

To be able to transfer individual learning into Organizational Learning, adaptive learning, reconstructive learning and process learning need to take place. With adaptive learning, Probst and Büchel mean that the members of the organization are able to identify problems in their environment and then develop and implement strategies to deal with such problems. This type of learning is the reaction of the organization to its internal and external environment in order to adapt to the environment. However, this process is based on existing norms. The next level of learning is called reconstructive learning, where norms and values are questioned and changed in the necessary cases. This level contains changes in deeper, cognitive structures. As the highest achievement of learning Probst and Büchel mention process learning. This can be described as learning to understand adaptive and reconstructive learning. Hence, the purpose is not to learn items in particular, but to study the process of learning itself with the aim of improving the ability to learn. This highest level of learning can be called learning to learn.\(^{87}\)

These different stages of learning have been adapted from Argyris, who developed them in his theory about the detection and correction of errors. In his theory these stages of learning are called single-loop learning, double-loop learning and learning to learn.\(^{88}\)

According to Probst and Büchel there are different triggers to Organizational Learning. Some examples of these are: unsolved problems in the organization, internal and external differences, disturbances which are based on dissatisfaction, conflicts or competitive pressure. Other triggers, which can start the Organizational Learning process, can arise from the members itself in the sense that they have different views which have to be discussed, or through job rotation, training or other changes in staff. The other main aspect that can initiate Organizational Learning is a slack of resources. In situations where the resources are not

\(^{86}\) Probst, G.J.B. and Büchel, B.S.T. (1997)  
\(^{87}\) Probst, G.J.B. and Büchel, B.S.T. (1997)  
\(^{88}\) Argyris, C. (1999)
scarce, there is enough time to start thinking and questioning norms and underlying assumptions.\textsuperscript{89}

To succeed to create the right atmosphere in an organization, where different ideas can be implemented and triggered one should carry in mind that the culture of the organization is of vital importance. Schein links organizational culture to the idea of a Learning Organization. He argues that in a world of chaotic change, organizations must learn ever faster, which calls for a learning culture that works as a “perpetual learning system”. To implement this, the atmosphere in the organization is important.\textsuperscript{90}

Furthermore, Schein points out that leadership is: “the attitude and motivation to examine and manage culture”\textsuperscript{91}. In his understanding the culture of a group can be defined as:

“[…]a pattern of basic assumptions that was learned by a group and as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.”\textsuperscript{92}

In Organizational Learning, basic assumptions shift the heads of the group members and the leaders should promote such shifts by helping the organization’s members to achieve a certain degree of insight and develop motivation to change.\textsuperscript{93}

### 3.2 Developed Principles

In the following section, we describe the components of our conceptual model, which can be seen as a further development of the key factors described above. This model includes systems thinking, groups and teams, shared vision, leadership style and communication. According to Senge the process of building a Learning Organization is unique, so that the implementation has to be customized in order to fit to the needs of the contemplated

\textsuperscript{89} Probst, G.J.B. and Büchel, B.S.T. (1997)

\textsuperscript{90} Schein, E.H. (2004)


\textsuperscript{92} Schein, E.H. (2004), p. 17

\textsuperscript{93} Schein, E.H. in Argyris, C. (1999)
organization. Therefore, it is vital to recognize which discipline implementation is of highest priority and which is of less importance in the beginning.\(^{94}\)

Furthermore, Probst and Büchel describe what should be done in order to initiate the learning process. In this context, they come up with six basic steps in the management of Organizational Learning. These basic steps include ascertaining the need for learning, identifying triggers of learning and using concepts to overcome barriers to learning.\(^{95}\) In the field study, which we did in preparation for this master thesis, we analyzed the contemplated organization regarding the learning processes. Thereby, we discovered the origin of the learning needs, but also the triggers of the learning process as well as the barriers. As we already have described in the introduction the main problem in the considered organization, Växjö Airport, is the lack of communication between the departments. However, this communication problem is also related to the vision formulation, since the airport manager imposed his vision, which he developed in coordination with the business development and the administration department, on the whole organization. This problem regarding the vision lights the interdepartmental communication issue again, but also demonstrates an additional problem, which is the authoritarian leadership style of the airport manager.\(^{96}\)

These problems strongly influenced the conceptual model, since our action plan attempts to solve the arisen problems in the airport. Therefore, we adopted the described key factors to create the most important disciplines, which are required at the airport in order to deal with their problems. Namely, these disciplines are systems thinking, team work, shared vision, leadership style and communication. Although these principles are adjusted to the situation at the airport, they go along with the seven so-called action imperatives for building a Learning Organization Marsick and Watkins have developed.

They emphasize the open system perspective, since it includes the connection of the organization to its environment. The other characteristics according to them are to create continuous learning opportunities, encourage collaboration and team learning, establish systems to capture and share learning, empower people towards a shared vision, and promote

\(^{94}\) Senge, P.M. (1990)
\(^{95}\) Probst, G.J.B. and Büchel, B.S.T. (1997)
\(^{96}\) Field study
dialogue and inquiry. More recently they have attached the characteristic of leaders, who 
model and support learning at the individual, team and organization level.  

By looking at these characteristics above, one can recognize that our chosen disciplines are 
key factors of a Learning Organization.

3.2.1 Systems thinking
Today more information is created than humans can absorb and changes are occurring faster 
and faster in our society. People are aware of the complex world they are a part of but to be 
able to handle the complexity people need to think about it as a system.

According to Checkland and Senge a system is a way of looking at the world and to see how 
elements are connected to each other, which forms a whole. By using systems thinking people 
think about the world outside themselves and connect the whole to its parts. Systems are 
special because they can be applied everywhere. They are the concept that keeps everything 
together. When looking upon systems thinking with Cusins’ view, systems are defined 
from their environment by a boundary which is haphazard. Inputs from the environment cross 
the border into the system and comes finally out as outcome after a transformation process in 
the system. The flow in the system can be things like material or information. This can be 
compared to Senge’s view on systems thinking where new information will be transformed to 
new thinking and knowledge for the organization. New knowledge is extremely important for 
organizations to make members of the organizations learn and thus systems thinking is an 
important part in Learning Organizations. By thinking as a system and knowing what effects 
people’s decisions have on others, the system can help the organization to gain more 
knowledge to become stronger.

Oshry states that humans know how their life is in their own system but they do not know 
how the other parts of the system are. They do not know what other people experience instead 
these parts of the system are invisible for them. People live in a world where they believe in 
myths and prejudices and believe that this is the truth. Even though people think they know,
they probably do not know. Oshry calls this blindness for the other parts in a system spatial blindness. Another kind of blindness by Oshry, called temporal blindness, occurs when people do not see the set of actions that has brought them to the present. They forgot the past and when the history is becoming invisible for people, misunderstandings and conflicts can arise.\textsuperscript{103}

Scott states that there are three different perspectives on systems. These are the rational system, natural system and open system perspective. Rational and natural systems are a closed system which means that they are separated from the environment. In rational systems a certain goal is trying to be reached and therefore the structure of relationships are made explicit. The activities of the members are consciously coordinated in a specific way to fulfill a “certain purpose”. In natural systems participants try to work together to make the system survive. They have a large common interest in the survival of the system and put all their collective focus on this.\textsuperscript{104}

In contrast, the open systems are open and depending on the environment. According to Scott, open systems are a combination of parts that are interdependent of each other, but at the same time they know about their own differences. The parts of the system have an ongoing exchange with the organization and therefore all parts must be willing to produce in the system. At the same time, the activities are dependent on the environment they are operating in, which makes the system open for new impressions.\textsuperscript{105} Cusins defines open systems as systems where effective feedback loops can be showed. With feedback loops the author means when feedback comes out as output from the system and goes back as input, and modify the system to make it more flexible and responsive. According to Cusins, closed systems do not content any feedback loops.\textsuperscript{106}

Open and closed systems are important aspects of systems thinking for the improvement of knowledge in Learning Organizations.\textsuperscript{107} Still, systems thinking is of special importance when it comes to team work, since then the individual has to pay attention to the consequences of his actions for the others. People are a part of systems and they are the one who gain new

\textsuperscript{103} Oshry, B. (1996)
\textsuperscript{104} Scott, R.M. (1989)
\textsuperscript{105} Scott, R.M. (1989)
\textsuperscript{106} Cusins, P. (1994)
\textsuperscript{107} Cusins, P. (1994)
knowledge for the organizations. There cannot be a Learning Organization if it does not include people and to create systems thinking, people must learn how to learn together.  

3.2.2 Groups and Teams

Today team working is a common trend within organizations, for example to increase employee satisfaction and productivity. In teams people can accomplish tasks together that they are not able to accomplish alone and at the same time fulfill the social needs that are in the human nature. However, not always people prefer to work in teams. According to Stewart, people will only continue to work together as long as the costs, like reduced efficiency and negative social interactions, are lower than the rewards, like positive interactions and economic as well as social benefits. The most common difference between groups and teams is that a group consists of two or more people interacting with each other whereas the members of a team are share the same commitments and goals.  

3.2.2.1 Teams in Learning Organizations

According to Senge it is important to be able to create learning teams and dialogues among members of the organization in Learning Organizations. In dialogues complex issues are explored and in discussions decisions are made. Senge means that almost every important decision is made by teams and that is also a source for the development of new ideas for the organization. Individuals have to be innovative and aware of other members’ roles and abilities to become an efficient team. Murray and Moses agree with Senge and state that collective intelligence is a precursor to Organizational Learning. Kim and Mumford have the same view and claim that organizations learn from teams when it comes to skills, approaches, and commitment of individual members. When a team can share the same values and interpret in the same way, the integration between the members is increased. As a result of this every individual in the group improve his/her intuitive and interpretive skills.

108 Senge, P.M. (1990)
109 Stewart, G. et al. (1999)
110 Senge, P.M. (1990)
There are three critical dimensions in efficient team learning developed by Senge. First, the team must find out how to become cleverer together than as separate individuals, second, the team must be innovative and complement each other, and third, the team must learn how to learn from other teams.\textsuperscript{115}

According to Hackman and Walton, there are other factors that are important for teams to become efficient. Teams have to:

- "enhance the capability of members to work together interdependently in the future in carrying out the work; and
- contribute to the growth and personal well-being of team members"\textsuperscript{116}

Kirkman and Rosen claims that it is important in Learning Organizations that team members are chosen after their “learning ability” in comparison to traditional organizations, where teams are put together considering their knowledge and experience. Learning Organizations must choose people that have the ability to learn together.\textsuperscript{117} When picking the right people to the teams, the Learning Organization has for example to look at the responsibility among people to develop themselves and others\textsuperscript{118} and that the leader can work as a coach\textsuperscript{119}.

### 3.2.2.2 Self-leading teams

In Learning Organizations the leader should act as a coach and let go of his power, then self-leading teams can be an alternative. According to Stewart, teams with a high degree of autonomy are called self-leading teams. These teams have large freedom in their work. They also decide everything regarding what and how they are going to do it when working together. Motivation and commitment act as the glue that keeps the team together. The concept of self-leading teams is suitable if there is a necessity for autonomy and ability for individual self leadership.\textsuperscript{120}

Wilson shares the same view and points out how the trust between the leaders and the employees has to be enlarged in order to be able to create a self-leading team. According to

\textsuperscript{115} Senge, P.M. (1990)
\textsuperscript{117} Kirkman, B.L and Rosen, B. in Murray, P. and Moses, M. (2005)
\textsuperscript{118} Clutterbuck, D. in Murray, P. and Moses, M. (2005)
\textsuperscript{119} Kirkman, B.L. and Rosen, B. in Murray, P. and Moses, M. (2005)
\textsuperscript{120} Stewart, G. et al (1999)
the author the leader must also start to behave in a supportive way towards the employees instead of acting as an authoritarian leader, but it is not necessary that he/she gives up all leading competence of the team. Moreover, staying in control of what is happening is crucial to get everything in the organization to work. When self-leading is implemented in organizations, the members (both leaders and employees) will get the chance to grow and develop as a person.\textsuperscript{121}

However, to become a self-leading team requires a lot of training for example to teach the team how to work in a creative environment instead of only go on by routine. According to Stewart self-leading teams have the best function in a dynamic and changing environment where a high degree of flexibility is needed.\textsuperscript{122}

3.2.2.3 Goals, norms and culture in the groups

Nilsson explains that every group has a structure, which shows how the group is build up with goals, roles, norms, relations, leadership, power and influences. The structure can be explained as a process, both visible and invisible. This process can be changed, but the structure will be the factor that makes the group recognizable. Together, the group process and the group structure create a group culture, which defines how the group acts and behaves.\textsuperscript{123}

The goals in the group show what kind of functions the group has. Without any goal the group would create chaos because of a lack of organization. Only deriving from the goal the group can steer its actions and decide what to do. Sometimes the goal can be different in a group because of different individual goals. Even though the goal can be different for the group members, a common goal should be created in order to guarantee the group’s survival. Without any common driving force the group is not able to exist further.\textsuperscript{124} Here it is important to distinguish between goals and the vision, which is another incentive of a group. A goal is valid for a short-term period and can be achieved, whereas a vision holds true for a long-term horizon and the likelihood to achieve it can be by only 50 percent. Besides these differences goals and vision provide the same encouragement for the group.\textsuperscript{125}

\textsuperscript{121} Wilson, G. (1995)
\textsuperscript{122} Stewart, G. et al (1999)
\textsuperscript{123} Nilsson, B. (1993)
\textsuperscript{124} Nilsson, B. (1993)
\textsuperscript{125} Collins, J.C. and Porras, J.I. (1996)
According to Nilsson, norms are one aspect that characterizes the group and play an important role. Different groups look at the world with different views and they also do not have the same behavior in every situation due to different norms that exist in every group. Each group has their specific kind of norms, which are unwritten rules that influence their actions and behavior. Ordinary rules are something the group members must control, while norms are rules they are willing to follow and which they create by themselves. It can be difficult to recognize these norms, because they can be invisible both for the group members and for outsiders. Norms describe what is acceptable or unacceptable behavior in the group and create expectations for the group members. It is acceptable to deviate from the group norms, but only small variations are allowed. According to Nilsson too much deviation from the norms can result in excluding of the group member by the group. It is common that a group member with high status can diverge more from the norms than other low status members.\textsuperscript{126}

Nilsson argues that conformity can occur in norms. This means that the behavior of the group members is becoming exactly the same, for example in opinions, clothing, behavior or values. The reason is that the conformity is created from some kind of group pressure. Individuals need to get their picture of the world confirmed by others, and by that people start to agree with each other. One reason for conformity is the risk of breaking up if the group does not agree with each other. This kind of team work - when everyone has the same picture - makes it easier for humans to work together and to reach a common goal.\textsuperscript{127}

On the other hand, Janis states that group thinking is not always the best alternative, since there is the risk that the group members stop thinking on their one and only follow one member, without having a critical attitude. That is especially contradicting to the postulations of the Learning Organization, because this implies creative groups which support dialogue.\textsuperscript{128}

Compared to Nilsson’s view on norms, Schein talks about the culture in groups. According to the author, culture can be one reason why people seem to argue or behave in special ways. It is also the reason why it is so hard to change groups and why groups and organizations can differ as much as they do. Schein claims that culture can be analyzed at three different levels: artifacts, espoused believes and values and basic underlying assumptions. Artifacts are visible

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[126] Nilsson, B. (1993)
\item[127] Nilsson, B. (1993)
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
for an outsider, for example clothing, manners and emotions. Espoused beliefs and values go deeper than artifacts and can only be seen if people stay in the culture for a while, for example behavioral norms. The third step, basic underlying assumptions are deeper and concern basic assumptions that are taken for granted in the group.\textsuperscript{129}

### 3.2.2.4 Motivation

Guirdham points out that it is the driving force, motivation, which makes people go on with what they are doing. The group goal is related to the motivation of the group, because the goal is the “main fuel” for all human beings.\textsuperscript{130} Herzberg distinguishes different factors regarding their motivation potential. One group of factors are the non-motivating factors, such as money, status and relationships with co-workers. These factors do not motivate the individual, but if he/she does not get it he/she will be dissatisfied. To make people high motivated, factors like responsibility, confirmation and self-fulfilling are important, which will be showed in higher work effort and performance. According to Herzberg people usually mistake the “not motivating factors” as being the motivation factors.\textsuperscript{131} These motivating factors simply develop in the atmosphere of a Learning Organization, since this implies the empowerment of the employees.\textsuperscript{132}

To be able to learn from each other and to gain new knowledge to the organizations, people must learn how to work together. They need to cooperate to be able to reach their goals and to increase the success of the organizations. This implies that the group should share one vision, which they strive to fulfill in the future.

### 3.2.3 Vision

Due to the changes in the environment and on the market value creation plays an important role in today’s business. Therefore, the success of an organization depends on its value producing ability. Hence, one key characteristic of successful organization is the foundation planning. That means that the organization is based on a solid foundation, which includes the vision of the organization.\textsuperscript{133} According to Mintzberg and others a “[…] vision serves as both an inspiration and a sense of what needs to be done – a guiding idea”.\textsuperscript{134}

\textsuperscript{129} Schein, E.H. (2004)
\textsuperscript{130} Guirdham, M. in Nilsson, B. (1993)
\textsuperscript{131} Herzberg, F. in Nilsson, B. (1993)
\textsuperscript{132} Yeo, R.K. (2006)
\textsuperscript{133} Harris, M.C. (1998)
\textsuperscript{134} Mintzberg, H. et al (1998), p.124
In addition to Mintzberg’s definition the authors Bennis and Mische describe a vision as following:

“A vision is the articulation of the image, values, direction, and goals that will guide the future of the organization.”

In other words, a vision is an image of the future we desire to create. The purpose of the vision, which is valid for a shorter time frame than the mission, is to evoke emotions and to create the desire to make the vision come true. An important aspect that should be taken into consideration by formulating the vision is the measurability of the achievement. Without the possibility to measure the achievement it cannot be defined as a vision, but as a dream or a wish.

The vision can be written in different ways and thereby focus on distinct matters. First of all a vision can be described by the attributes extrinsic or intrinsic. An intrinsic vision looks inward, whereas an extrinsic vision is focused on achieving something relative to an outsider, for example to beat a competitor. However, an extrinsic vision can eventually weaken the organization once the vision is achieved, because then the organization attempts to keep the status-quo. The intrinsic vision is more appropriate for generating creative tension.

Another distinction can be made between positive and negative visions. The question answered by a positive vision is what we want while a negative vision is concerned with avoiding something. These two ways of visions derive from the sources of energy that motivates an organization: fear or aspiration. Thereby, aspiration enables continuing learning and growth.

3.2.3.1 Formulation of the vision

In the traditional approach the vision is formulated in a top down way, which means that the vision is imposed on the organization by the management. The vision includes a goal and vivid description of the state after the achievement of this goal. Regarding the duration of the

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136 Harris, M.C. (1998)
137 Senge, P.M. (1990)
vision the authors argue. Harris points out that the vision should be changed after three or five years,\(^{140}\) whereas Collins and Porras state that one vision is valid in a time frame of ten up to 30 years. They describe the vision as goal, which can be reached with a likelihood of 50 to 70 percent. Despite the low probability rate of success the organization must believe that it can reach the goal.\(^{141}\)

However, this is not the only existing perspective on strategic thinking, since other approaches have evolved. One of those different approaches claims that the realized strategies are planned, but also emerge during the achievement process. A totally planned vision prevent learning processes after the formulation of the vision, whereas turning up visions encourages learning.\(^{142}\)

This understanding is shared by Quinn, who argues that visions can emerge in change processes and the leader cannot announce the vision ahead, instead they have to observe the process of change.\(^{143}\) Mintzberg and Waters move on even further by saying that formulated visions are obstacles for changes in the organization. In addition, they mention that individual visions are more flexible, since it is only stored in one brain. They argue that such a vision can be changed unproblematic due to the individual’s willingness to change.\(^{144}\) On the other hand this view is contradicting to Argyris, since he points out that it is a requirement that those who work within in the deliberate strategy of the company connect in a so called joint reflection with those who are involved in developing emergent strategies.\(^{145}\)

### 3.2.3.2 Employee involvement

Argyris understanding supports the trend of employee involvement, which has been a catch word in the last years. As Cotton states employee involvement is a “participative process that uses the entire capacity of employees and is designed to encourage increased commitment to the organization’s success.”\(^{146}\) Also Hyman and Mason describe the opportunity to influence or even take part in the decision-making process. Usually employee involvement goes along with information provision. This information provision is characterized by a two way

\(^{140}\) Harris, M.C. (1998)


\(^{143}\) Quinn, R.E. (2004)


\(^{146}\) Cotton, J. in Robbins, S.P. (2005), p. 236
communication: not only top down information flow, but also bottom-up communication, which can be quality circles or employee suggestion schemes for example. Another aspect of employee involvement is job restructuring, which can be equated with job enrichment.\[147\] The participation of the employees is required, because of the increasing job complexity. Thus, the managers do not know everything their employees know and their knowledge is valuable in the decision-making process.\[148\]

### 3.2.3.3 The Vision in a Learning Organization

The involvement of the employees plays also an important role, when it comes to the development of a vision in a Learning Organization. According to Senge the members of the organization should share one vision. He explains that people have a personal vision, which is a picture or an image in his or her head and heart, whereas shared visions are pictures and images that people throughout the organization carry.\[149\]

However, Senge is not the only author who argues in favor of a shared vision. Harvey Jones writes:

\[“\text{Making it happen means involving the hearts and minds of those who have to execute and deliver. It cannot be said often enough that these are not the people at the top of the organisation, but those at the bottom.}”\[150\]

According to Probst and Büchel the development of the vision can also be seen in the context of learning by creating a culture. With this notion the process of the vision formulation is of greater interest than the content itself, since it is the development process, which fosters learning. The vision as well as the way of the creation and implementation shapes the culture of the organization. Therefore, the formulation of the vision should not be done by individuals, but either by elites or groups. Probst and Büchel argue that many members of the organization should participate in the creating of the vision, which consequently has to be done in a group process. The development of a shared vision can be seen as a tool to change the organizational frame of reference, because in the formulation process the values, norms

\[147\] Hyman, J. and Mason, B. (1995)
\[149\] Senge, P.M. (1990)
and goals are analyzed and questioned. The building of a shared vision supports the identity finding and frames the culture of the organization.\textsuperscript{151}

Hence, it is important to distinguish between personal visions imposed on the organization or shared vision created in a group process. An imposed personal vision can only command compliance, whereas the later can generate true commitment, since it reflects the individual visions. The people, who share a vision, feel connected and bound together by a shared belief. From this common caring the power of a shared vision derive.\textsuperscript{152} Hamel share this view, since he argues that every member has to be involved in the organization in order to achieve this needed level of dedication.\textsuperscript{153}

According to Senge, Maslow has found that a shared vision and purpose is one of the main characteristics of high-performing groups, which represent the peak in human efficiency. In those groups, the members identify themselves with the task to such an extent, that the task becomes a part of their personality.\textsuperscript{154} This goes along with Mc Gregor’s concept of the Theory X and Y, in which he describes the motivation of the employees depending on different assumptions. He concludes that employees exercise self-direction and self-control, if they are committed to the aims of the organization. Based on this theory he also suggests participative decision-making for increasing the motivation.\textsuperscript{155}

In order to involve the employees in the vision building process, personal visions should be encouraged, since shared visions derive from personal visions. Caring about something is always rooted in the individual values. Therefore, there is a need for an atmosphere that fosters the development of personal visions, from which shared visions can emerge.\textsuperscript{156} According to Hodgkinson the leaders must be willing to share their own vision, which includes communicating and asking for support.\textsuperscript{157}

The next step is the transfer of the personal visions in a shared vision. As said before the shared vision should represent the personal visions in order to achieve true commitment.

\textsuperscript{151} Probst, G.J.B. and Büchel, B.S.T. (1997)  
\textsuperscript{152} Senge, P.M. (1990)  
\textsuperscript{153} Hamel, G. in Hodgkinson, M. (2002)  
\textsuperscript{154} Senge, P.M (1990)  
\textsuperscript{155} Robbins, S.P. (2005)  
\textsuperscript{156} Senge, P.M. (1990)  
\textsuperscript{157} Hodgkinson, M. (2002)
Hence, Senge compares a shared vision to a hologram, since there each piece contains the whole image. In an organization each member sees his own picture of the organization and those pictures represent the whole organization from different point of views. After building a shared vision each member of the organization has the same picture in their heads and hearts, but from their own point of view.\textsuperscript{158}

However, Sennett sees a tension between the concern for dialogue and the demand for building a shared vision. He argues that the interest in building a shared vision

\begin{quote}
“[...]falsely emphasizes unity as the source of strength in a community and mistakenly fears that when conflicts arise in a community, social bonds are threatened.”\textsuperscript{159}
\end{quote}

Therefore, the role of the leader in this process should not be neglected, since he can create the right atmosphere, which does not suppress different opinions.

\textbf{3.2.4 Leadership}

The new ways of thinking concerning the whole organization also questions the required leadership style. As Parsloe and Wray explain after reading about issues as for example Total Quality Management, Employee Empowerment or Learning Organization it becomes obvious that the days of the traditional management science of command and control were numbered.\textsuperscript{160}

Learning Organizations calls for a new view of leadership, since the traditional views of leaders originated from an individualistic and nonsystematic worldview. A traditional leader sets the direction, makes the key decisions and mobilizes the members of the organizations to follow his directions, whereas the task of a “learning leader” can be described as following:

\begin{quote}
“They are responsible for building organizations where people continually expand their capabilities to understand complexity, clarify vision, and improve shared mental models – that is, they are responsible for learning.”\textsuperscript{161}
\end{quote}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{158} Senge, P.M (1990)  
\textsuperscript{159} Sennett, R. (1998), p. 143  
\textsuperscript{160} Parsloe, E. and Wray, M. (2000)  
\textsuperscript{161} Senge, P.M. (1990), p. 340
\end{flushleft}
In general, the main task of a leader in a Learning Organization is to generate creative tension, not only in themselves but in the entire organization. This tension is created by the gap between the vision respectively purpose and the current state of reality. Thereby, the leader has not only the task to set the direction or the target by formulating the vision, but he should also be committed to explore the truth about the current reality relative to that vision.\footnote{Senge, P.M. (1990)}

Garratt emphasizes this notion, because he stresses the ability to value people as the key asset for Organizational Learning. Thereby, the role of the leader is to nurture, include and coach the members of the organization to competence and development. The leaders have to develop these acquirements and then reveal this understanding through their attitude and behavior.\footnote{Garratt, B. (1990)}

As Schein points out leaders are able to insert their own assumptions in the daily routine of their organizations. Through their behavior leaders explicitly and implicitly mediate the assumptions they truly hold. Thus, he describes the role of the leader in the following:

\begin{quote}
\textit{The learning leader must portray confidence that active problem solving leads to learning, thereby setting an appropriate example for other members of the organization.}\footnote{Schein, E.H. (2004), p. 395}
\end{quote}

In order to create a learning culture it is vital to embed the process of learning in the culture.\footnote{Schein, E.H. (2004)}

Senge distinguishes three different leader roles, whereby the role of the leader as a designer seems to be not the most obvious one, since the function of design are rarely visible, but those who practice it can find deep satisfaction in empowering the others and take a step back. Because design is an integrative science, the leaders task in a Learning Organization concerns integrating all the learning disciplines. He/she is the one, who designs the learning processes and decides about the proceeding in implementing the learning disciplines. However, for
those tasks the leaders cannot rely on their decision-making and problem-solving abilities, but have to focus on their skills in coaching, mentoring and helping others to learn.\textsuperscript{166}

The role of the leader as a steward is connected to the purpose story, since every leader should be able to relate his personal vision in order to give the vision a greater meaning and integrate it in a broader context. This purpose story contains an integrating set of ideas that gives meaning to the aspects of the leader’s mission. Nevertheless, to be the leader of a Learning Organization also means to listen to the visions of the other members of the organization and to realize that the own vision is only a part of the system.\textsuperscript{167}

According to Senge the third role of the leader is the position of a teacher, which means that the leader helps other people in the organization to develop understanding for the systemic structures. Thereby, the leader defines the reality and act as a role model concerning the question of the level of reality. A leader in a Learning Organization should focus on the purpose and the systemic structure without neglecting the other two levels, which are events and patterns of behavior. However, the real challenge is to “teach” the other members of the organization to follow this behavior. It is very important that learning leaders are able to release their strategic insights in order to enable a public discussion and further development.\textsuperscript{168}

Marsick and Watkins also emphasize the role of the leader by recently adding to their theory a seventh characteristic of Learning Organizations, which is “leaders, who model and support learning at the individual, team and organisational level.”\textsuperscript{169}

The description of the leader’s behavior from the authors above, the leader as a teacher implies the concept of coaching or mentoring. Therefore, Parsloe and Wray argue that encouraging the members of the organization, especially the managers, to become coaches and establishing mentoring programs are vital points on the agenda for Learning Organizations. In this sense, they define the goal of coaching and mentoring within the Learning Organization:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{166} Senge, P.M. (1990)
\item \textsuperscript{167} Senge, P.M. (1990)
\item \textsuperscript{168} Senge, P.M. (1990)
\item \textsuperscript{169} Marsick, V.J. and Watkins, K.E. in Cullen, J. (1999), p.48
\end{itemize}
“The aim is to help and support people to manage their own learning in order that they may maximize their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance and enable them to become the person they want to be.”

Also Goleman argues that coaching and mentoring are important abilities that characterize a leader. In his understanding coaches and mentors get inside the heads of the people and can feel how to give effective feedback. A good coach knows when to hold back and when to push harder for better performance, which motivates the employee.

Some authors use coaching and mentoring as synonyms, but the terms have different meanings and imply different behaviors. The general purpose of mentoring is an exchange of wisdom, which includes guidance for personal, career or life growth, whereas the tasks of a coach are goal-directed with emphasis on taking action and sustaining changes over time. The difference between these two concepts becomes clear, when looking at the “other” person. The mentor works together with mentorees, partners or learning group members, while the coach is responsible for employees or co-workers. Thus, the overall term is coaching, but by behaving as a coach the leader can have the function of a mentor.

3.2.4.1 Coaching

First of all, there is not only one right way of coaching, since the appropriate coaching depends on the organization. However, coaching can be defined as:

“[…] a process that enables learning and development to occur and thus the performance to improve. To be a successful coach requires knowledge and understanding of the process as well as the variety of styles, skills and techniques that are appropriate to the context in which coaching take place.”

It is important to mention that coaching is a co-created process, which means that it involves not only the willingness but also the motivation of the person that should be “coached”.

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However, when the leader behaves as a coach in the right way, it can be a trigger for personal growth and motivation as well as strategic change.\textsuperscript{174}

As one can recognize on the figure below Parsloe and Wray distinguish two different styles of coaching, which are called hands-on and hands-off respectively. In a case of hands-on the manager has all the control, thus it is called coaching as a manager. However, there is a floating transition to the hands-off style, where the employee has the control. In this case the authors talk about managing as a coach.\textsuperscript{175}

![Figure 4: Coaching management styles\textsuperscript{176}](image)

Wales emphasizes the gain in motivation which can be observed by the employees, who are led by a coach. Another vantage point is that by coaching the manager is enabled to translate the personal insights of the employees into improved effectiveness and organizational development, since the relationship between manager and employees is deepened.\textsuperscript{177}

### 3.2.4.2 Mentoring

According to Robbins mentors are good teachers, thus they can present ideas clearly and listen well. In addition they share their experiences as well as contacts and act as a role model.

\textsuperscript{174} Chidiac, M.A. (2006)
\textsuperscript{175} Parsloe, E. and Wray, M. (2000)
\textsuperscript{176} Parsloe, E. and Wray, M. (2000), page 55
\textsuperscript{177} Wales, S. (2003)
He explains further that the most effective mentoring relationship exists beyond the boss-subordinate relationship, because this connection is always characterized by a conflict of interest.\textsuperscript{178} Parsloe and Wray define mentoring general as a process that supports and encourages learning to happen.\textsuperscript{179}

A mentor program provides personal benefits for the leader as well as benefits for the organization. Due to the mentor-mentoree relationship the mentor can gain access to the attitudes and feelings of the lower-ranking employees. Thereby, the employees can be a source of potential problem solving by providing early warning signals. For the organization the mentoring acts as a support system for talented employees, who are more motivated due to the mentoring and thus less likely to quit.\textsuperscript{180}

These concepts increase the importance of good communication processes in the organizations, since they emphasize a closer relationship between manager and employee, which results in a dialogue.

3.2.5 Communication

Managing people in organizations depends ultimately on communication, since it is one of the most important processes, which takes place in companies. It influences individuals, groups and organizational achievement.\textsuperscript{181} It is important to realize that it is only through communication between individuals that each can identify with their job and with the company.\textsuperscript{182}

However, what does communication mean? The word “communicate” is related to the word “common” and it stems from the Latin verb communicare which means “to share”, “to make common”. When people communicate, they make things common and increase their shared knowledge and common sense.\textsuperscript{183} The everyday view of communication is quite different from the view of communication taken by communication scholars. In the business world the

\textsuperscript{178} Robbins, S.P. (2005)  
\textsuperscript{179} Parsloe, E. and Wray, M. (2000)  
\textsuperscript{180} Robbins, S.P. (2005)  
\textsuperscript{181} Rosengren, K.E. (2000)  
\textsuperscript{182} Probst, G.J.B. and Büchel, B.S.T. (1997)  
\textsuperscript{183} Rosengren, K.E. (2000)
view is that communication is synonymous to information. Thus, Axley state that communication can be seen as the flow of information from one individual to another.\(^{184}\)

### 3.2.5.1 Communication and the communication process

George and Jones define this similarly but include also the communication between groups: “The sharing of information between two or more individuals or groups to reach a common understanding.”\(^{185}\) On the other hand Conrad and Pool think that communication is the process by which people interactively create, sustain, and manage meaning.\(^{186}\) Lee Thayer also adds that communication is a process. Namely: “the process of affecting an interchange of understanding between two or more people.”\(^{187}\)

There are many definitions depending on how people choose to understand this complex process. Most people agree that communication is the exchanges of symbols, common messages, and information, the art of expressing ideas and the science of transmitting information.\(^{188}\) Communication in this thesis refers to human group behavior in connection to Learning Organizations. Therefore, it is important to clarify that in our understanding the best definition for this purpose is given by Probst and Büchel, since their explanation includes also the systems thinking, which is according to Senge one of the most important notions when it comes to Learning Organizations.\(^{189}\)

Jacobsen and Thorsvik illustrate the communication process in the figure shown below and explain that this process includes two actors: the sender (the one, who send the message) and the receiver (the one, who receives and interprets the message). The sender initiates the communication process through coding the information, the ideas, viewpoints or feelings one will mediate to the receiver.

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185 George, J. and Jones, G. (2002), p. 437
188 Williams, F. (1992)
189 Senge, P.M. (1990)
Coding is the use of different verbal (language) or non-verbal symbols (body language) which mediates the message. The sender also has to choose a channel through which the message will be transferred. Furthermore the channel has to fit to the chosen symbol. For instance if the chosen symbol is non-verbal a canal such as e-mail would be unsuitable. Instead the sender should use a channel, where the direct eye contact can arise.

When the message is received it has to be decoded, which means that the receiver has to interpret the information in order to develop an understanding about the message the sender wants to mediate. The last track in the communication process is often the feedback, where the receiver answers the sender’s received message. The model in the figure above shows the described communication process.

Only to share information is not enough for an effective communication. People have to have a common understanding of what the information mean e.g. they have to have a relatively accurate idea of what a person or group trying to tell them. However, what is good and effective communication? George and Jones’ definition is:

“Communication is good and effective when members of an organization share information with each other and all parties who are involved are relatively clear

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about what this information means. Communication is ineffective when people either do not receive the information they need or are not quite sure what the information they receive means."¹⁹²

Jacobsen and Thorsvik define this in the similar way and mean that communication becomes effective, if the receiver interprets the signification of the message in the way which agrees with the sender’s intentions.¹⁹³

### 3.2.5.2 Communication channels and their effectiveness

In a Learning Organization context a well structured and effective communication process supports the learning in organizations and generates according to Nonaka and others opportunities through which explicit or tacit knowledge can be discussed and processed by individuals and groups so that the hidden knowledge can be used. Therefore, one of the key elements, that support this sharing of learning, is the communication channel.¹⁹⁴

Messages can be sent in different channels. Written information imply that it sends in written documents e.g. as a report or a text message, while oral information is transferred in direct form between two or more individuals. Besides that people can also communicate non-verbally.¹⁹⁵ Ancestors communicated by using grunts, cries and other sounds, but also with their body language and gesticulation. The non-verbal communication is still a very important part of the human communication¹⁹⁶ and it includes gesture, facial expression and contact.¹⁹⁷

According to Jacobsen and Thorsvik both sending and receiving information through different communication channels is a decision that affects the meaning of the message.¹⁹⁸ Lengel and Daft found in their research that many executives do not understand the relationship between communication channel and communication effectiveness. In their opinion a medium can enhance or distort the intended message. Each channel of communication – written text,
telephone, face to face or electronic – has characteristics that make it appropriate in some situations and not in others.\textsuperscript{199}

Regarding to Lengel and Daft there are two longstanding myths about effective communication. The first myth is that executives prefer oral, personal communication whenever possible. The second is that executives, who are good communicators, can get their message across using any medium. In order to show that these statements can be questioned, they came up with a media selection model that relates the information-carrying capacity of media to communication needs based in matching characteristic called richness. The premise is that the richness of the medium should be matched with the needs of the message for effective communication.

Lengel and Daft declare that media differ remarkable in their capacity to convey information. They found that the menu of media available to executives can be classified into a hierarchy based on a composite of these characteristics called richness. This has been illustrated on the picture below. The more learning that can be transported through a medium, the richer the medium. For instance written information gives the receiver less information than direct conversation, since the receiver cannot observe the body language through a letter or report. Therefore, they conclude that face to face communication is the richest medium, because it has the capacity for direct experience, multiple information, immediate feedback and personal focus.\textsuperscript{200}

![Figure 6: Different media’s ability to mediate rich information](image)

\textsuperscript{199} Lengel, R.H. and Daft, R.L. (1988)
\textsuperscript{200} Lengel, R.H. and Daft, R.L. (1988)
Hendersen and McAdam clarify that a Learning Organization actively seeks to move knowledge from one part of the organization to another to ensure that relevant knowledge is used effectively.\textsuperscript{202} Therefore, one can state that communication in Learning Organizations is not only the information flow itself, but also the way people share their knowledge both explicit and tacit as Nonaka and others state\textsuperscript{203}. That is how they succeed with communicating their individual knowledge to other members or groups of the organization in order to have the opportunity to create new knowledge and increase their common thinking, which Senge calls the common IQ.\textsuperscript{204}

Several authors have pointed out that companies, which have an ambition to become a Learning Organization, should create an environment where dialogue and openness become a natural way to communicate. Henderson and McAdam explain that in order to be a Learning Organization an effective communication process must include tools which encourage openness, dialogue and honesty.\textsuperscript{205} In Senge’s opinion structural aspects of Organizational Learning refer to how the organization is formed to accommodate and support shared learning. Clearly, the internal communication process is encompassed in this aspect. Through communication, “thinking collectively in dialogue and conversation” organizational members mutually influence each other’s views and change organizational shared realities.\textsuperscript{206} After comparing this statement to Lengel’s and Daft’s theory about media richness we can assume that the most effective communication channel in a Learning Organization is the direct conversation.

\textbf{3.2.5.3 Networks}

Communication networks and communication channels have in common that they establish connections between people. When an organization constitutes a communication network, it builds up a formal net for communication i.e. the members determine who is going to communicate with whom. Networks consist of different patterns for communication, in which different communication channels can be used.\textsuperscript{207}

\textsuperscript{202} Henderson, J. and McAdam, R. (2003)
\textsuperscript{204} Senge, P.M. (1990)
\textsuperscript{205} Henderson, J. and McAdam, R. (2003)
\textsuperscript{206} Senge, P.M. (1990)
\textsuperscript{207} Jacobsen, I.D. and Thorsvik, J. (2002)
Researchers carried out different experiments in which they compared different types of communication networks to find out, which of them works most effective. These are illustrated and explained below. \(^{208}\)

![Different types of communication networks](image)

**Figure 7: Different types of communication networks** \(^{209}\)

In the wheel network most information goes through one central member of the group. The central member receives information from the other members and sends messages out to them. The other members do not communicate with each other. This network is used mostly by groups, in which their members work independently with different tasks. \(^{210}\)

The chain network is the most formal one because the communication flow is predetermined between group members. This network is common when the tasks are dependent from each other and should be done in a special order. Chain networks also characterize the communication up and down the hierarchy.

The circle network arises when members of the group communicate with other members who are similar to themselves in the same dimension for example interests or expertise or because they are placed next to each other in a work environment.

In the all-channel network everybody can communicate with each other. When the work activities of one group member depend on others’, this kind of communication should be

\(^{208}\) Jacobsen, I.D. and Thorsvik, J. (2002)
\(^{209}\) George, J. and Jones, G. (2005), p. 442
\(^{210}\) George, J. and Jones, G. (2005)
used. Each group member’s activities influence the behavior of every other member in the group.\textsuperscript{211}

According to George and Jones how the information flow look like in an organization depends on whether the organization is centralized or decentralized.\textsuperscript{212} In the experiment the researchers found out that the complexity of the task is of vital importance whether the centralized or the decentralized communication network is going to be the most effective in an organization. When the task is complex the decentralized network should be preferred; in contrary when the task is easy and daily practiced the centralized communication is recommended.\textsuperscript{213}

Stata adds that Organizational Learning occurs through common comprehension, knowledge and through common ideas based on earlier knowledge and experiences.\textsuperscript{214} According to Senge in order to become a Learning Organization the company should involve all its employees.\textsuperscript{215}

However, to become an effective Learning Organization companies have to be aware of the organization’s structure in order to have the ability to support shared learning. Systems thinking was mentioned earlier and it is also important here since according to Monge “a central assumption of the system approaches is that communication is the means by which systems are created and sustained”\textsuperscript{216}

Therefore, we conclude that companies which want to become a Learning Organization should strive for an all-channel network, since in this structure of communication the employees are able to share information with anyone in the organization. The learning process is going to be naturally supported in the company, if it creates the right communication network in which the employees have the ability to share information and knowledge with each other. Probst and Büchel express this as following:

\textit{“Communication also enables people to develop a collective view of reality. High quality internal communication brings transparency into company life and helps to}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{211} George, J. and Jones, G. (2005)  \\
\textsuperscript{212} George, J. and Jones, G. (2005)  \\
\textsuperscript{213} Jacobsen, I.D. and Thorsvik, J. (2002)  \\
\textsuperscript{214} Stata, R. in Sarv, H. (1997)  \\
\textsuperscript{215} Senge, P.M. (1990)  \\
\textsuperscript{216} Monge, P.R. in Dainton, M. and Zelley, E.D. (2005), p. 52
\end{flushleft}
integrate complex relationship so that people gain a wider view of the whole system. Learning is aided by communication by permitting the identification of principles and values and increasing the sharing of information."²¹⁷

Managers should provide job instruction, job rationale, organizational procedures and practice, feedback performance and an introduction of goals. Employees in turn communicate upwards about themselves, co-workers and their problems, organizational practices and policies, and what needs to be done and how to do it. Managers should encourage developing two ways of communication among all employees. If this fails they need to find other alternative methods in order to give successfully feedback to employees.²¹⁸

3.3 Model Overview

The picture below provides an overview of the conceptual model, which includes the five disciplines we developed and described in the previous section. That means that the picture, which is our own creation, can be seen as a summary of the previous descriptions. By applying all these key factors, which are systems thinking, teams, shared vision, leadership style and communication, the contemplated organization can become a Learning Organization. However, this is a long process, so that our project that is described in this thesis can only be the starting point.

In order to become a Learning Organization we think it is of vital importance to think in systems, which implies seeing the whole instead of the parts. Thus, one is able to recognize the consequences of his/her action, even if the consequences appear at another place or with a delay in time. In addition it also facilitates the learning process, if the members of the organization are working in teams. Thereby, also the atmosphere and the style of the team are important. One characteristic of a team is that all members are working in order to achieve a common goal. This is also related to the next key factor, which is a shared vision. If all members of the organization share the vision and if they have developed this vision together, it can act as a driving force, which binds them more together. In order to create a shared vision the leader and his leadership style plays an important role, since he has to let go some

of his power and listen to the employees. Therefore, the managing by coaching style is according to us appropriate in a Learning Organization, since the coaching supports the learning process. However, in our opinion all this cannot work without a proper communication. As we have pointed out before it is important that all members of the organization can communicate with each other, which is possible in a network. Moreover, face to face communication can be seen as the best way to communicate in this context.

Another part of our model is possible obstacles that can arise at almost every place and stage in the process. Those obstacles can be for example unwilling people, which act as a barrier on the way of becoming a Learning Organization, but it can also be other factors in the organization. However, if the obstacles are only small disturbances on the way, the organization can start to become a Learning Organization by implementing these five key factors.

![Diagram](image-url)

Figure 8: Developed principles unique for Växjö Airport
4. Empirical Study

This chapter presents the empirical data that we have collected in the contemplated organization. The empirical data includes not only a description of the interviews we carried out but also the observations of the conducted meetings. First we draw a picture of the different departments, which is followed by an explanation of the arising problems. The last part of the chapter gives a picture of the meetings that we observed. However, in this chapter we only reflect the answers we received without any changes due to the wish of scientific credibility. We are aware that the second part about the meetings heavily relies on our interpretation.

4.1 Presentation of the different departments

Due to the fact, that we wanted to get a good picture of the actual situation in the organization, we interviewed employees from several departments in order to get their thought about the organization. We visited Växjö Airport on different days, since we had to respect the schedules of the employees. These interviews were carried out as part of the previous conducted field study, that we have mentioned before. The questions of the interviews can be seen in the Appendix 1. To show respect for the involved employees and to be able to avoid conflicts in the company, we are not going to write specifically about the individual interviews. Instead, we are going to group them in different departments in order to see how those apprehend the organization and its atmosphere.

4.1.1 The administration perspective on the organization

Generally we got the impression that the employees in this department work toward the same goal: to make Växjö Airport competitive on its market and they continuously search for better solutions and improvements in the company. These employees know were to go with new ideas and how to handle them. All of them are member of the so called innovative group where the employees get the opportunity to talk and discuss about their ideas for the
development. The innovative group meets on a monthly basis and this group includes not only the administration department but also the CEO and the employee of the marketing company.

The administration has a good view of the organization. They mainly know how the different parts are connected to each other even though some of them would estimate opportunities to learn more about other departments such as the ramp on the airside. They also see all departments in the company as equal important. Many of them had other tasks in the organization before they got their current position.

The employees in the administration work close together but they are all responsible for different areas and have a special competence. They are mostly high educated and have a long experience in the organization. Therefore, the employees are quite used to both internal and external changes in the company. Changes are seen as something positive, since the administration is working hard improving the business and their way of working. Some of the employees think that changes should only occur if it is strongly necessary and not spontaneous. With other words changes should only occur if they have a positive outcome.

Motivation is not a problem here, since the employees like their jobs and enjoy having a big freedom concerning the disposition of time at their workplace and having the opportunity to learn from each other and develop on individual level. They also have the possibility to take part in different education programs if they think that they need to update their knowledge.

Their relation to the CEO is good and they feel that they can always ask for advice or discuss arising problems with him. Generally they see the CEO as a coach and they think that he is the driving force in the company. This quality seems to be very important for the organization to survive in its environment.

According to the employees, we have talked to, there are not many mistakes made in this department and if they occur it is not difficult to talk about them and they get help to correct them. Thus, mistakes are not punished instead the handling of them is more seen as a learning process. The administration workers think that rules which are not concerning the security are easy to change.
In this department the atmosphere of the organization is seen as positive. Sometimes, of course, misunderstandings and conflicts arise, because of disagreements but they are always solved. We gained the impression that the communication is good in this department.

4.1.2 The cafeteria perspective on the organization

Our general impression of the employees working in the cafeteria is that they are satisfied with their work and they feel responsible for the success of the whole organization. They have been working there for a long time and their working place do not demand any special educational skills. All employees in the cafeteria have a meeting every month with the landside manager.

Earlier, the cafeteria was not seen as a part of the whole organization, but today according to the employees in the cafeteria, the view has changed in a positive direction when the cafeteria has gained a more important role for the organization. However, the employees in this department still feel that their work is not taken seriously by everyone in the company.

The employees in the cafeteria feel that they have a good view of the whole organization, but they would appreciate to learn more about the different areas. They would also like to show the other departments how they work behind the desk, since much of the work in the cafeteria happens behind doors.

The employees know to whom to turn to if they have a problem, who is mostly the landside manager. They feel they have a good relationship to the landside manager and respect him, and they are given a lot of responsibility and freedom to act. The employees in the cafeteria work closely together and spend sometimes free time together. One example for this is their “employees club”, where they do different activities together. While there are only women working at this department, they like the atmosphere and feel they have a good connection to each other. They think it is quite hard to criticize their co-workers, but they try to do their best in giving feedback and criticism.

The employees in the cafeteria feel that they can learn from each other, which is important since they do not have any special education programs. They had an education in how to lift boxes more ergonomically, because they are handling heavy weights everyday. The only other training they get is security training, which is common among all departments in Växjö
Airport. Any other education program would be appreciated among them, but they could not see how to find a program that is of concrete importance for them as cafeteria employees. Even the manager for this department has difficulties to find suitable further training for the employees. Because of this, the motivation, although being on a high level, is reduced. The employees feel motivated, because they like their jobs and coworkers and they have big freedom at their workplace.

When talking to the employees it seemed to that the rate of mistakes is low in the cafeteria, but if a fault should occur, the employees seem to learn from the error and try to prevent it in the future.

4.1.3 The ramp perspective on the organization

The employees working on the ramp are satisfied with their jobs because of their coworkers and the variation in their every day jobs. The employees described the atmosphere as very good and there is a special “jargon” between the employees, which are all men. They work in four different teams with five employees in every team. Every team has a rotating team leader which has meetings every month with the airside manager. In the past, the employees had weekly meetings with the CEO. Now, the CEO does not have time for those meetings anymore.

At this department, the security issue is extremely important and it permeates the whole department in how to do things. The security rules are very strict and there is not much space for changing them. They have to write a report about everything they do and sign for what they have done due to the security specifications. This takes a lot of time, but is necessary for the safety at the airport.

When problems or questions arise, the employees ask their team leader. There are also two managers they always can turn to: the airside manager and the co-manager. With normal daily problems concerning their work the first person the workers turn to is the team leader. Furthermore the co-manager is responsible for bigger problems and the working schedule. Of course the ramp workers can go to the airside manager, but he is more focused on the business planning than solving daily problems. The relationships between the employees at the ramp, the team leaders and their managers are good. The employees show respect for the managers and they can speak open with each other. The team leaders, who have been working in the
organization for many years, seem to have a more close cooperation with the managers than the other employees.

When it comes to mistakes there have not been any large mistakes made at the ramp. If any fault would appear, everyone at the ramp feels responsible for what they have done and because of the security rules the employees have to report every error immediately. The main opinion on the ramp is that you can learn from your mistakes.

The employees get a lot of education in security and they also get lots of training concerning procedures at the airport. They feel that they are doing a very important job, but they are not so involved in the work of other departments. The employees at the ramp put all their effort in performing a good job at their own department and especially the employees, who are working at the airport not for a long time, do not know much about what happens in the other departments.

Motivation is not a problem at the ramp where the employees like their jobs, their coworkers and, although it is heavily regulated, they feel that they have great liberties in their work. They also get a lot of education to update their knowledge, for example in security. Nevertheless, we found out that some employees at the ramp feel that it is hard to develop and advance to higher positions. The lack of developing became in this way a serious low motivation factor.

### 4.2 Arising Problems

By conducting the interviews with the employees from the different departments several problems came to light, that are described in the following.

#### 4.2.1 Problems regarding the communication

What seems to be the main problem is a lack of communication between the departments and the way the CEO acts as an intermediary concerning the information about the further development of the company. The employees talk a lot with their co-workers in the same department, but there is a lack of communication between the different departments. Thus, the members of the organization know a lot about what is going on in their own, but have a lack
of knowledge about what is happening in the other departments. Therefore, they feel comfortable in their own area but have problems in keeping in touch with the other employees.

This leads to more problems, because due to the fact that they do not know what the other members of the organization are doing they cannot fully appreciate the work the other departments are doing. This holds especially true for the cafeteria, since the workers at the ramp do not see the importance of the work the cafeteria employees are doing. On the other hand, the administration thinks that the cafeteria is doing a great job and that their work is really important for the survival of the airport, since they provide a very good service, which binds the passengers. Before, it has been the workers of the ramp, who earned the money for the company. The reason for this was that the air-business market was shaped differently, now the low fare carriers play an important role in the business. Those low fare carriers focus more on airports close to big cities in order to utilize the capacity of the planes.219

The same problem arises when it comes to the relation between the ramp and the administration. The administration knows what is going on outside and can valuate their work, but the other way around, the ramp workers are not so well informed about the procedures in the administration department. This is maybe one reason why they do not know about the importance of the cafeteria and also what the company plans for the future.

4.2.2 Problems regarding the vision
As we have written above the development and planning for the future is done in the separated marketing company, which that leads to another problem. Due to this fact the vision is not developed in cooperation with all employees, only the employee of the marketing company, Jan Fors and the administration have been involved in this processes. The marketing employee told us that he does not inform the other employees about his plans for the future of the airport. In his understanding this is the task of Jan Fors, the CEO. However, the employees working in the cafeteria and at the ramp do not know about the future plans and therefore cannot feel so involved in the development of their organization.

219 Interview with the CEO: 2006-02-20
This strict separation between the plan for the future work and the people that keep the business going every day leads to a lack of understanding. Therefore, they have problems to work according to the vision and help to make it come true. In the worst case, people are working against the vision and try to hinder the new developments. Although nobody we talked to was afraid of changes, changes are perceived negative, if the employees do not understand the reason for the changes.

4.2.3 Problems regarding the manager

First of all, the CEO of the airport is the head for both companies, Växjö Airport and Smaland Airport, but he seems to be more involved in the business development than in the daily routine processes. In our first interview with him he created the impression that he is very open to new ideas and developments, which are related to his interest for the business development and the future planning that take place in the marketing company.

However, by continuing with the interviews and talking to the other employees we had to change our impression of his way to lead, since we realized that his picture of himself is too positive. The employees in the administration are satisfied with his leadership style and really see him as a coach. Also the cooperation with the marketing employee and the manager works very well and they can talk very open to each other. Nevertheless, the people working outside and the employees in the cafeteria are quite satisfied with the CEO and his attitude towards them, but for them he does not seem to be a coach. They do not have the opportunity to talk to him so often, since they have their own managers, to whom they talk regarding their problems and their new ideas for improving the work. Thus, the culture of the organization implies that the employees talk to their line manager instead of the CEO.

4.2.4 Problems regarding the education

As we have written above especially the workers at the ramp do not recognize the importance of the cafeteria. However, we can comprehend this attitude, since the cafeteria people do not have a high level of education, whereas the ramp workers need a special education to work at the airport. Therefore, the ramp workers have the impression that the people in the cafeteria are less educated. The employees of the cafeteria told us that there are no education programs available that fits for their work. Generally we see an unbalance concerning the education in different departments. Especially the employees in the administration department can decide by themselves what kind of further training they want to attend, whereas for the cafeteria the
landside manager is finally deciding where he sends the employees in order to update their knowledge.

4.2.5 General problems
One large problem in the organization is the personnel situation, since due to cost saving procedures there are less employees working in each department and each employee has to deal with a lot of stress. This holds true especially for the people working at the ramp, because there it can happen that they are phoned in the middle of the night and told that they have to work in the next morning. Due to the security specification there always must be five people working when a plane is going to take off or to land. Thus, if one of the group members becomes ill, a colleague has to replace him to fill up the group. Therefore, especially these employees have to deal with a lot of pressure. Also, in the cafeteria the employees feel much stressed, since they often have problems with delayed planes in the evening.

4.3 The meetings with the departments

In the following part we describe our observations of the meetings, first the departmental and then the mixed meetings. We created questions in order to initiate and guide the discussion about the vision of the organization, which can be seen in Appendix 2. The official announced vision of the organization is “to become the second largest airport in the Southeast of Sweden”\textsuperscript{220}. Our questions also include the departmental visions and motivation aspects.

4.3.1 Meeting with the administration
When the employees from the administration arrived they all immediately sat down and started to talk to each other. The participants were all middle-aged men and women who are high educated and has been working there for a long time. The meeting took place on the 21\textsuperscript{st} of April, but the presentation of the topic and the purpose of the meeting was already two weeks before.

4.3.1.1 Atmosphere
The atmosphere was comfortable and everyone seemed to be in a good mood even though it was early in the morning. Laughing and jokes made the atmosphere relaxed and the

\textsuperscript{220} Interview with the CEO: 06-02-20
administration seemed to know a lot about the concept “vision”. When it was time to discuss the questions one of the employees immediately took the charge and decided that it was easier to start from the bottom and go up, instead of follow the order. A lot of other questions arose but the employee that “was in charge” always lead the group back to their main question, so that it was not necessary for us to intervene. Even though the group discussed by themselves, they sometimes turned to us as researchers with their answers. The employees stated that they have been involved in creating the vision so they think it is shared.

4.3.1.2 Discussion

The vision of the company was with other words their own vision that they had created together with the CEO, and thus they knew the vision in exact words.

When talking about the vision of their own department, financial questions arose. They want to keep the costs down and said that they all are working towards the same vision of the company. Nevertheless, the employees came up with some goals for their department. They want to have a good economic situation and be independent of the numbers of passengers. The employees in the administration also want to increase the profits in the landside and the number of jobs. Because of the unpredictable future at the airport they can only plan one month ahead. This makes it hard for the employees to know what to do and how to act to reach the vision of the company and goals.

A feeling of dissatisfaction was also discovered when talking about the vision. Some of the employees at the administration felt that nothing has happened after they had created the vision together with Jan Fors. One question that arose was: “Everyone is working toward the same goals but why is nothing happening?” Many new ideas have been suggested but none of them are implemented. Everyone in the administration shares the opinion that it is hard for the airport to get money from the owners. They feel being left aside compared to other public transports like the trains. The employees mean that more money is spent on trains compared with the airport. They also meant that the environment they are working in is changing so fast and they need to rewrite and change their goals. They have the goal to get more low costs flight to Växjö Airport, but when it does not happen, they need to change their goals to follow up with the development.
The employees at the administration also talked about their motivation. The main reason for staying at their positions at the airport was that they already have been working there for so long and considering their age their chance on the labor market is low. They feel motivated when new things happen so that there is a lot of variation. Another positive factor is that they can work independently and have a lot of responsibility. An important motivation factor is the fast changes they had to adapt to and learn how to handle them.

### 4.3.2 Meeting with the cafeteria

The meeting with the employees of the cafeteria was the first meeting we observed. We did the presentation of the project and the explanation of the underlying concept two days before the discussion meeting, which took place on the 5th of April. In the following, we describe our impression of the atmosphere during the meeting as well as the outcome of the discussion.

#### 4.3.2.1 Atmosphere

The employees in the cafeteria appeared to the meeting well prepared and in a good mood. They already had chosen a person to take notes during the seminar and were very curious to start the discussion. There were no problems in talking about our questions, so that there was no necessity for us to interrupt the conversation.

During the meeting, we gained the impression that the employees in the cafeteria have very good relationships to each other and even talk about issues concerning their private life at work. However, in the discussion they were very focused on the questions, so that the discussion was very beneficial. The atmosphere was very friendly and we are struck that the employees in the cafeteria appreciate our project, which provides them with the opportunity to talk to other departments and even the CEO a lot. At the end, they choose two spokespersons, which have been very active during the whole discussion.

#### 4.3.2.2 Discussion

The employees in the cafeteria developed the vision for the department to become bigger and to gain the possibility to survive without passengers. They have developed many ideas in order to reach this aim, e.g. catering for events or become a restaurant. The cafeteria personnel think that their vision in the department is also connected to the vision of the company. For them the vision of the whole organization should be to become the largest airport in the south of Sweden and to outperform the other airports.
They also discussed some possible ways to fulfill the organizational vision. In their opinion, it would be of great importance to have low fair carrier flights landing in Växjö. Another possibility to improve the situation of the airport would be to earn more money at the landside and as we mentioned above they already have developed concrete plans how they as the cafeteria can earn more money for the airport.

During the discussion, they also raised other issues that can be improved. One aspect concerns the communication and information, since they complained that they are sometimes informed very late about additional flights. They also wish to hear about news earlier. In this context, they also mention that there is confusion to whom to talk to regarding different issues.

In general, we gained the impression that they have many ideas to develop the airport further and that they feel responsible for this process. They would like to get more responsibility and suggested that they can take over the security control. Another suggestion that came up during the discussion was a study visit to see how other airports handle the cafeteria and the tax-free shop.

4.3.3 Meeting with the ramp

Due to this fact this department has 22 employees and they work in shifts it was impossible to arrange a meeting in which all the employees could participate. In the beginning of this project we wanted to have three meetings, one for each department, but the situation influenced our plan and instead of one we had to arrange two meetings for the Ramp. We will call the first meeting Group A and the second Group B.

4.3.3.1 The Group A meeting

The meeting with Group A was held on the 18th of April and in the beginning only four employees participated because some of them were sick and others could not show up on time. However, later two more employees arrived and joined the discussion.

4.3.3.1.1 Atmosphere

When we started the meeting with a presentation of the topic and the questions, the participants seem to take it not serious. So as researchers we felt that these employees do not want to put a lot of effort in this meeting. The atmosphere was tensed already in the beginning and instead of discussing with each other; they started to argue with us. During the whole
meeting we could sense a negative attitude towards our project, but also towards the CEO’s vision and his way of running the business. This negative position was also expressed in their body language and comments about us.

4.3.3.1.2 Discussion
We started this meeting with an explanation of the topic, the questions and the reason for this project. After that a silence arose. Nobody wanted to begin to talk. To make it easier for them we reworded our questions which were on the blackboard and asked those verbally. We tried to help the participants to create a talkative atmosphere. Finally the members began to talk but instead to discuss with each other they argued with us. Even though we explained that they should talk and discuss with each other and pointed out that we are only there for observation, they did continue to talk and argue with us.

The group seemed to have not a clear understanding of the concept vision. Instead they were talking about different problems such as schedule problems and the dissatisfaction in the department concerning these issues.

One of the main topics in this meeting was the cafeteria. The employees of Group A discussed the importance of this department. In their opinion, it is not vital for an airport to have a big coffee place. Their suggestion was to have machines instead of a cafeteria with people working there. They looked at the cafeteria as a cost factor, which does not earn any money for the company.

They were also anxious about the future of the elder employees, since according to the group members nobody has retired on a pension from this company yet. The reason for this is according to the employees that the security prescriptions order that those employees who are working on an airport should have a good constitution.

Later a question concerning the economy arose. Most of the employees in this group see the company’s attempt to keep costs low as a short term solution. The participants also talked about the CEO’s vision. They do not agree with his vision since as the participants put it: “He only wants to earn money and do not think about the consequences of cutting down the working time and he does not see the long term problems with that.”
When the discussion became too long we had to exhort the employees from the ramp to talk about the vision. As a clue we offered some advices and we explained that if they are unsatisfied with the CEO’s vision they should create a new one and influence the company’s vision, since they got the opportunity through this meeting to do so. We told them to try to think about the important issues about which they talked earlier for example the schedule and the pension can be involved in the vision. We also pointed out that the vision should give them motivation and should not be too easy to fulfill.

Finally, the group came to a conclusion and they created an own vision for the company. According to the members of group A the company should earn enough money so everybody can get a good schedule and the company can afford to keep older employees on other positions.

After a lot of arguing, the participants also chose a person, who was willing to present the group’s vision for the department and the company in the mixed group.

4.3.3.2 The Group B meeting

The meeting of Group B took place on 19th of April 2006 and there were five participants with mixed ages.

4.3.3.2.1 Atmosphere

The atmosphere in this meeting was relaxed and the employees seemed to feel comfortable. They chose one participant to take notes and wanted to discuss our questions. However, they did not talk so much and it was not a discussion, since they always agreed on one opinion immediately. The overall impression was that they took it serious and that their attitude was not negative. During the whole discussion they tried to be very diplomatic, so that the discussion did not include so many feelings.

4.3.3.2.2 Discussion

In the beginning of the meeting we presented our project in the same way as for the other groups.

To make it easier for the participants to create an own vision we explained and reworded the questions on the blackboard. After that the participants started to talk and succeeded to create a better feeling. Their interest seemed to be on higher level now as in the beginning.
The members talked quite a lot about their schedule and discussed that pretty much instead of focusing on that question which where on the blackboard. They found especially the first task pretty hard to talk about, namely what goals and dreams they have individual.

Similarly to the Group A meeting here also arose the topic of the elder employees and this group showed the same position regarding this topic.

Later they argued about the vision for their department and were always focused on the airside and that the department depends on the flights. They also talked about the problem that their workload is not evenly spread over their whole working day, since sometimes they have a lot to do for a couple of hours when the airplanes have to be prepared for take off. In contrarily in other parts of their working day they do not have lot to do and therefore the airside do not need that many employees when no airplanes are landing or taking off. This problem of course influences the scheduling for the ramp and as a consequence the ramp employees sometimes have to work for short periods and from time to time they even have to go to their work place twice each day. This solution interrupts the workers free time. At the end, they came to the vision for the organization to be the largest airport of Småland.

4.3.4 First mixed meeting

When having the mixed meeting with two spokespersons from each department one participant from the ramp group was missing. Thus, only one group of the ramp, group B, was represented. It was our suggestion that the participant from the ramp started to talk and after that, it was the cafeteria’s turn and then the administration presented the outcome of their meeting. We decided to have this order, because we wanted to avoid that the administration’s spokespersons dominate the meeting, which was our impression after the departmental meetings.

4.3.4.1 Atmosphere

Regarding the atmosphere at the mixed meeting, we could sense that all the participants were excited and nervous about this meeting, which was different to the department meetings were everybody seemed to be comfortable with the situation. However, the atmosphere was relaxed and the different departments talked to each other very open. During the meeting, the administration representatives took the leading role and the other participants of the meeting respected this role. This became obvious, since the others always turned to the administration
concerning their suggestions and ideas. Thereby, it stands out, that the cafeteria was contributing a lot, since they wanted to discuss their ideas. On the other hand, the spokesman from the ramp kept quiet and had no new ideas to discuss.

4.3.4.2 Discussion

At first, the ramp explained their vision for the company, which was that everything should work well at the airport and that Växjö Airport should keep on going to be the best airport. Their goal was to have better schedules and a save work place when becoming older. They want the opportunity to stay with different tasks and positions and not be fired when getting older.

After the ramp, the cafeteria presented the vision of the company. They stated as the organizational vision that the airport should become larger and independent of the passengers. They want the airport to become the largest in the South of Sweden and to get lower cost flights to Växjö. Their departmental goal, which they presented here, is to get more education and to be able to use the whole competence in the cafeteria. The employees in the cafeteria also want to make the cafeteria larger and to get more customers. In order to do so they have many different ideas.

The vision of the administration was the same as the officially announced vision, which is to become the second largest airport in the Southeast of Sweden. They also want to increase the air traffic at the airport by getting lower cost flights to Växjö. When talking about their subvision, the administration claimed that they have the same vision as the whole company. They also want to become more flexible and not so dependent of everything, since they have to stick to strict rules. Those rules give them more work, e.g. statistics, which have no real benefit for the organization.

Since the spokesman of Group A was missing, we tried to summarize the discussion of their group meeting in the mixed meeting in order to present their view. We decided to include their view, although this involved us- as observers- more in the discussion, because their discussion differed from all the other departmental meetings, since the participants of the Group A meeting were not only against our project, but also against the cafeteria. They did not see the importance of having a cafeteria at all.
After every department presented their vision of the company and their goals at the departments, the administration immediately started to take the charge and to discuss the different goals and ideas. The employees at the cafeteria were discussing a lot but it was the administration who decided which questions were going to be discussed and which questions they should not discuss closer. The administration also said that some of the ideas of the cafeteria are not feasible in practice without even considering the suggestion closer.

The participants at the mixed meeting tried to discuss how they are going to reach the vision together and their conclusion was that they need more flights. If the airport would get more, the vision would automatically be fulfilled. The cafeteria had many suggestions how to get more customers to the cafeteria, but the administration did not seem to agree with them. The main view, except from the cafeteria, was that an airport should get the main income from the flights, because without any airplanes the company is no longer an airport. Thus, the ramp and the administration are focused on the planes and flights, whereas the cafeteria is open for new ideas to use their whole potential, which could be one way to become more independent of flights and passenger numbers.

4.3.5 Second mixed meeting with the CEO

Also in this meeting, only Group B from the ramp was represented. Thus, there were six participants at this meeting, the CEO included. We decided to let them do the presentation in the same order as in the first mixed meeting, i.e. ramp, cafeteria, administration. The role of the CEO was to listen and give feedback to their ideas.

4.3.5.1 Atmosphere

The atmosphere in this second mixed meeting was more relaxed than in the first, although the CEO was participating this time. It strikes out that the CEO immediately took the place at the head of the table. However, he was joking with the employees so we got the feeling that everybody felt comfortable in the meeting. During the whole discussion, we had the impression that the participants paid attention to talk in the correct way and say the “right” things.

4.3.5.2 Discussion

The spokespersons presented their visions in the same order as in the meeting before and also the presented visions were the same. Only the ramp representative announced a different
organizational vision in this meeting. In the first mixed meeting their vision was “to keep on
going to be the best airport”, but in this meeting he came up with the official announced
vision, which is to become the second largest airport in the Southeast of Sweden.

Again, we presented the discussion of Group A, but then the spokesman of Group B tried to
defend his colleagues and said that we did not understand them right.

The CEO closely listened and even took notes about what the other participants said. He gave
them feedback to their visions and ideas and seemed to consider the possibility of their ideas.
Especially when the ramp representative came up with the idea of sub-goals, which break the
main vision down into smaller parts, the CEO agreed.

In this meeting, the administration did not take such a dominant role as before without the
CEO participating, but still they tried to repress some of the ideas.
5. Analysis

In this chapter we compare the data that we have collected during the interviews and through the observations of the meetings with our created model of Learning Organization. To give the reader a better understanding we conduct the analysis by following the order of the developed principles in the model.

5.1 Systems thinking

According to Checkland, people need to use systems thinking in dynamic environments to be able to handle the complexity that occur\(^\text{221}\), and thus we wanted to research if Växjö Airport uses this kind of thinking. The organization works in a dynamic environment with lots of changes, and planning for the future is difficult without knowing what will happen in the next months. Therefore, Senge claims that systems thinking is important for the organization to use in order to be able to become stronger by seeing the whole system.\(^\text{222}\)

Like Checkland\(^\text{223}\) and Senge\(^\text{224}\) explain, systems thinking is about seeing the whole instead of the parts and realizing the connections. After the interviews, it became clear that the different departments see the importance of their own actions for the company and that they have high knowledge in their own working tasks. However, the interviews also showed a lack of knowledge for the other departments. It was obvious that the departments do not see the importance of the other departments and therefore have problems with seeing the organization as a whole system.

The ramp does not see the importance of the cafeteria and does not recognize that the income for the cafeteria goes to the same “wallet” in the organization as the income from the ramp. Instead, the ramp has negative thoughts about the cafeteria and does not connect the coffee

\(^{221}\) Checkland, P. (1991)
\(^{222}\) Senge, P.M. (1990)
\(^{223}\) Checkland, P. (1991)
\(^{224}\) Senge, P.M. (1990)
place to the rest of the organization. This shows, in Checkland’s view, the lack of systems thinking in the organization when the ramp does not know how the cafeteria is connected to their own area at the ramp. The ramp has also problems to understand the actions of the administration and their working tasks.

The cafeteria was more open to the same thinking as Senge, which was that they saw the effect of their own actions on the whole organizations. Their suggestion to expand the cafeteria in order to become more independent of the passenger numbers can be seen as a safety net if there would be a recession in the air traffic. They wish to interact more in other working tasks in the organization, like the security, showed that they are aware of the other parts and use systems thinking.

The lack of knowledge about the other areas among the departments clarifies for us that systems thinking is not used in the whole organization. The consequence of this is, as Senge says, that less new knowledge is created in the organization. According to Checkland, the environment influences the systems to create new thinking and new necessary knowledge for the organization, but when the employees do not see the whole, they miss this opportunity to gain new knowledge in becoming a Learning Organization. By that, they do not get the chance to expand their knowledge in the organization and to become stronger by seeing the whole system.

This kind of blindness, when the departments do not see the other areas as a part of the whole system is what Oshry calls spatial blindness. The employees believe that they are open and see the whole, even though they in fact do not. The other blindness, called temporal blindness, is another concept that can be found at Växjö Airport. The employees have forgotten the past and do not see the set of actions that has brought them to the present. It is difficult for the ramp to see how the work of the administration and the cafeteria has made it possible for the organization to reach the current place. It is when the employees at the ramp no longer see the past, and when they do not know the importance of the different parts.

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225 Checkland, P. (1991)
226 Senge, P.M. (1990)
227 Senge, P.M. (1990)
228 Checkland, P. (1991)
229 Senge, P.M. (1990)
231 Oshry, B. (1996)
departments’ tasks, that they develop a negative attitude and that the systems thinking cannot occur.

According to Scott, an open system is depending on the environment.232 Because of the changing environment Växjö Airport always needs to adapt to, the empirical findings show that Växjö Airport is an open system. The different departments at the airport are interdependent of each other but they also know their differences, which is Scott’s definition of open systems233. However, not all the departments realize the interdependency, when the ramp believes that they could perform a good job and guarantee the survival of Växjö Airport, even though the cafeteria would disappear. This is why we argue that Växjö Airport is an open system but the employees in the organization do not see it.

Feedback should also occur in open systems to modify the system and to make it more flexible and responsive, if one believes in the definition by Cusins.234 If any mistake is done at the airport, there will immediately be some kind of response and feedback because of the large weight that is put on the security area. This kind of feedback will help the organization to avoid the same mistake.

### 5.2 Groups and teams

Teams are an important aspect to think about in today’s organizations. To be able to increase the productivity, employee satisfaction and come up with new ideas, like Stewart says235, we wanted to develop the team working at Växjö Airport. The reason for this was that we discovered that the different departments did not cooperate as much as they could do. By developing different departmental meetings and mixed meetings, we wanted to increase the interactions between the parts of the organization. As Senge says, a group member can improve its intuitive and interpretive skills and therefore gain new knowledge and thinking to the organization in order to create a Learning Organization.236

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234 Cusins, P. (1994)
235 Stewart, G. et al. (1990)
236 Senge, P.M. (1990)
In every department the employees are used to work in teams or as a group, except the administration which has a lot of individual working areas and subjects to handle, but even then they try to cooperate and help each other. The communication within the different departments is good and they know how to work together. According to Senge’s critical dimensions in how to become an efficient team, individuals have to be innovative and aware of each others roles and abilities. The employees at the different departments have all been working there for a long time, which leads to a clear understanding of each other’s roles and abilities. The innovative ability that Senge talks about is also good in some of the departments, for example the cafeteria. The cafeteria has a higher innovative ability compared to the other departments but these ideas are constrained by the administration. As result the team is less efficient and the innovativeness and new knowledge that is there cannot be used.

The research at Växjö Airport showed that the employees have a good team and group work in their own departments, e.g. the ramp and the cafeteria, but also the team work between the different areas is less good. Like Senge’s critical dimensions in efficient teams, the departments do not know how to learn from other teams in other departments. This was shown in the discussions at the mixed meeting were some of the employees seemed to be not willing to understand the others’ ideas and suggestions, for example the administration and the ramp were against the ideas the cafeteria had.

The lack of cooperating between the departments and the lack of efficient teams result in an incoherent organization where people work against each other instead of cooperating. The teams in Växjö Airport fail concerning the aspects included in Hackman’s and Walton’s theory about efficient teams; instead of leading the organizations into the future and contributing to the growth and personal well-being of team members, Växjö Airport does the opposite. This makes it difficult for the organization to become a Learning Organization without having teams cooperating and learning from each other.

When choosing spokespersons for the mixed meeting, we as researchers wanted each department to choose their own representative, which they did. Just like Kirkman and Rosen claim, it is important for the Learning Organization to choose the right people for the teams.

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237 Senge, P.M. (1990)
238 Senge, P.M. (1990)
239 Senge, P.M. (1990)
The chosen people must be willing to learn and to develop themselves and others.\textsuperscript{241} It was noticeable that the cafeteria had no problems to choose two spokespersons. The employees at this department were ambitious and they wanted to gain new knowledge. It was harder for the ramp to choose two spokespersons because none seemed interested to go to the next meeting and among the employees at the administration department it was hard to find people both willing and with time. Adapting Kirkman’s and Rosen’s theory this shows very clear the importance choosing the right people with the correct attitude.\textsuperscript{242}

When comparing the theory with the empirical data, one sees that the different groups and teams in the departments are self-leading teams. The employees have large freedom in the work and they can influence their work in how and when to do their tasks except from the tasks depending on the plane schedules, which is the definition about self-leading teams by Stewart. The author also claims that this kind of teams have the best functionality in dynamic and changing environments\textsuperscript{243}, which is exactly the environment Växjö Airport works in. When working with self-leading teams Wilson states that the leaders must let go some of his/her power and act as a coach instead of an authoritarian leader. This way of leading will help the employees to get a chance to grow, according to Wilson.\textsuperscript{244} At the Växjö airport, the CEO acts as a coach for the administration, but for the other employees this is not true.

When interviewing the employees at the different departments we immediately discovered some differences between the three departments. The administration was the one who decided everything and reduced the new ideas in the organization, the cafeteria was filled with new ideas for the whole organization and wanted more education, the ramp was the one who was negative to the other departments and did not see the importance in the other department work. This kind of similarity of the employees in every department belongs to group structure according to Nilsson. Group structure involves the things that make the group recognizable, like common goals, norms and behavior.\textsuperscript{245} Every employee at his/her own department has the same goal as the rest of their department. These specific goals kept the administration, cafeteria and the ramp divided during the mixed meetings. Every group has their own goals,

\textsuperscript{241} Kirkman, B.L. and Rosen, B. in Murray, P. and Moses, M. (2005)
\textsuperscript{242} Kirkman, B.L. and Rosen, B. in Murray, P. and Moses, M. (2005)
\textsuperscript{243} Stewart, G. et al. (1999)
\textsuperscript{244} Wilson, G. (1995)
\textsuperscript{245} Nilsson, B. (1993)
which is as Nilsson says important for the survival of the group. Without any common goal, the group would not know where they are going. This is also the reason why we wanted every employee to be involved in the vision of the company, to get everyone connected and striving towards the same thing.

Norms is another concept Nilsson mentions concerning the group structure. These unwritten rules in every department are one reason why each behaved as it did. Acceptable behavior from the ramp was for example to clearly show us as researchers how much they disliked our project and how young they thought we were, compared to the cafeteria who was more than willing to participate in this project. One reason for the behavior from the ramp could be, as we discovered, that they are all men and are used to a hard jargon at their working place at the ramp. When it comes to deviation from the norms, Nilsson mentions that it is easier for members with high status to diverge from the norms than low status members. During our observation, it became obvious that the administration is seen as a high status member by the rest of the organization. The administration could agree or disagree against the other ideas in a much more open dialogue that the cafeteria could towards the ramp and the other way around. At the first mixed meeting, the other departments followed the administration, which had high status, and did not argue too much against them.

One reason why every department agreed so much with their own department and looked at everything in the same view as their colleagues could be what Nilsson calls conformity, which can occur in norms. According to the author this kind of behavior, when everyone has the same picture of the world, makes it easier for the teams to work together and to reach their goals. Like Janis claims, this kind of thinking results in some kind of negative group thinking among the ramp. Instead of thinking critical, everyone followed one member and group thinking occurred, which works against a Learning Organization.

Instead of norms that influence the group behavior, Schein talks about culture in groups and how it can be analyzed at different levels in an organization. Our understanding of Växjö Airport is that it is a quite open environment. After the interviews and meetings with the

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246 Nilsson, B. (1993)
249 Nilsson, B. (1993)
employees, we discovered some norms in the teams and also some assumptions that were taken for granted in the groups, which is mention above. These group norms are also visible as artifacts in the organization, since the different departments wear different cloths. The cafeteria employees are mostly dressed in black, whereas the ramp is dressed in special working cloths. The employees in the administration can decide freely what to wear.

To make people go on with what they are doing, Guirdham claims that motivation is needed.\textsuperscript{252} According to Herzberg’s motivation theory people often believe that money, status and relationship with co-workers are motivation factors, even though these factors do not result in higher work performance.\textsuperscript{253} This can be compared to our findings, which showed that the employees at Växjö Airport claimed that they were motivated, by money and the good relationship towards colleagues. Herzberg claims that only factors like responsibility, confirmation and self-fulfilling are motivating\textsuperscript{254}, and that could be the reason why the employees at Växjö Airport do not feel so satisfied with their works even though they claim to be motivated. The factors the employees believed are their motivating factors do not result in higher performance and motivation according to the theory.

5.3 Vision

The meetings with the different departments differed a lot in the atmosphere and the course of action, but the outcome of the meetings, the formulated visions, were similar. In the following, the differences as well as the similarities are described.

The administration came to the vision to become the second largest airport in the Southeast of Sweden, which is the same as the officially announced. In addition, their departmental vision follows this idea. They focus very much on the organizational vision, by saying that their departmental vision it to work towards the achievement of the organization’s vision.

As Harris points out the measurability of the achievement is an important requirement of a vision.\textsuperscript{255} In the considered case, the realization of the organizational vision is truly

\textsuperscript{252} Guirdham, M. in Nilsson, B. (1993)
\textsuperscript{253} Herzberg, F. in Nilsson, B. (1993)
\textsuperscript{254} Herzberg, F. in Nilsson, B. (1993)
\textsuperscript{255} Harris, M.C. (1998)
measurable with the help of figures, e.g. profit, passenger numbers. However, concerning the departmental vision the measurability can be questioned, since it is hard to measure the actual contribution of the administration to the achievement of the vision.

Besides, their formulated visions are positive, which means that it describes something what they want in comparison to a negative vision, which is concerned with avoiding a certain aspect. It is possible to draw conclusions from these characteristics, since positive visions derive from aspiration, which enables according to Hodgkinson continuing learning. On the other hand, if one considers the distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic, the vision the administration developed is rather extrinsic than intrinsic, which can weaken the organization.

The cafeteria employees, who were very ambitious, came up with the organizational vision to become the largest airport in the South of Sweden, which is only slightly different from the one of the administration. For their department, they developed the idea to become bigger and gain the possibility to survive without passengers. These vision formulations are both measurable.

The organizational vision is also rather extrinsic, but the departmental vision is more likely to be intrinsic, which is more appropriate to create creative tension. Furthermore, their formulated visions are both positive, so that here again aspiration is the source of energy that motivates the organization.

The third department, the ramp, had problems to identify anything, which is up to the marks of the vision definition. Their statement to earn more money in order to solve their daily problems with the schedule does not really fulfill the requirements of the concept. It rather corresponds to what Mintzberg calls a statement of want needs to be done, which is one part of his vision definition, but the other part, the inspiration, is missing. However, they also adapted the vision to become the second largest airport in the Southeast of Sweden, which derives directly from the officially announced vision. Of course, this statement is measurable.

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If one focuses on the actual vision statement, the conclusion is that the vision is positive and rather extrinsic. However, they were not able or not willing to develop a vision for their department, which questions their willingness to participate in the process.

Here, a distinction between the ramp and the cafeteria comes to the fore. Although both departments have not participated in the vision formulation process, which means that the vision is imposed on them, the cafeteria employees can identify with the vision as well as the perspective of the CEO, whereas the ramp does not work towards the vision and cannot share the CEO’s view. This was one main topic, which arose in both meetings of the ramps, that the strategy to cut down costs is shortsighted.

The administration has been involved in the vision creation process, so that they should carry the picture in their heads. Thus, the vision of the organization has been created in a group process, which is a requirement for a shared vision in a Learning Organization, but only one department of the company participated in this group. It stands out that even though they have participated in the vision formulation process their motivation is rather low. As a reason for this low motivation, they named the lack of success, since they cannot recognize any progress in the achievement of the vision.

When it comes to the involvement of the employees, Hyman and Mason talk about the information provision. The information allocation should include a two-way communication, which means not only top-down, but also bottom-up. If this is compared with the communication flow in the organization, one have to admit that this two-way communication is only in place between the CEO and the administration department. The administration has many information about the business as well as the market in general and the CEO includes them in the decision making process. Thus, they are involved, which Hyman and Mason call a participative process. Contrarily, the cafeteria and ramp employees complained that they are not kept up to date with the newest developments and they stated that they have not enough opportunities to talk with the management. As one possible way of employee involvement, Hyman and Mason talk about employee suggestion schemes. At the airport, the employees stated that they made many suggestions, but neither have their ideas been

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implemented nor have they received any feedback. Hence, both the top-down as well as the bottom-up information flow has to be improved in order to meet the demands of employee involvement.

As Probst and Büchel point out the process of vision formulation is more important than the content of the vision itself, since the development can foster learning. They claim that a group instead of individuals should formulate the vision, because the process influences the culture. Therefore, one can conclude that the way, the vision at the airport has been created before, mirrors the culture of the organization. The CEO works close together with the administration, but the other departments are left out in this process. This is also visible if one visits the organization, since the office of the CEO and the administration employees are located close together with open doors, whereas the other departments are farther away.

It stands out that there are always the same employees, who already talk a lot during their daily routine, in the innovative group. Thus the creativity, which is important for a Learning Organization, can be questioned. The opinions of the employees in the administration seem to be very conform and thus only one perspective is represented in the innovative group, which has also been responsible for the vision formulation. This is the reason why Sennett argues against a shared vision, since this acts as a rejection of dialogue. The vision of the airport was developed with a lack of dialogue as the cafeteria and ramp perspectives were not included in the formulation process.

However, the meetings that are the foundation for this thesis tried to combine the formulation of a shared vision and the opportunity for dialogue. Thus, the vision that was presented in the second mixed meeting includes all perspectives in the organization and one can recognize that the chance to be more involved fosters the motivation of the employees.

5.4 Leadership

By talking to the CEO of the airport in the beginning of our cooperation, he recognized that he has to change his way of thinking and his way to lead for the survival of the company.

Thus, one can argue that he has also realized that the days of the traditional management are numbered as Parsloe and Wray state.\textsuperscript{264}

According to Senge, the main task of the leader is to generate creative tension, which derives from the gap between the vision and the current state of reality.\textsuperscript{265} The meetings, where the employees talked about the vision, have shown that all employees know the vision, but they are not aware of their current position. The administration department even complained that they cannot see any progress in the achievement of the vision. Thus, the leader does not fulfill this requirement of creating the tension as a motivating force.

Schein postulates that a learning leader acts as a role model for the employees, which means that the employees follow his/her assessment of the importance of the learning process.\textsuperscript{266} This is not easy to achieve in the contemplated organization, since the employees of the cafeteria and the ramp do not work close together with the CEO. Thus, they cannot observe his behavior properly and are not able to follow his example.

When looking at the roles of a leader, which Senge describes\textsuperscript{267}, it comes to the fore that the leader as a designer is closely related to Schein’s understanding, where the leader has to foster the learning climate.\textsuperscript{268} Concerning the CEO in the airport, one can conclude that he is willing to implement the learning process. The leader as a steward refers to the creative tension described above. By integrating the vision in a broader context, meaning is added. As we have experienced during the meetings, the employees know the vision and in the words of the CEO, they have bought the vision. However, not all employees see the vision as a driving force in the company. Another aspect as Senge states is that the leader must listen to the visions of the other members of the organization.\textsuperscript{269} The second mixed meeting was the opportunity for the leader to listen to the visions of the employees. There, he listened closely to the ideas and one got the impression that the vision includes the main perspectives of the departments. When it comes to the leader as a teacher, Senge describes the importance that the leader is able to release his strategic insights in order to enable a further development in

\textsuperscript{264} Parsloe, E. and Wray, M. (2000)
\textsuperscript{265} Senge, P.M. (1990)
\textsuperscript{266} Schein, E.H. (2004)
\textsuperscript{267} Senge, P.M. (1990)
\textsuperscript{269} Senge, P.M. (1990)
form of a dialogue.\footnote{Senge, P.M. (1990)} As we have pointed out there is a lack of communication between the business development and the employees concerned with the daily business. Thus, the CEO in the airport has to improve his information provision in order to allow this dialogue to happen.

Several authors have mentioned that coaching is the right way of leading in a Learning Organization. When looking on this issue in the organization we not only focus on the CEO, but also on the other managers. Thereby, it comes to the fore that the cafeteria employees are highly motivated and willing to develop further. Thus, the cafeteria employees fulfill the requirement for being coached. This is important, since coaching is according to Parsloe and Wray a co-created process.\footnote{Parsloe, E. and Wray, M. (2000)} Here it is up to the landside manager to act as coach in order to increase the motivation of the cafeteria employees and to use their personal insights for organizational development. Unfortunately, the landside manager did not participate in the mixed meeting, so we were not able to observe his reaction to the ideas and interaction with the employees. The other representatives of the administration could not give effective feedback to their suggestions.

Concerning the ramp, it stands out that they have a hierarchical structure. First, there is the team leader, on the next level the employees have the co-manager, who is responsible for the daily issues including the schedules, and above there is the airside manager. Therefore, it is difficult to find out, who should be the coach. In addition, the employees at the ramp do not seem to be willing to take over more responsibility, since an attempt to let them do their schedules on their own failed. They did not appreciate this solution even though the schedules are a critical issue for them, which was one of the main topics during the discussion in their departmental meetings.

In the administration, the CEO would take the position of the coach, since he is the superior for them. In the interviews, all employees from the administration stated that the CEO acts like a coach in their opinion. This is also observable, since they all have the responsibility for their tasks and work self-dependent. When considering the CEO as a coach for all the employees, we concluded that his ability to give feedback could be improved. In addition, he also does not follow up the tasks that he delegated. In the meetings, the employees complained that they made many suggestions for improvement and development, but they
neither have heard anything about those from the CEO nor are their ideas implemented. This aspect has a restrictive influence on the motivation of the employees, since they feel that their ideas are not appreciated.

5.5 Communication

Already in the very early stage of our project it came to the fore that the communication at Växjö Airport is not as good and efficient as it could be in order to become a Learning Organization as Rosengren states. The reason for this is that no continual communication between the different departments occurs and because the CEO does not succeed to inform his employees about new events and other important issues, for example the planned business development in the marketing company Smaland Airport. Therefore, after we have analyzed our collected data we gained the opinion that the organization rather uses the wheel network than the all-channel network when the employees and the CEO communicate.

During the interviews, we also got the impression that the CEO mainly uses the intranet to share information with his employees and not so often direct conversation. This is in itself not wrong. The problem starts when the employees do not use this kind of communication media because they do not find it necessary or comfortable, which is the case in this organization. As Jacobsen and Thorsvik explain the media richness in direct conversations is higher than by using the intranet. The highest media richness is achieved in direct conversations, based on Henderson’s and McAdam’s idea that effective communication processes must include tools which encourage openness, dialogue and honesty. Therefore, companies, which want to become a Learning Organization as Växjö Airport, do not profit from this kind of information channel, since most of the employees at the ramp and cafeteria are not used to work with computers during their working day and the knowledge and information cannot be shared efficiently in this way.

The communication problems at Växjö Airport trigger the uncertainty in the organization and can be seen as an obstacle to become a Learning Organization. Parsloe and Wray stated that

272 Rosengren, K.E. (2000)
273 George, J. and Jones, G. (2005)
communication is one of the most important processes, which take place in companies in order to stay competitive, thus the communication should be improved in the organization.\textsuperscript{276} The other reason for the necessity of improvement is the conviction that the concept Learning Organization strongly depends on communication.\textsuperscript{277} Therefore, if the airport tries to implement or develop a Learning Organization in a company the communication should be improved. How people communicate in the organization should satisfy the preconditions for the possibility to have dialogues, which support knowledge sharing and learning in an organization.\textsuperscript{278} In this understanding, whether this kind of communication is going to occur depends mainly on the employees and the leaders, but also the corporate culture in the company. In the airport the communication between the departments is not sufficiently developed, so that the dialogue is limited. The knowledge sharing in the organization does not occur to the extent as it could be, since there is a lack of interdepartmental communication.

According to Schein, the leader is responsible for the development of the organizational culture and if the corporate culture is going to support or be an obstacle for the organization. In Schein’s opinion it is of importance that the leader is conscious about this and tries to develop such a culture which triggers the learning in the organization.\textsuperscript{279} The empirical data shows that he should put more effort in the creation of the right learning atmosphere for his employees and the increase the information provision. That would decrease the uncertainty among the worker and it would also help the organization to become a Learning Organization.

On the departmental meetings, it became obvious that the CEO is not efficient in his way to communicate new information to the employees. Especially the cafeteria complained about the fact that they do not always know what is planned for the future and sometimes they get the information too late. On the other hand, on the first mixed meeting, one of the administration representatives contradicted and explained that the problem is not that the CEO does not communicate; the problem is that the employees do not search for information and they do not put any effort in finding out by themselves. This problem shows the importance of the selection of a media with a high degree of richness.\textsuperscript{280}

\textsuperscript{276} Parsloe, E. And Wray, M (2000)
\textsuperscript{277} Nonaka, L. et al. (2000)
\textsuperscript{278} Senge, P.M. (1990)
\textsuperscript{279} Schein, E.H. (2004)
\textsuperscript{280} Lengel, R.H. and Daft, R.L. (1998)
If this problem is compared to the communication theory, one can realize that the CEO puts information on the intranet, which might not be the most efficient channel. The reason for this is that the employees do not receive information since they do not use the intranet very often. Another possible reason is that some employees have a negative attitude towards the marketing company and the CEO’s work, because they do not understand their way to work and what they do.

Furthermore, our impression is that the employees know how to communicate with each other. They are efficient to create a pleasant atmosphere on the face to face meetings and they communicate in a very good way. All the group members in the meetings were involved. If somebody was too quiet, the other employees often asked questions in order to get that person involved in the discussions. With other words, the workers were both diligent in sending and receiving messages on these meetings i.e. listen to each other, and they were not afraid to come up with new ideas.

In the beginning of the study, the CEO was afraid to put together employees which are high educated with workers which are not. His anxiety was that this combination could create conflicts and dissatisfaction. He pointed out on the first meeting that he would like to have a mixed innovative group in the company, where people from different departments could be involved but he does not really know how to manage this group without creating new problems. In the mixed meetings, the employees make the information common and everybody can be involved in the development process of the company. Consequently, the created mixed groups helped the employees to reach what George and Jones call common understanding of the information. Through better understanding, the workers can develop systems thinking.

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283 Senge, P.M. (1990)
6. Conclusions

This chapter contains our final conclusions which are based on the comparison between our own model and the empirical data which has been collected in the contemplated organization. This chapter also gives suggestions for further subjects that are in our opinion worth of researching. Besides, we provide a critical perspective on our own work and state what we could have done differently.

6.1 Final results by comparing the disciplines to the organization

By conducting this thesis, we realized that all the chosen disciplines, which namely are systems thinking, groups and teams, shared vision, leadership style and communication, are strongly connected and influence each other. The implementation of one discipline always depends on the other disciplines, thus we conclude that they are all interdependent. This is especially visible in the analysis, since it was not feasible to separate the different concepts completely. In the following, we look at each discipline of our model.

Concerning the systems thinking in the organization, we can conclude that there is a lack of knowledge about what the other departments are doing, which results in not seeing the organization as a whole system. As a consequence, less new knowledge is developed, so that the growth of knowledge is limited. The organization is dependent on the market situation and the changes in the environment, thus they should have an open systems perspective. Only then, they would be able to appreciate the work of the others, since then they realize the necessity of changes. For the inside of the organizations it is important to recognize what is outside in order to get input in form of feedback from the environment. However, the problem with systems thinking is that it is difficult to implement, because it depends on the people’s attitude and personality and it is complex to change people’s mind. In general, the question always arises, where the boarders of the system are and if an open system can have boarders at all.
When it comes to the work in groups, we argue that the innovative ability in mixed groups is higher than in departmental groups. If it is always the same people who meet, the creativity is decreased. Thus, we suggest having rotating participants in the groups, which was also a recommendation from the employees for going on with the meetings. By mixing the participants of the group the group structures can be broken up, which can act against the occurrence of group thinking. By putting people with different degree of education together, it is difficult to integrate high-status members, which are not open-minded for the ideas of others and immediately take the leading position in the group. Self-leading teams have a high degree of flexibility, which is vital for adjusting to the changes in the environment. In those teams the responsibility is higher, which results in an increased motivation. By working in groups there is always a risk of group thinking, which can mislead the group decision. Besides, it is difficult to create mixed groups in practice due to different working tasks and schedules.

According to us the highest motivating potential is reached by a positive and intrinsic vision, because there is no risk that the organization is weakened after reaching the vision. It is important that everybody shares the same vision, but it should be the leader who starts the process. In our opinion it is not possible to involve all members of the organization in the beginning of the process. The participative process should start later in order to involve everybody and include their suggestions and ideas. Without this dialogue the vision cannot act as a motivating force for the employees. However, the meaning of a shared vision has to be limited, since our research has shown that it is possible to share one vision, but below this vision the members of the organization have different reasons why they want to achieve the vision and how they want to achieve it. The contribution to the achievement of the vision ultimately depends on their position in the organization.

Our research has shown that the most important task of the leader is to act as a role model, so that the employees can follow his/her behavior. In addition, he/she has to generate creative tension to initiate the motivating power of the vision. Both tasks are related to the culture of the organization, which the leader strongly influences. It is important that he/she creates an atmosphere that supports the sharing of knowledge. This implies the provision of information, which can be improved at the airport. In order to fulfill this role the leader has to act more as a coach, an authoritarian leadership would act against this.
For every organization and especially for a Learning Organization it is important to find proper ways of communication. In order to provide the information everybody should be connected and be able to talk to each other, which can best be done in an all channel network. Thereby, they can use all kinds of media, but the face to face communication is vital, since this has the highest degree of media richness. In every communication process, there is always a risk of misunderstanding, which can be caused by using the wrong communication channel, but also by a misinterpretation of the receiver.

Our research has shown that these categories have a vital influence on the becoming of a Learning Organization for the Växjö Airport, but in every category problems can arise if they are not fully implemented. However, there are more factors, for example culture and knowledge sharing, that are important in the concept of Learning Organization, but these factors of the model are the preconditions for the others to follow.

After conducting this research we come to the conclusion that one cannot distinguish between Learning Organization and non-Learning Organizations. In our opinion every organization is in some way a Learning Organizations, but since there are so many factors that create a Learning Organization it is not possible to compare the different organizations concerning their kind of Learning Organization. As we have stated how the concept is used should be unique, thus every organization has to develop its own solution for the development. This makes it impossible to point out the “better” organizations in the sense of this concept. The only aspect that can be compared is the degree of maturity in the process of becoming a Learning Organization. Therefore, we state that the becoming of a Learning Organization is an ongoing process, which never ends, since the organizations always have to continue with what they are doing and cannot lay back once they have achieved it. There is always the possibility to improve.

6.2 Further suggestions for the organization

The obstacles we meet concerning the disciplines in our model should be removed in order to develop a higher degree of learning in the organization. It is of high importance that the leader creates a culture, where people feel secure to state their beliefs and where the innovativeness is encouraged.
At Växjö Airport, the employees should be trained to change their attitude and become more open-minded. This can be done through an improved information flow and increased communication between the different departments. Thereby, it is also important to involve the employees from the ramp in the vision, since they seemed to not see the sense of a shared vision.

Our suggestion is that the leader should take care of those suggestions which arose during the created meetings in the company and follow the development of the ideas, so that the employees feel that he supports the ideas and acts as a coach.

Therefore, we claim that the organization should continue to work in mixed groups, since this improves the communication, the sharing of knowledge and the creativeness in the company. We would also like to advise the group members to exchange the participants from time to time which keeps the creativeness on a high level.

6.3 What we could have done differently

When writing a study like this the authors tend to deposit all their effort on it. We are not an exception of the rule. Thereby, it is always difficult for us to criticize or censure our own work.

First of all, cooperation with several companies in order to get more perspectives of Learning Organizations and recognize more factors that are of validity in other companies would have been a benefit for our thesis. It could also be interesting to see if there are some factors which are similar or are the same in every organization.

We described that the leadership style is of importance by implementing the concept of Learning Organizations at the airport. However, in this thesis we focused on the employees, since the leaders are already on a good way.

When it comes to our empirical data, we have to admit that the data heavily relies on our perception and interpretation of the interviews and meetings. In addition, we have to trust the
employees that what they tell comes up to the truth. Thereby, it also depends on the selection of the employee, which picture we got.

We had to make a selection regarding the theory. Here the question is always if we chose the most important literature. In doing so we rather focused our literature research on electronic data bases and libraries in Sweden than of other countries.

We could have gone deeper in the analysis, if we would have had the possibility to spend more time in the company and thus collect more data, but this was not possible since we would have disturbed the working task of the employees.

### 6.4 Further researches

After doing the research about Learning Organizations we can suggest some further ideas for researches concerning this subject. One suggestion could be to compare different companies in order to find more factors that can facilitate the becoming of a Learning Organization and to focus more on those other factors that are of importance. Thereby, it could be possible to identify factors that are common for several organizations.

It could also be interesting to develop more in one company and help them to go further on the way of becoming a Learning Organization. For example it would be possible to work more with all leaders and try to influence their behavior and leadership style.

One final suggestion for a further research is to involve the gender issue and to see what importance and influences the differences between females and males have on the Learning Organization.

### 6.5 Final Comments

We really value the time the airport gave us and that they paid attention to our suggestions. This gave us the feeling that our opinion and our knowledge can help organizations in practice.
CONCLUSIONS

In this study we learned that it is very difficult to change people’s mind and that it takes a long time to get a close understanding about what is happening in an organization.

This thesis gave us the opportunity to work close together with an organization, which we appreciate a lot, since we will leave the university now. Therefore, it was a great chance to experience the working life in practice instead of only working with theories. We understand this thesis as a bridge from the university to the working life.
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• Växjö Airport: http://www.vxo-airport.se
APPENDIXES

Collection of appendixes

APPENDIX 1: Interview Guide

1. Motivation and Satisfaction with work

   - Do you like to go to work? And why?
   - What is fun at work and what is less fun?
   - Do you think that your salary is suitable to your work or performance? And compared to the salaries of the other employees?
   - Are you rewarded if you come up with new solutions?
   - Would you like to see and learn how the other employees in different departments work to see the connections?
   - Do you have a good view on the whole organization? (e.g. marketing concept)
   - Do you feel responsible for the success of the organization?
   - Do you think about the consequences of your activities for the other departments?
   - How would you describe the atmosphere in the organization?
   - Do you also spend free-time with your colleagues? (Trips with the whole organization…)

2. Relationships

   - between the employees
     - Do you have a lot of contact to your colleagues? And also to people in different departments?
     - Can you learn from your co-workers?
     - Do you encourage your co-workers?
     - Can you criticize your co-workers or are you afraid of doing so?

   - to the CEO or administration
     - How would you describe the leader? (his way to lead)
     - Do you go to the CEO if you have problems?
• Does the CEO listen to you and pay attention to your suggestions?
• Do you see the CEO as a part of the organization?
• If the CEO or your superior orders something that does not seem right for you, will you tell them or are you afraid of doing so?

3. Changes in the organization

• Do you search for better solutions to improve running the business?
• If you have new ideas for improvement to whom do you talk about them?
• Do you have meetings, where you can suggest your ideas?
• Are your ideas taken into consideration?
• How are problems solved in the organization?
• Regarding mistakes: what happens if you do something wrong?
  Do you think about the problem that caused the mistake?
• How do you see changes?
• Do you have time to think about the operations of the organization during the work?
  Is there spare time in your time schedule?
• Are you sent to training or education programs in order to improve your performance?
• What do you think about the rules and norms in the organization? (strict, flexible,…)
• Do you have the competence do behave different from the rules if it is appropriated?
APPENDIX 2: Questions for the meetings

1. What is your personal dream?
2. What is your personal goal?
3. How do you see yourself in the future?
   - Still working at Växjö Airport
   - Working area/task in the future
4. Where is the organization in the future?
5. Are the goal and the dream connected to each other or is it only a dream?
6. What is the vision of the department?
7. What is the vision of the company?
8. What motivate you?
9. How should the vision of the company really be? Discuss and come up with your created vision for the company?
APPENDIX 3: Feedback Questionnaire

Hi everybody!

Our project is over and now we would like to get some feedback from you about the meetings. Please circle your answers and you can answer the open questions in Swedish, of course.

Thanks for your help!

Cindy, Nele and Tamie

1. How would you describe the atmosphere in the
   • Department meeting
   • 1st mixed meeting
   • 2nd mixed meeting

2. Do you think the meetings were

   too short  ok  too long

3. Have you felt disturbed by our observation?

   Yes  maybe  no
4. Do you think the meetings have improved the communication?

   Yes    maybe, if we go on    no

5. Do you feel more involved now?

   Yes    no

6. Do you have the feeling that everybody’s opinion had the same importance?

   Yes    almost    no

7. Would you like to continue with these meetings?

   Yes    maybe, but differently    no

8. Do you have suggestions for new topics?

   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________

9. What can be improved regarding the meetings?

   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________

10. Was it difficult to find time for the meetings?

    Yes    No
11. How would you describe the behavior of Jan Fors during the meeting? (last mixed meeting)