



**EMPLOYEE
ENGAGEMENT IN 60
MINUTES**

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Report



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FOREWORD

The years are passing and it has been almost a decade since I started researching co-workership with colleagues at the School of Business, University of Gothenburg. There have been five books and many articles, reports and theses have been produced on the subject. Given that the research group on employee leadership has been split up due to new commitments, it feels urgent to provide an accessible overview of this research. First, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have made the research work possible, namely funders, project participants, partners, employers and colleagues:

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PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

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PARTNERS

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EMPLOYERS AND COLLEAGUES

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1. INTRODUCTION



Employee ownership is an increasingly recognised concept in Swedish working life and in many ways summarises a Swedish and Scandinavian organisational philosophy based on an active and responsible employee role. Especially in Sweden, the supervisor function has changed considerably in many sectors of working life, supervisors who "manage and distribute work" have been largely replaced by HR managers who are expected to exercise goal management and coaching leadership, and who therefore do not participate so much in the detailed planning of how the work is done.

Leadership and employee leadership are best exercised in interaction and create conditions for each other. No person can exercise good leadership until he or she has established some form of relationship and trust with those to be 'led'. In other words, exercising good leadership is the same as having established

a trusting relationship with those you lead based on mutual respect. But a leader cannot create such a relationship on his or her own. Such a relationship arises in the interaction with those being led and it is the led who choose to trust the leader.

Employee ownership is also something that goes beyond developing a relationship with your formal boss. Employee ownership is about the relationship with work and the employer at large, as well as to colleagues and customers, whether the latter are called clients, users, citizens, patients, students or customers. Employee ownership highlights the fact that regardless of a manager's leadership skills, there are employees who take more responsibility, are more committed and knowledgeable than others. There are co-workers who have a worse manager than they deserve, but there are also managers who have worse co-workers than they





deserve. Managers have a big impact on a workplace, but so do employees, especially if there is an expectation that employees will work relatively independently.

Although leadership and co-leadership are equally important phenomena, interest and knowledge about leadership is much greater than about co-leadership. In December 2001, a search on the then leading search engine Alta Vista yielded 45,000 hits on leadership but only 700 hits on employee management. In other words, there were 65 hits on leadership for every hit on employee management. In 17 February 2010, the ratio was slightly better (on Google); there were 55 times more hits on leadership (1,480,000 versus 27,000). Although the situation is still unsatisfactory, this is a much better relationship than in the English-speaking world. Indeed, in February 2010, there were no less than 900 hits on leadership for each hit on followership (103 million against 112 thousand). This imbalance has actually increased since 2001, when the ratio was 800 to 1 (3.2 million to 4 thousand). Employee engagement is another term that is rapidly gaining in popularity, but leadership is still 150 times more common. Sweden is thus well ahead in recognising the importance of employee engagement, although a 1 to 50 ratio between employee engagement and leadership is deeply misleading in terms of the actual importance of each concept.

The purpose of the report is to describe the meaning and importance of employee ownership and to briefly describe how employee ownership can be developed. It is my hope that the report will stimulate further efforts to develop employee leadership in Swedish working life.

The report is divided into five sections, the last of which describes more about the implementation of the research work and completed publications.

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2. CO-WORKERS AND SWEDISH WORKING LIFE

Employee ownership can have two different meanings. Firstly, co-employment means the relationship that everyone who has entered into an employment contract develops with their employer, colleagues, manager and customers (clients, users, etc.). This co-employment can take many different forms, just as leadership is exercised in a variety of ways (from formidable to miserable, from close to distant, etc.). Secondly, co-leadership stands for a philosophy which, although it exists in a few different variants, is fundamentally about employees having an active and responsible role, where they have opportunities for learning and development, community and collaboration, as well as challenge and support. The philosophy represents a vision of a working life that combines efficiency and performance with social responsibility, job satisfaction and well-being. The development of this philosophy has been taken in four stages:

1. Democratic leadership and work-life development (1970s)

The first steps towards employee ownership as an organisational philosophy were taken in the 1970s in the context of the work organisational development projects that took place in many workplaces. Instead of for the manager to decide what should be done and then communicate this in the form of orders and instructions, an ideal of democratic leadership was established where the manager, in consultation with the employees, discussed how the work should be carried out in order to meet the objectives set for the unit. It was also during this period that the principle that workers should be involved in the work of organisational development was seriously established.

2. Corporate culture and work motivation (1980s)

The second step towards employee ownership was taken in the 1980s when employers began to seriously recognise that they depended on the commitment, motivation and initiative of their employees to create competitive and successful organisations. This was done by focusing on creating corporate cultures to which employees would feel committed and loyal. It was thus no longer enough to try to attract compliant and hard-working workers to employers.

3. Introduction of flat and lean organizations (1990s)

The third step towards employee ownership was taken in the 1990s, when flat and lean organisations were introduced on a broad front in Swedish working life. Now the role of the lowest level manager changed and directing supervisors were replaced by personnel managers who were given more responsibility for finance and personnel management while much of the supervisor's task of "directing and distributing the work" was transferred to the employees themselves as individuals or, more commonly, as members of a work group.

It was when this third step was taken that the concept of employee ownership began to be used, not least to fill the vacuum left by supervisors. Co-management came to be seen as a substitute for leadership and the introduction of co-management was thought to release the commitment and initiative of relatively autonomous work groups or individualised





employees. HR managers delegated a large amount of responsibility to the teams during the period and moved away from the workplace to a separate office to a large extent. Managers' contact with the performance of daily work was largely severed, with their own computer and meeting room becoming the manager's workday rather than the workshop, the health department or the customer reception. Managers were taught that they should show their trust in employees by not interfering in how they carried out their daily work.

Many people still associate empowerment with autonomous teams to the extent that their interest in empowerment is driven by their (often negative) perception of autonomous teams. Although there are many exceptions, our picture is that self-managed groups generally did not work as intended. Many problems at the workplace were not solved, cooperation in the groups was often poor and the support of managers to the working groups was insufficient. Managers' increasing ignorance of how work processes work in practice over time has also led to poorly thought-out decisions, poor communication and organisational mistrust in many workplaces. Accessible and knowledgeable managers are simply needed to maintain communication and learning, which of course does not mean that close supervision is needed.

4. Collaboration as organizational interaction

In the first decade of the 21st century, a fourth step has been taken, aimed at establishing a more constructive employee-manager relationship, whereby managers become more involved in the day-to-day work of employees, without reverting to a direct management role for the sake of it.

Employee ownership is now about being able to influence one's own development and work situation, to be involved and committed. Leadership is very much about supporting this development of teamwork by linking the work of the working group to the rest of the organisation. This implies an increased need for managers compared to the flat organisations of the 1990s. Few things are as profitable as an inspiring and competent leader.

So what happens now that we are entering a new decade? Recently, quality and rationalisation in particular

methods based on the Lean concept or Toyota have been popular, which may give the impression that Japan and the USA are important role models for Swedish companies to meet international competition and that we should adopt organisational forms used in these countries. However, it is often only certain elements such as approaches and techniques that are introduced, not entire working practices. Swedish companies consciously choose not to introduce the same supervisor-oriented organisation as in these countries, but involve employees in a unique way in the work to improve efficiency.

There is also evidence that participatory rationalisation is effective. In fact, no other advanced industrial nation has had as strong a productivity performance as Sweden over the past 15 years. In fact, between 1994 and 2007, Sweden had a 50% higher productivity growth than the US and Japan. Thanks to this high productivity growth, Sweden is also the leader in overall growth apart from Ireland, which has had phenomenal employment growth over the period. Hurrah for Sweden!

Table 1: Changes in growth, employment and productivity 1994-2007

	GDP growth %	Change in % employment	Change in labour productivity %
Sweden	54	10	40
Ireland	111	60	33
United Kingdom	51	16	30
Germany	35	6	27
USA	54	23	27
Denmark	41	12	26
Finland	51	24	26
Japan	21	-4	25
EU 15	39	17	24
France	36	14	20

Source: European Commission

EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP AS A DEVELOPMENT PHILOSOPHY

Employee ownership as a development philosophy is about employees being involved, committed and responsible. It is about empowering employees to influence and take initiative while employers/managers support employees in their active employee role. In simple terms, the philosophy is based on five fundamental principles.

1) Responsibility between managers and employees should be mutual!

Developing good workplaces is seen as a shared responsibility for everyone in a workplace and that the relationship between employees and managers should be characterised by both parties living up to their commitments. In a good workplace there is trust and each member of the organisation protects its reputation by behaving in a respectable and responsible manner.

2) Organisations exist to meet external needs!

The second point is that organisations do not exist for their own sake, but that an organisation always exists to meet external needs, such as customers' needs for transport for a car company, citizens' needs for legal certainty and justice for a court, the elderly and their relatives' needs for dignified and competent care in elderly care services, and so on. A good workplace cannot be created without external needs being met, as failure to meet these easily leads to external dissatisfaction and lack of trust followed by lack of resources due to insufficient willingness to pay.

3) Need for continuous development!

The philosophy of employee ownership is that a workplace is never fully developed, but that there are always things that can be improved. There is also a need to maintain and perpetuate

maintain well-functioning relationships and processes, such as training a new employee in the business. Employers should therefore ensure that there is time and energy for development work and encourage such work to be carried out regularly.

4) Everyone should participate in the development work!

It is important that everyone in a workplace is involved in the development work so that the development work does not get out of step. Not everyone can be equally involved in the work or contribute in the same way or even as much. It is like a potluck, it is most successful if different people contribute different things according to their interests, as well as being able to take part in other people's contributions and share their own contribution with others in a generous spirit.

Those who help others tend to be rewarded and helped in turn.

5) Give outlet to employees' job satisfaction!

Although not all tasks are inherently fun to do, job satisfaction can usually be generated if there is a positive working environment and each employee can have a say in how the work is done. Good teamwork cannot be built only through duty and monetary rewards, it is also about providing an outlet for a more basic job satisfaction. Without joy at work, everyday life becomes dull and grey and commitment eventually fades away, something that in colloquial language is called "losing your appetite".

The above philosophy may seem rather obvious and not very complicated. The challenge is not to formulate which principles are most important, but to ensure that these principles become reality. In many workplaces, the philosophy of co-leadership is not applied at all, but rather its opposite:

- 1) Employees and managers not trusting each other and blaming the other party for shortcomings.
- 2) The perspective of customers and users is not included in the discussion of how the work in a workplace should be developed and carried out.
- 3) That development work is seen as temporary one-offs to be ticked off and even as something negative that must be carried through with the minimum of effort.
- 4) That the development-oriented run their own race while a silent majority looks on with envy, scepticism and contempt.
- 5) That negative thoughts and constant whining extinguish any joy of work.

There may thus be a need to break negative spirals into something positive. But before I go into a discussion of this, I would first like to present two models to describe the co-workshop that can exist in different workplaces.

This is because it is often important to understand what kind of employee leadership is being exercised before it can be determined how best to develop it.

FROM EMPLOYEE TO EMPLOYEE

The trend towards a more active worker role can be seen in the language used. In the 1970s, the employee was a worker, wage-earner, staff member, labourer or civil servant. The word employee was only used in a few sectors, such as the newspaper industry and the police. The employee was a worker or civil servant when group affiliation or status was to be marked, and a worker or employee when conflicts of interest with employers were to be marked. Employers, on the other hand, liked to use the word 'staff' to indicate that they were in power and that employees were part of an impersonal and interchangeable mass of resources.

Concepts such as employees, staff, workers/servants, still have a strong position in many traditional industries such as construction, commerce and hotels and restaurants. However, in the engineering and process industries, the public sector and skilled service production, the concept of employee has become dominant. This is partly because these employers have recognised the importance of knowledgeable, involved and committed employees and that employees want to be knowledgeable, involved and committed. For most people in the workforce, especially the younger generation, meaningful work is central. Competence, togetherness, community, participation, skills development and commitment are definitely aspects that contribute to this.

A new Swedish model has begun to emerge around employee ownership and meaningful work. The first Swedish model, as many people know, was established in the 1950s when employers took responsibility for making companies more efficient by applying principles of mass production. Workers then received higher wages in exchange for more monotonous tasks. State and municipalities helped with structural change as small units and old industries were replaced by large units with modern technology by providing financial compensation, job placement and training.

Today we see that modern technology and large-scale production are not enough to create wealth and competitiveness. Modern technology is now available worldwide for those who can afford to invest. But technological and financial resources are only two of the ingredients for a competitive enterprise. Volvo's passenger car production has had access to the technical and financial resources of the large Ford group. But instead

The commitment and innovation of the 1990s has increasingly been replaced by bureaucratic control routines where even relatively small decisions are taken at a distance, with time delays and according to the rules, rather than what individual situations warrant. Workforce leadership, which has been a key element of Volvo's organisational philosophy, increasingly appears to employees as a vision without any tangible coverage in reality. It is hoped that Geely's takeover will enable this philosophy to be brought to life again.

Most employers have realised that letting managers take responsibility and tell "the old men on the floor what's what", as it may be said in organisations without trust between managers and employees. Employers increasingly recognise that their success depends on employees with the ability to learn, to collaborate, to take responsibility, to handle stressful situations, to look after the needs of customers and users, to manage information and to take responsibility for their own health. Such abilities do not develop by themselves but are the fruit of employees being given the space to practice such abilities under the guidance of managers or more experienced colleagues.

TEAMWORK AND THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

There is still a long way to go before the new Swedish model of co-workership is widely accepted. There is a wide variation in Swedish working life in terms of employee-management relations. Employers' organisations and trade unions at central level have an important role to play here in establishing the new model more firmly in even more sectors of working life. The Industrial Union and the Metal Workers' Union fought each other in the early 1990s

FACTS

More about this is described in a forthcoming book about the Volvo Group edited by Sten Jönsson and to be published in autumn 2010 by Liber

the concept of the employee when the Confederation of Industry wanted to replace collective agreements with a joint agreement for workers and white-collar employees and to give individual member companies greater influence in the negotiation of agreements. For parts of the trade union movement, this made the concept of co-workers a negatively charged one, with white-collar workers perceiving certain privileges as threatened, while the Metalworkers' Union and others felt that the proposal for the new employee agreement as a shift of power in favour of the employer.

The attitude of the trade union movement is now more neutral or clearly in favour of the philosophy of co-labour. Virtually no union representatives are opposed to participation and development opportunities, although there are union representatives who would prefer to return to autonomous working groups and are therefore reluctant to see a more developed worker-manager relationship. There is also some fear that better interaction between employees and managers could lead to a loss of union mobilising power. After all, it was largely the combination of workers' powerlessness and employers' arbitrariness that led workers to join together in unions in the fight for more decent working conditions at the beginning of the last century.

Our assessment is that this fear is unfounded because companies (at least Swedish ones) that seek good relations with their employees also seek good relations with the trade unions. It is also the case that union affiliation rates are highest in sectors where employers have embraced the idea of employee-management relations, such as in public administration and skilled manufacturing, while they are lowest in sectors with more undeveloped employee-manager relations, such as in hotels and restaurants and other

labour-intensive private service sectors. The employee ownership philosophy also offers trade unions a new role: to be partners in creating good employee-manager relations, to point out gaps in management skills and to help employees represent themselves as individuals and work groups in creating good workplaces. Committees and meetings can never in themselves develop good workplaces, but they can create the conditions for such development to take place. In the public sector, in state-owned companies and in many other places, trade unions maintain just such a role in the framework of cooperation agreements and cooperation groups.

At the same time, there are many unions that defend the status of professional groups as "free professionals" and where demands for collaboration and workplace development are discouraged in favour of protecting the privilege of members to choose working methods, to work autonomously and without performance measurement. Such a strategy can bring benefits to members but often leads to the loss of the organisational position of such professions in the long run. It is no coincidence that professions that are more interested in of the organisational perspective and workplace development also receive good career opportunities, such as economists, engineers, information workers and nurses.

EMPLOYEE LEADERSHIP IN SUCCESS-RICH ORGANIZATIONS

In those organisations where the workforce is at its best and where employees are most satisfied with their work situation, this has not been the result of fortunate circumstances but the fruit of determined work over a long period of time, usually several years. These are work

donors who are willing to invest resources to ensure that their own organisation has above-average leadership and high employee engagement. It is also about an attitude that if employees are given the right conditions to do a good job, they will do their best. And then there are systems in place to ensure good work performance, not just pious hopes and pretty talk. Furthermore, there are managers who do not shy away from difficult conversations or from drawing attention to problems in the workplace. It is also about developing and embedding business objectives that the vast majority of employees find meaningful and that they are willing to make an effort to achieve, and that co-workers are empowered and initiatives are valued. These are employees who are satisfied with their work situation but not satisfied with everything. Finally, it is also about the ability to move from words to action, about translating beautiful visions and sincere intentions into targeted development work where new behaviours are established. It is then a matter of following up on decisions and celebrating successes, thereby conveying a sense of pride to all those who have contributed to developing a mediocre workplace into one characterised by commitment, job satisfaction, quality and good results. (See also section 4.)

3. TO DESCRIBE EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

As mentioned in the introduction, there are different types of employee relations and also ways of categorising employee relations. In this section, two different categorisations are presented, one of which describes the way in which employee ownership is shaped by different forms of organisational roles for employees and the other the level of development that individual employees have achieved. Thus, the descriptive definition of employee ownership is used here, namely how the employee's relationship to work, employer and work colleagues is shaped in practice.

DESCRIPTIVE EMPLOYEE MANAGEMENT 1: DIFFERENT FORMS OF ORGANIZATIONAL EMPLOYEE ROLES

The 2003 book *The Empowered Employee* presents a classification of five forms of employee ownership linked to work organisation and collective characteristics. These are:

1. Traditional employee relations

This form of employee ownership is found in workplaces that are not characterised by an active employee role, but on the contrary where supervisors still hold the reins and assign tasks. Traditional co-management is common, for example, in the construction industry where supervisors tend to advise the craftsmen and manage the planning together with the site manager. This form of teamwork is also common when the people doing the work are of low status (shop assistants), or when they are temporary or inexperienced staff. The common feature of traditional co-employment is that the employees (or rather, in this case, the staff) are not given the opportunity to participate or develop in their work other than learning to perform the specific tasks

in a competent manner (which in many cases can be fast).

2. Organization-oriented teamwork

A characteristic of organisation-oriented employee ownership is that the organisation or company has succeeded in introducing an active and responsible employee role, at least to a large extent. What distinguishes it from other active forms of employee ownership is that there is a clear expectation of how this role will be shaped. It is therefore not a question of organisations granting autonomy, but rather of a clear and consistent delegation of responsibilities and powers. A good example of organisation-oriented employee leadership is described in chapter six of the book *Employee Leadership in Practice*. It shows that in a successful commercial bank, the clear rules on how to exercise authority were seen as supportive by employees, who were able to manage their own workload and development in a way that was satisfactory both to themselves and to the bank.

3. Group-oriented teamwork

Group-oriented teamwork is practised in organisations that apply the principle of letting work groups take over all, or at least part of, the management function. Often there are specially appointed group leaders, but these people are usually part of the group and are not managers or employer representatives in the usual sense. Typical of group-oriented employee management is that the work group itself has a great deal of influence over how the work is organised, who will do what and when. Experience has shown that teams have difficulty in solving all the work management problems that may arise

on their own, such as discord, conflicts or people who don't seem to fit in with the group. To be fully effective in group-oriented teamwork, therefore, a reasonably accessible manager is usually needed who can help the group to tackle the problems that the group are not able to solve on their own. Certain tasks such as development discussions, health and safety responsibilities, salary setting and recruitment also remain natural managerial tasks even when there is a high degree of delegation of responsibilities to working groups.

A manager can also do a lot of good by exercising leadership that contributes to

to strengthen commitment and the development of new skills at both individual and group level. Group-oriented employee development is common in parts of industry (e.g. many large engineering companies and in the process industry), and in parts of the non-governmental sector (especially in local government).

4. Individual-oriented teamwork

In many professions, there is a tradition of employees acting independently in their work, and there is a requirement for the employee as an individual to have the ability to take initiative and make decisions. A high degree of individual responsibility is characteristic of an individual-oriented workforce. Examples of professions where this form of co-employment is common is among administrators, salespeople and consultants. In the education sector, too, there has traditionally been a strong individual orientation, although this has been challenged by the organisation of teaching teams.

A positive aspect of individual-oriented employee leadership is that employees are often very committed and development-oriented, although this tends to be more linked to their own mission and development rather than to the common organisational goals.

developments. A weakness of this approach is that the community in a workplace can become weak and a climate can develop in which employees perceive each other almost as competitors in a struggle for increased pay, promotion, attractive assignments and social prestige.

Organisations that choose to apply a high degree of individual accountability therefore need managers who can contribute to a climate where individuals cooperate and help each other to achieve good results both for the individuals themselves and for the workplace as a whole. Managers still need to be able to set boundaries for co-workers who work too boundlessly.

5. Leaderless collaboration

The fifth form of employee ownership is about as undeveloped as traditional employee ownership, but where traditional employee ownership has too strong a bias towards managerial control, this form of employee ownership is flawed by an undeveloped employee-manager relationship and often also an undeveloped employee-employer relationship. There are few employees who work entirely in the absence of a formal manager, but many more where the manager has a peripheral role. In our experience, there are two main types of managerless workplaces: on the one hand, in professions that are so autonomous and socially prestigious that managers are given a weak position (lawyers, doctors, veterinarians and university teachers) and, on the other hand, in workplaces where managers do not perform their managerial function competently. This can be manifested, for example, by the emergence of a laissez-faire spirit in a workplace, where common obligations and rules are replaced by a more anarchic state. In such workplaces, managers are often replaced over time and it is not uncommon for managers that as newcomers to their positions they are forced to try to deal with such situations.

WHAT FORM OF EMPLOYEE CREATION WORKS BEST?

The form of co-management that is recommended depends on the circumstances. Traditional employee management may be needed if employees' ability to take responsibility is limited, but at the same time there is often a need to move gradually towards one of the other forms (e.g. team-oriented) in order for development to take place. It is also conceivable that the leaderless approach can work if the employees are very mature and there is a spirit of cooperation and community created by the employees themselves and a high degree of commitment and responsibility for the common tasks. However, the other three forms are normally preferable. The organisational approach is very good if it is possible to create a common organisational approach (which, however, can be difficult to achieve); similarly, the group approach is well suited if results can be measured at group level and there is a need for cooperation, while the individual approach is suitable in organisations where there is a strong need for employees to be able to carry out their work independently on the basis of individual competence.

If an organisation has chosen a certain form as an ideal, it is also important to prevent the disadvantages of the respective form from being avoided, such as:

- That traditional employee relations cement an "us and them" mindset between managers and employees with low levels of interaction and trust.
- That organizational citizenship is mostly on paper but not in action.

- That the group-oriented employee model is characterised by relatively poorly functioning work groups with a lack of leadership both in the group and by the responsible manager.
- That the individual-oriented approach to employees means that no one is prepared to sacrifice working time for things that do not lead to personal benefits or professional advancement.
- That leaderlessness leads to a lack of goal-oriented work and organisational control.

In order to prevent these problems from occurring, there is a need, not least, for a leadership that, in cooperation with employees, acts to counteract such problems. This in turn is best done by establishing a trusting relationship between managers and employees within which common commitments are made.

DESCRIPTIVE EMPLOYEE MANAGEMENT 2: DEGREE OF INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT

Another way of describing employee creativity is to focus on the individual skills and attitudes that employees have developed in their work. In a workplace, there can be a big difference between experienced and inexperienced employees, or between committed and uncommitted employees, for example. Four forms of employee management are therefore presented here: compliant, specialised, initiative-oriented and transnational employee management.

1. Compliant teamwork

Most professionals remember what it's like to be new in the workplace, especially when you're also new at work. New employees are expected to settle into their jobs by following the procedures and instructions available at workplaces

as well as the prevailing social norms and regulatory systems. Even if the work is strangely or inefficiently organised, it is difficult for a new employee to do anything about it, as the expectation from the other employees was that he/she would adapt to the prevailing order and not the other way around. Many workplaces have also developed a culture of putting newcomers in their place, sometimes in quite humiliating ways. This may involve

about being responsible for making coffee, running errands or enduring glares. There are many different ways to mark the new employee's lower rank.

The ability to fit into a particular cultural and organisational system and to adapt to different local customs and attitudes can be linked to the concept of a compliant workforce. Being compliant clearly facilitates the socialisation and absorption of a new employee into a working community. This form of co-employment is particularly suitable for inexperienced employees, who are given the opportunity to learn the job gradually by starting with simple tasks and then being given the opportunity to try out more skilled tasks over time. A weakness of the compliant employee is that it is based on a passive and compliant role that is mostly about imitating and following orders. To achieve improvement and development, employees need to develop more skills than compliance.

Many professionals link adherence to the practice and regulatory system of the profession, they may be poor at adherence to the organisation as such, for example if a leaderless workforce is prevalent. Developing teamwork in these areas is difficult, and trying to be a manager and leader of a group that sees it as honourable not to care about managers is not a rewarding task.

Compliant teamwork

Characteristics: passive employees who follow instructions and imitate the way more experienced professionals do their work.

Basic skills needed for this form of teamwork: adaptability and the ability to learn.

Key skills that can be developed through compliance: cooperation and responsiveness

Key skills in a compliant co-worker:

- Be able to subordinate own wishes to the given task
- Ability to learn new tasks
- Ability to interact with and show respect for colleagues.

2. Specialized collaboration

In most workplaces, there is a division of labour where certain employees are responsible for carrying out certain specific tasks, explicitly or implicitly. In an industrial company, for example, a worker may have taken on the role of operating a particular machine, and in a shop, an employee may be responsible for keeping the green counter fresh. The specialised workforce is important for creating efficiency in work processes, especially in slightly larger workplaces where an individual employee may only be able to

to master a small part of all tasks well. Specialised staff is also needed in organisations dealing with emergency situations, such as the rescue service and the police, where there is no time for staff to discuss, for example, how to extinguish a fire, but where each firefighter needs to know what his or her task is and how to carry it out immediately before arriving at the scene of the accident.

In specialised staffing, employees are trained to take responsibility for defined tasks and are given opportunities to perform these tasks independently. Employees are often given the opportunity to become experts in their own specialisation. On the other hand, the same opportunities for taking responsibility for developing the workplace as a whole are not created, nor is the ability to take the initiative in developing work processes often developed. A specialised workforce can also lead to communication problems between workers who have mastered only a small part of the production process, with the risk of conservatism in the performance of the work. This is because the experienced employee learns a certain way of working more and more efficiently, but becomes reluctant to try out new ways of working, which at least in the short term means a loss of efficiency. In computer work, employees sometimes become experts in increasingly outdated computer software or find it difficult to develop good routines for managing their e-mail, etc., because they do not receive tips from or the opportunity to discuss ideas with colleagues.

Specialized collaboration

Characteristics: employees who take responsibility for performing specialised tasks.

Basic skills needed for this form of teamwork: cooperation and responsiveness

Key competences that can be developed through specialisation: the ability to take responsibility for defined tasks and a high level of competence in the performance of these tasks.

Well-developed key competencies for specialised staffing means:

- *Ability to take responsibility for assigned tasks in a serious and trustworthy manner.*
- *Ability to progressively develop expertise in own area of responsibility.*
- *Ability to listen and absorb information from colleagues*
- *Ability to communicate your professional role so that others understand how you think and why.*

3. Initiative-rich teamwork

In the third stage of co-leadership, employees have developed an active co-leadership where they not only take the initiative to improve the way they do their own work, but also their own workplace or the organisation as a whole. Initiatives may relate to better practices, cooperation and information sharing, and may include suggestions for continuous improvement as well as more fundamental changes. Employees who have developed their initiative are able to work independently and in a specialised manner without cutting themselves off, and are able to look at the whole picture and how it interacts. They see not only their own tasks as important, but also the organisation's goals and tasks as important to work towards.

The enterprising employee is suitable for good entrepreneurial activities staffed by professional, ambitious and development-oriented employees. Employees not only have responsibility, or feel responsible, they also take active ownership. This type of employee has a high innovative potential, but there is a risk that employees who have developed this disposition do not thrive in bureaucratised organisations and also that they are more ambitious than they should be for their own

health, especially if they have burdensome family responsibilities or are sensitive to stress and/or a high workload. Pro-active co-operation is particularly burdensome when responsibilities are individual, lacking a social community and a collegial spirit of generosity, helpfulness and mutual responsibility for both work tasks and the well-being of all, which brings us to the fourth and most developed form of co-operation, trans- boundary co-operation.

Initiative-rich teamwork

Characteristics: employees who are active, enterprising and responsible in relation to the organisation's goals and tasks.

Basic skills needed for this form of employee management: ability to take responsibility and good professional skills

Key competences that can be developed through initiative: the ability to see the whole picture, to influence others and to be influenced.

Well-developed key competencies for the initiative-oriented workforce means:

- *Ability to assess current situation, objectives and available resources*
- *Being able to make and implement decisions relating to their own work*
- *Ability to take initiatives to improve your own workplace*
- *The ability to be active and driven without becoming prematurely exhausted.*

4. Cross-border employee creation (co-leadership)

In the trans-national workplace, employees are so involved in creating a good and efficient workplace that they become part of a collective management function, where the important decisions concerning the workplace are taken in consultation with the employees, where different interests (owners', users'/customers', society's and employees' interests) are weighed together in a holistic sense of responsibility. This does not mean that the need for a formal leader disappears, only that the role of the leader changes, namely to support the ability of employees to take holistic responsibility, to

providing feedback and affirmation and addressing common problems that employees find difficult to solve on their own. The latter may involve, for example, finding good compromises when there are differences of approach and direction, employees who repeatedly break common rules, or employees who have experienced social or health problems.

The transnational workforce is suitable for creative and innovation-focused businesses and for employees with a high skill level. It also requires that there is trust in the workplace, both that employees trust each other and the management of the organisation, and that all parties are prepared to act in such a way that trust can be maintained. In this way, social capital is built, people who act responsibly - not necessarily altruistically, but at least not just selfishly or irresponsibly - are trusted, and therefore a willingness to behave responsibly is created so that they can be respected themselves. In transnational co-operation there is a need for maintenance work and



courage, pointing out when someone is behaving irresponsibly, in the same way that young people feel good about being told off if they are destroying a bus shelter.

Crossing boundaries is a demanding challenge, but one that, if successfully managed, brings deep job satisfaction, pride and extraordinary business results. Being part of a truly well-functioning and socially mature team often becomes a lifelong memory for those who achieve it, and something that very significantly enriches everyone's life experience and personal maturity.

Cross-border collaboration (co-leadership)

Characteristics: employees who take responsibility for the social climate and participate in collective and responsible decision-making

Basic skills needed for this form of teamwork:

Holistic vision and advocacy

Key competences that can be developed through transnational cooperation: innovativeness and ability to build social capital

Well-developed key skills for the transnational workforce means:

- *Openness to and willingness to learn from the knowledge and experience of others*
- *Developing transnational roles vis-à-vis the formal leader*
- *Ability to create new knowledge and insights together with colleagues, and to change behaviour and working methods on the basis of these.*

- *Ability to take confidence-building actions that affect the "culture"*

Just as a high jumper needs to be able to run in order to jump high, which requires the ability to walk, which relies on the ability to stand upright, so employees need to master the other three forms of co-workship in order for transnational co-workship to work well. Development work should therefore first and foremost address the more fundamental levels of these deficits. This means, for example, that many industrial companies need to focus on developing a more initiative-oriented workforce, while in some sectors there is actually a need to train the compliant workforce to respect the organisation to a greater extent. guidelines and decisions, and often develop greater cooperation skills. However, this is not primarily about obedience and compliance, but about achieving a greater degree of interaction and interaction among employees and managers.

LINK BETWEEN DIFFERENT LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE MANAGEMENT

The different forms of employee ownership can be linked to different forms of management, which can either be in harmony with employee ownership and thus reinforce it, or challenge employee ownership and thus stimulate development. Note that situational alignment between leadership and co-leadership need not be a positive thing, but can preserve less developed forms of co-leadership.





Situational alignment between leadership and co-leadership:

Form of co-operation	Situational leadership
Compliant teamwork	Direct management, assignment of tasks
Specialized collaboration	Direct leadership, coordination of roles
Initiative-rich teamwork	Goal management, staff development leadership
Cross-border collaboration	Participatory/shared leadership

As can be seen, the development of co-leadership is about the manager moving from being the active one and the employees from being passive to the employees taking an active role as well. In many cases, managers should leave the initiative to the employees and take a more subdued role, while still showing a passionate commitment to their own managerial mission. The next section describes how such a transformation can take place.





4. DEVELOPING TEAMWORK

Achieving truly good co-leadership requires many skills at the organisational, group and individual level. The first section looks at co-leadership at the group and individual level, while the next section looks at developing co-leadership at the organisational level.

All personal development begins with the individual deciding to develop. Other people cannot develop "me" for me, they can be a support in development but not more. The same is true for group development, the group can only develop if the group members have decided to develop. This requires that the group members are ready to see that there is a common responsibility that should be taken and that cannot be taken by anyone else but the group members. Individuals often set up various mental barriers to their own development, such as that there is no point in doing something because the group member is so reluctant, the environment is so ungrateful or the manager so uncomprehending. Such obstacles should not be seen as stopping points, but rather as obstacles on an obstacle course that can be crossed with practice. Exhausting, yes, but also very satisfying when you land on the other side of the obstacle. The best time to start development is "here and now", postponing the necessary discussions to the future will get you nowhere.

Research on happiness has identified three factors that contribute to human happiness. The first factor is self-respect, which is not least about being able to live up to one's own values and "being an authentic version of oneself". The second factor is social interest, personal

people who care about other people have better social relationships and a richer social life. The third factor relates to job satisfaction and mastering challenges. Wealth does not usually bring long-lasting happiness because the happiness-giving demands of coping with difficult situations often disappear. The pace of life slows down, the wealthy can often choose their own activities and live a comfortable life, but such an affluent existence can be devastating to one's self-respect. The best way to deal with wealth is to continue to formulate goals and aspirations to strive for.

A working group where members respect and care for each other and where there are challenges that the group overcomes together is both effective and satisfying for the members. Demanding challenges also lead to development by increasing members' "comfort zones", which contributes to increased self-respect and job satisfaction. For example, backing with a trailer can be perceived as difficult and uncomfortable until you get the hang of it, and an experienced truck driver can often back a 12-metre trailer with the same precision as a small car without a trailer. If you don't dare or don't want to practise backing with a trailer because it feels uncomfortable, you will never be a good driver.

In order to release the commitment and joy of working in a group, some problems and social barriers often need to be overcome. A disagreement between two members can have a devastating effect on cooperation, as can an unfriendly and hostile climate. There may also be inequalities in the distribution of work and employees who shirk their responsibilities. Some

problems in a workplace can be solved by the members themselves, other problems require active management and some problems may need special support, e.g.

in the form of an occupational psychologist. It is therefore reasonable that if a work group is required to develop good internal cooperation, it should also have access to the level of support necessary for the group to solve its cooperation problems.

If there are no pressing problems in a group that need to be addressed before development work can begin, a good first step is to try to determine what the main concerns of the working group are.

mission, what the real purpose of the work is and what level of work output is reasonable to achieve in order to say that the group has done its job well. There is also often a need to define the "rules of the game" in the workplace (group), such as what each employee has the right to demand from his/her employer/workmates and also what obligations each employee needs to fulfil. As a fourth step in this model, the team should identify key skills that need to be developed in order to perform their job well over time.

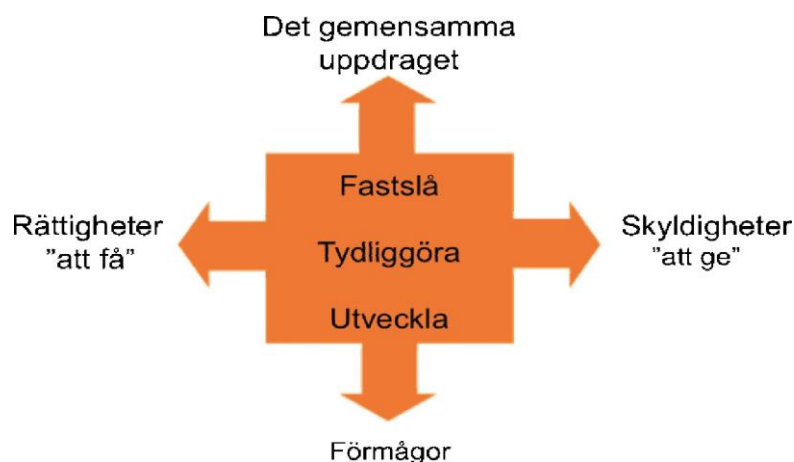


Figure 1: Rules of the game in the workplace (Tengblad, et al 2007, p 98)

The most important tool in any development process is dialogue. A good dialogue is characterised by participants openly expressing their opinions, listening to each other and developing a deeper and more common understanding of what is being discussed. In a good dialogue, all participants are influenced by what is said and are willing to try to change their actions in some direction. A dialogue needs to have a specific topic and last for a fairly long time, so that all participants have time to listen to each other's arguments as well as presenting their own.

FACTS

A comfort zone includes behaviours that a person feels comfortable with and that do not require a lot of effort to manage. For example, an experienced driver who drives in his or her home city is within his or her comfort zone, but outside it when driving in the centre of Paris during rush hour.

Developing a workgroup/workplace into a situation where everyone feels self-respect, social closeness and job satisfaction can take a long time and require a lot of effort. Even if the truly good workplace never emerges, the collective effort itself is a source of increased meaningfulness and commitment in the workplace. And getting only halfway to the really good workplace is, of course, more stimulating and successful than never taking a single step from a mediocre and unengaged workplace.

Developing good teamwork takes time as new skills and abilities need to be mastered. It therefore requires perseverance and that employees feel that the effort is giving something back to them personally. The

it is an important managerial task to ensure that employees really feel this, as well as that the manager has the ability to deal with employees who do not live up to the common agreements.

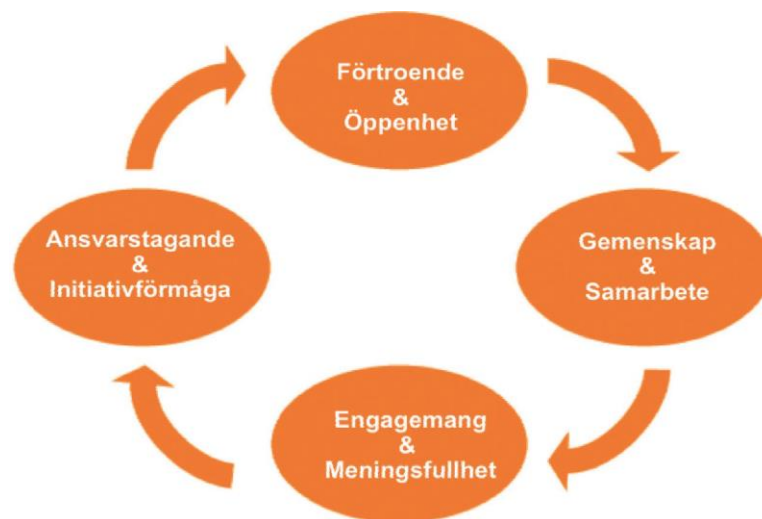


Figure 2: The Employee Wheel (Hällstén & Tengblad, 2006, p 15)

In successful development projects, a self-reinforcing development process occurs where increased openness and dialogue lead to a strengthened sense of community and cooperation, commitment to the common task, increased responsibility and initiative, which in turn strengthens trust and openness, as described in the Employee Creativity Wheel model. However, it is important to remember that such a wheel never turns on its own, but only gets rolling when the majority of employees in a work group or workplace have decided to push the wheel forward together. Only when the process gets going will energy be released, which is why there is reason to try to involve even sulky, gloomy and whiny people and not let their pessimism become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Often there are

reasons for their discouragement, and this discouragement can often be overcome with participatory leadership.

A manager who wants to be involved in influencing employee leadership needs to set aside time for interaction and relationship building with employees and not let administration take up almost all of the time. One book that describes well how managers can positively influence employee engagement is Li Bennich-Björkman's book *Something has happened* (SNS, 2002), which describes primary schools that have achieved very good results despite poor conditions. A female school leader compared her participation-oriented leadership with previous management positions:

It is very important to be involved and not to act as I did before, like a locomotive trying to start a

mass of carts. They thought they were starting a development project. Then, after six months, they turned around and looked. There wasn't a single wagon left. Everyone had unhitched. It wasn't their project... they weren't involved (Bennich-Björkman 2002, p. 132).

The Employee Wheel model can also be expanded with activities that can support positive workplace development. To build trust and openness, dialogue is important, both between employees and between employees and managers. Community and cooperation can be stimulated by regular social activities, e.g. once a quarter as the

something fun and enjoyable is done that contributes to a better atmosphere and togetherness. Often, many tasks can also be facilitated by spontaneous meetings and interaction, for example at a dinner party. Engagement and meaningfulness can be stimulated by participation in vision and development work (see also the Rules of the Game model) and finally, responsibility and initiative can be stimulated by mutual commitments. And of course, employee development should also be linked to the common work task, which we usually call the workplace mission.

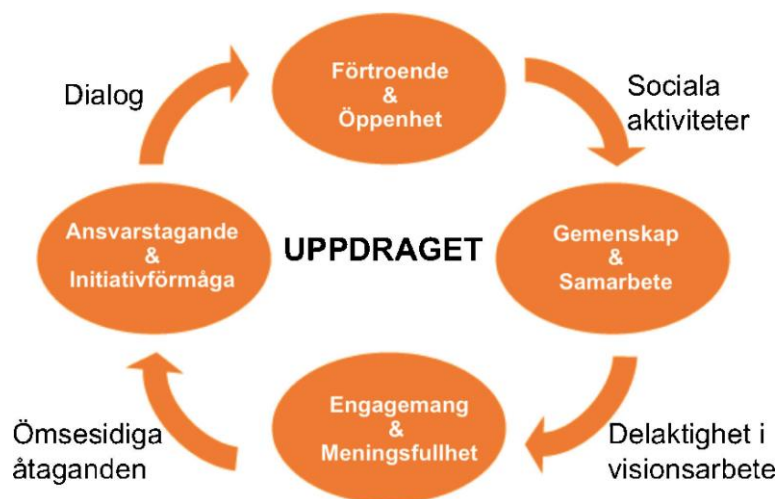


Figure 3: The Employee Wheel, expanded version

EMPLOYEE AND EMPLOYER ROLES

In 2003, The Empowered Employee describes five conditions at the organisational level that are important for contributing to empowerment at an organisational level. I still find these to be the most pressing, although more conditions are also described in Empowerment in Practice. The five conditions in The Empowered Employee are:

1. Organizational trust

There is extensive research showing that economically successful societies also have higher levels of public trust compared to other societies. So-called social capital manifests itself in a greater propensity to participate in voluntary organisations, in greater tolerance of differences, in lower levels of corruption and nepotism, and in higher levels of helpfulness (see, for example, the book Social Traps and the Problem of Trust by Bo Rothstein (SNS 2003). Citizens trusting each other



simply contributes to cultural, political and economic development. The same goes for organisations. With organisational trust, ideas flow more freely, cooperation increases, the need for close (and costly!) management is reduced, and accountability and initiative increase.

2. Continuity

Trust is largely built through social relationships and frequent reorganisations often break down relationships and new relationships take time to build. Continuity is also important to achieve learning and a sense of control among employees, which is so important to prevent stress and ill health. Organisational leaders who jump between different approaches to organisational development also fail to achieve lasting results. Implementing an employee-centred management philosophy takes years of dedicated work.

3. Sustainability

Sustainability here is about finding the right level of staffing, staffing should be low enough to allow for the need to develop better ways of working and collaboration but not so high that the workload stifles development work and constructive discussions. It is not by running faster than others that Swedish working life should be competitive, but rather by a well-developed problem-solving capacity, ability to adapt to customers and innovativeness.

4. Diversity

Life is becoming increasingly complex and the illusion that one person can keep track of everything that is happening is dangerous. Understanding how other people think and feel who belong to a different social group is very difficult if there is no contact with these groups. Creating sustainably successful organisations

tion requires that women and men, young and old, people from different ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientation, etc. are given good opportunities to participate in tasks, solve problems and deal with challenges. Good management and leadership simply needs to be inclusive.

5. Professionalism

In times of rapid change and the need for integrative approaches, there is also a need for depth of knowledge and professional integrity. Learning and education as has rapidly made an industry shift towards the entertainment sector tends to consist mostly of humorous inspirational lectures on the importance of positive thinking. Nothing wrong with this but there also needs to be an influx of more specialised knowledge and a realisation that learning can be time consuming and not something that can only happen "on the side of the real work". The danger is particularly great for managers who are reeling under heavy workloads and who feel they have no time for learning except during a few short beach breaks. Being a professional is also about seeing one's role and task in a wider context, not to be confused with entitlement to become a strong profession through a monopoly of knowledge and a reserved attitude towards the outside world.



5. SLUTORD

When we started researching employee ownership, we were sometimes met with a lot of scepticism in the early years (2001-2004) about the phenomenon of employee ownership and whether it was worth or even possible to research. This scepticism is no longer encountered, but rather the philosophy of employee ownership has spread to new sectors, for example, at the time of writing, colleges and universities have started to engage in employee ownership. It is probably the case that instead, scepticism is directed at organisations and companies that are not interested in developing employee engagement and responsibility. Rather, what holds back investment in these issues is that hard questions about economics and technology dominate in many organisational management and that there is often a lack of understanding that economic performance is created by people and that technological innovation requires human relationships to work. People management is a soft area, and as long as there is a lack of understanding in many workplaces that soft areas also have a decisive impact on hard areas such as economics and technology, the necessary development will not take place. Employee ownership simply deserves to be a matter for chief executives and management teams rather than human resource managers and a means to achieve quality of operations, customer and user satisfaction and good financial results.



ANNEX 1. ON THE IMPLEMENTATION AND REPORTING OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

A total of 19 sub-studies have been conducted on employee engagement, mainly through interviews, observations and a questionnaire survey. More information about the implementation of our research can be found in *Co-operation in Practice* (Hällstén and Tengblad 2006).

Table 2: Substudies carried out

Private sector (12)	Public sector (7)
architectural firm	employment service
commercial bank	disability and elderly care
building material manufacturers	preschool and primary school
retail	environmental management
telecom installation	police
technology consulting	veterinary activities
media consulting	child and adolescent psychiatry
engineering industry (2)	
product development (2)	
Revision	

MORE READING ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

More about the concept of employee ownership and how this relates to the development of Swedish working life is described in the book *Den myndige medarbetaren* (Tengblad, Liber 2003). Knowledge about different forms of employee management and how employee management is practised in different sectors of working life is mainly conveyed in the book *Medarbetarskap i praktiken* (Hällstén & Tengblad, Studentlitteratur, 2006). Finally, how to work practically with developing employee leadership is described in *Medarbetarskap: Från ord till action* (Tengblad et al. Liber, 2007). However, aspects of development, forms of employee leadership and Swedish working life are present in all books.



PUBLICATIONS

First, five books published (so far) within the research project are presented, followed by other articles, book chapters, reports and theses.



Employee ownership: from words to action

Tengblad, Stefan, Christer Ackerman, Freddy Hällstén & Johan Velten.

Liber, Malmö. 2007.

Since 2000, Stefan Tengblad and Freddy Hällstén have been conducting research on employee leadership. In the book *Employee Management: From Words to Action*, the most important research results are summarised in an accessible and everyday way. The authors are two experienced organisational consultants who share their experiences of what it takes to achieve good employee management. The book shows that the best route to organisational success is through employee engagement and job satisfaction, and that active leadership is needed to create the best possible conditions for this.

Employee leadership: from words to action! is primarily aimed at HR managers who want to bring about a living development process in their workplace. The book is also suitable for anyone who wants an up-to-date summary of what employee leadership means, its importance and how it can be developed.

The book can be ordered directly from the publisher: www.liber.se



Employee leadership in practice

Hällstén, Freddy and Stefan Tengblad (ed.)

Studentlitteratur, Lund (2006)

Employee Leadership in Practice, consists of twelve chapters, more than half of which are sub-studies on employee leadership in private and public organisations. The most important and comprehensive study of these is done in a West Swedish municipality's primary and pre-school system, but the sub-studies from a commercial bank, a family-owned media company, an employment agency, etc. also describe how co-workership takes shape in Swedish working life. Co-workership in practice concludes with a chapter that discusses in ten points how co-workership can be developed.

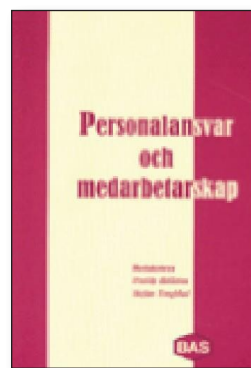
The book can be ordered directly from the publisher: www.studentlitteratur.se/32005

**The adult employee**

Stefan Tengblad

Liber ekonomi, Malmö (2003)

Den myndige medarbetaren offers an accessible overview of how Swedish working life has developed up to the beginning of the new century, with a special focus on the emergence of a more active employee role. Not least, societal changes, both actual and alleged, are discussed. The book concludes with a chapter on how an empowered co-worker role can be developed. In January 2004, The Empowered Employee received the "Reflection Book of the Year" award from Personal & Ledarskap and the Centre for Personnel & Development. The book can be ordered directly from the publisher: www.liber.se

**Personnel responsibility and employee leadership**

Hällstén, Freddy and

Stefan Tengblad (ed)

Book publisher BAS, Gothenburg (2002)

Human Resources and Employee Leadership is the first book to focus explicitly on the concept of employee leadership. The book presents five sub-studies, three of which are from qualified service activities, what is usually described as knowledge work. These particular studies on technical development work and auditing made us aware of the extent to which responsibilities previously seen as part of the responsibility of managers and human resource functions could rest with the employees themselves. Personnel Responsibility and Employee Ownership is therefore an important book for anyone interested in the organisation of knowledge work and also for those who want to understand the origins of the Employee Ownership research programme.

The book can be ordered directly from the publisher: BAS@handels.gu.se



Employee responsibility: conceptualization, validation, determinants, and outcomes

Wajda Irfaeya

University of Gothenburg (2009)

Individual responsibility at work has a major impact on the efficiency and success of an organisation. However, what it actually is has so far been unclear and up to individual interpretation. A thesis from the School of Business and Economics at the University of Gothenburg changes this by clarifying the concept of individual responsibility, showing what influences the willingness to take responsibility and how responsibility itself affects employee performance and job satisfaction.

In addition, the thesis provides a tool to measure individual responsibility.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF RESEARCH THE PROGRAMME

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Andersson, Thomas (2006) *Confidence in oneself - A study of managers' Selbstförtroende*, in S. Jönsson, I-L Johansson & R. Solli (eds) *The Value of Trust*, pp. 287- 309, Lund: Studentlitteratur

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Andersson, Thomas (2007) *When the dancing partner does not want to follow any more - Experiences from managers' personal development training*, presented at the 23rd EGOS conference, Vienna, 5-7 July, 2007

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