MENTAL/ LIFE SKILLS AT BUSINESS SETTINGS:

The value of using sport psychology consultants

Halmstad University
School of Social and Health Sciences
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Supervisor: Natalia Stambulova
Examinor: Urban Johnson

Author: Alexandra Fürst

Abstract

The objectives of the study were to examine (1) employees' experiences in using mental/life skills and (2) sport psychology consultants' experiences in teaching mental/life skills to employees in business settings. The study was conducted through qualitative interviews. Two interview guides were created to answer the objectives. Six participants, three employees who used mental/life skills and three consultants who worked both in sports and in business took part in the study. The interviews were analysed inductively. The results pointed towards that mental/life skills can beneficially be used at workplaces in order to increase effectiveness, improve communication between employees and to develop the employees further. The results also indicated that sport psychology consultants can successfully work in business but additional educations is an advantage. The results of the study are discussed from the point of related theoretical frameworks and research in sport and work psychology.

Key words: *business settings, consultants working in sports and business, employees, mental/life skills.*

**Sammanfattning**

Syftet med studien var att undersöka (1) anställdas erfarenheter av att använda mental/ life skills och (2) idrottspsykologers erfarenheter av att lära ut mental/ life skills till anställda i näringslivet. Två intervjuiguider gjordes för att svara på syftet. Studien genomfördes med hjälp av kvalitativa intervjuer med sex deltagare, tre anställda som använde sig av mental/ life skills och tre konsulter som arbetade både inom idrott och näringsliv. Intervjuerna analyserades induktivt. Resultatet pekade på att mental/ life skills med gott resultat kan användas vid arbetsplatser för att höja effektiviteten, förbättra kommunikationen mellan anställda och för att utveckla de anställda ytterligare. Resultaten indikerade också att idrottspsykologer framgångsrikt kan arbeta inom näringslivet men ytterligare utbildningar är en fördel. Studiens resultat diskuteras med utgångspunkt från relaterade teoretiska ramverk och forskning från idrotts- och arbetspsykologi.

**Nyckelord:** Anställda, konsulter som arbetar inom idrott och näringsliv, mental/ life skills, näringsliv.
Introduction

How much would the society benefit on having healthy and high-performing employees at every workplace? It would probably lead to improved economics for the society but also the benefits of enhanced life quality for the employees, improved relations and less stressed inhabitants. Many companies and enterprises are getting ready to invest money to improve the health of their employees. But all the same they wish to keep productivity at a high level. Employees that have stress related diseases cost a lot of money for many companies. Nowadays sport psychology is gaining ground outside of sports. An increasing amount of sport psychology consultants are today working towards business. Techniques from sport psychology could potentially enable the companies to have a healthy and moreover, a high performing staff. Many business managers are also looking for ways to improve their individual performance and enhance their abilities to lead and to encourage their fellow employees. One solution could be to train employees and managers in mental/ life skills by the help of sport psychology consultants. After all, sport psychology consultants are trained to work with techniques of performance enhancement and promoting wellbeing at the same time. This is also in line with current research that shows that skills learnt in one setting almost always can be transferred to other areas in life. Skills that are useful in sports are most certainly valuable in business. It is therefore interesting to investigate the experiences of employees who have worked with techniques used in sport psychology, such as mental/ life skills. Do the employees perceive them to be beneficial? Another aspect of interest is how sport psychology consultants can be useful in business settings. Research in this area could not only broaden the working field for sport psychologists but also help enterprises to create healthy and high performing workplaces.

Definitions

In literature as well as in common language a lot of different names are used to describe more or less the same thing. Psychological skills training, mental training and life skills training are three commonly used strategies with the same kind of goals. In this essay all three of them will therefore be defined. The term mental/life skills will be used in this paper as a generic term. It emphasizes that the skills are controlled by mental processes and can be useful in various areas of life.

Psychological Skills, Mental Skills and Life Skills

Psychological skills are a wide range of different skills for optimal athletic performance (Mahoney & Chapman, 2004). Different examples of psychological skills are self-perceptions, motivation, coping with stress, attributions, associations, dissociations and moral development (Weiss, 1991; Hardy, Jones & Gould, 1996). Mental skills are very much similar to psychological skills but refer more directly to what can be controlled by mental processes. Mental skills are the abilities to improve performance through cognitive-somatic techniques such as knowing how to relax, use imagery or positive self talk (Blakeslee & Goff, 2007). The life skills definition is more focused on the transferability of skills. Life skills are abilities to perform under pressure, solve problems, meet challenges, set goals, communicate, handle both success and failure, work with a team and receive feedback and benefit from it (Danish & Theodorakis, 2005).
**Psychological Skills Training**

Psychological skills training, (PST), is described by Weinberg and Gould (2006) as a systematic and consistent training of mental or psychological skills. The aim is to improve performance, increase enjoyment or achieving greater self-satisfaction through sports. Techniques that are used include goal setting, attentional control, progressive muscle relaxation and enhancing confidence techniques.

**Mental Training**

Mental training is a systematic and consistent training of mental processes. The aim is to achieve peak performance and wellness. Self-images, goal-images, attitudes and emotions are seen as four basic factors for external and internal success. The development and control of these four factors is the main part of the training programmes (Johansson & Uneståhl, 2006). Mental training has also been described as seven elements to reach personal excellence: focus, commitment, mental readiness, positive images, confidence, distraction control and ongoing learning. Focus is seen as the most important element which also influence all the others (Orlick, 2008)

**Life Skills Training**

The World Health Organisation, WHO, (1993) describes life skills training as how to learn to adapt and implement a positive behaviour that facilitate for individuals to deal successfully with the difficulties and challenges of everyday life. According to Danish and Nellen (1997) they can be physical, behavioural or cognitive.

**Mental/ Life Skills**

Mental/life skills are defined as strategies to enhance human development and to add to the individual’s resources.

**Theoretical Frameworks**

**The Lifespan Model of Developmental Challenge (Hendry & Kloep, 2002)**

To cope with challenges and changes in life there is a need of having a certain amounts of resources. Every human being possesses an imaginary pool of potential resources. The resources could be used in different kinds of situations. There are five different areas of resources: biological dispositions, social resources, skills in various domains, self-efficacy and structural resources. Biological dispositions are genetics like health and talents and social resources are the social network and the quality of that one. Skills in various domains are used to solve problems occurring in life. According to Hendry and Kloep (2002) having skills in many different areas is a better resource than having very specialized skills. With a wide range of different skills it is easier to compensate for a lack of skills or resources by using skills from other areas in life. Adaptability is one of the most important ingredients for handling life challenges successfully. Self-efficacy is seen as the feeling of being able to cope with challenges and that the resources are sufficient to solve the situation. It is valuable to have a realistic view on whether or not a task can be handled. It facilitates the selection of manageable task if the resources are limited. Structural resources are material resources, background and so forth.
The different resources interact and influence each other and are highly dynamic. All of the resources or skills could potentially be lost, gained or varied and that would as a consequence affect the other resources in the pool. Together, all the resources determine, in combination with situational characteristics, if a task will be perceived as routine, challenging or risky. Depending on how well a task is solved it will add or diminish the amount of resources in the resource pool. If a challenge is met successfully the amount of resources in the pool will increase and it will lead to development. If the opposite occurs, the amount of resources in the pool decreases, it will lead to decay. A person can also choose to avoid change and challenges which would result in stagnation. Stagnation can be perceived as negative or positive but either way once a challenge is forced on that person the risk is that not enough resources have been developed to handle the situation efficiently.

Using different kinds of mental training can therefore create new skills to put in the resource pool and help people towards development. Being a sport psychology consultant shifting towards business will imply changes and challenges. The sport psychology consultant will need already existing resources and in addition, if the shift is handled well, new resources will be developed. From the employees perspective it is about being able to meet challenges in a business setting and having the adequate resources to do so. Or even better, to be able to create new skills and resources in order to improve and develop at work.

The Life Development Intervention Model (LDI) (Danish, Petitpas & Hale, 1993)

Danish, Petitpas and Hale (1993) define sport psychology as a way to enhance competence and promote development during the whole life span. According to that definition, sport psychologist should be as concerned about their clients’ life development as the athletic performance. The life development intervention emphasizes on continuous growth and change and the goal is to enhance personal competence by teaching life skills. To become competent a person must attain both interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. The meaning of interpersonal skills is the ability to communicate with other people in different situations. Intrapersonal skills are both physical and mental skills. Although used in LDI intrapersonal skills are referred to as psychological skills.

The focus of LDI is to teach goal setting. Goal setting is according to the LDI a means of empowerment. To set goals is a way to take control of the future and potential dreams. It is a way to respond to the environment rather than to just adjust to it. The LDI teaches to identify, set and attain goals. The LDI emphasizes only on process goals, which are always under the control of the individual, rather than outcome goals which are seen as the result. Four major obstacles could potentially be in the way to reach your goals. The obstacles are lack of knowledge, lack of skill, inability or fear to do appropriate risk taking and the lack of adequate social support (Danish & D’Augelli, 1983; ref in Danish, Petipas & Hale, 1993). The idea of the intervention is to teach participants how to set goals, identify and overcome the obstacles and reaching their goals. In order to reach their goals the participants have to develop new skills, acquire new knowledge, learn to take risks and develop an effective social support system. The LDI does also call attention to the importance of using different interventions depending on their relation to the occurrence of life critical events. Enhancement strategies are interventions before an event, supporting strategies are used during the event and counselling strategies are used after the event (Danish et al., 1993). As the name indicates the life development intervention is about enabling people to develop and to reach their goals. It is an intervention that is clearly transferable to all different areas in life and is as applicable in sports as in business.
The Model of Psychological Preparation for Peak Performance (Hardy, Jones & Gould, 1996)

To create a peak performance a multitude of different factors influence the athlete simultaneously. To be able to illustrate this in an adequate way a model was developed to show five major components that all influence the creation of a peak performance. The model should be seen as a triangle with a circle around. The base of the triangle includes factors like personality, dispositions and attributes. For instance, motivation, values and philosophical beliefs influence everything a person does and therefore influences directly or indirectly the athlete’s performance and mental state. These elements are very difficult to work with but still very important not to neglect. The left side of the model includes psychological skills and strategies and the right side contains adversity coping strategies. The coping strategies should develop skills to enable the athlete to deal with various types of problems that could prevent ideal performance state from occurring. The top of the triangle is the task-specific ideal performance state that leads to peak performance. It is important to stress that the ideal state is not one particular arousal zone. The ideal performance state is a mixture of cognitions, emotions and associated psychological parameters that will together lead to peak performance. Finally the area around the triangle contains the physical, social, psychological and organisational environment around the athlete. These factors can have both a positive or negative influence on a peak performance. If these factors have a negative influence it is probably necessary to evaluate what could be done to change those negative influences. No model has so far been developed on how to create peak performance in other areas of life. Potentially this model can be used and modified to suite different people in different kinds of situations.

Research Findings on Mental/Life Skills

The research findings have been structured in three parts that were perceived as important to investigate. The first part is about psychological skills training, mental training and life skills in sport. The second part is about implementation of psychological skills training, mental training and life skills. The third part describes psychological skills training, mental training and life skills in business settings and other areas in life. Every part includes studies on PST, mental training and life skills presented in that order.

Psychological Skills Training, Mental Training and Life Skills in Sport

Psychological skills training is a commonly used strategy in sport to teach athletes mental and psychological skills as a way to improve their performances (Weinberg and Williams, 2005). Weinberg and Williams (2005) analysed the successfulness of studies of PST and reported that 85% (38 of 45) of the analysed studies showed positive performance effects when using PST. They believed that the showed successfulness of the use of PST depended on sport psychologist understanding for how to implement an effective intervention. The key to do so is in an individualised, systematic manner over time and by often using a variety of psychological techniques. According to Weinberg and Gould (2006) the techniques used in PST originally came from mainstream psychology like behaviour modification, cognitive theory and therapy. Independently of which technique from PST that is used it needs to be practised and repeated to be effective. In elite sport the differences in the actual performance are usually very small. It is therefore argued that the actual differences are not due to technique or physical skills but in the end it is the mental skills that make the difference (Weinberg & Gould 2006). It should however be noted that contradictory results of the effectiveness of PST has also been brought forward as well as the concern that few studies on
PST have met the scientific standards for well established interventions (Gardener & Moore, 2006).

Mental training has been successfully used in sport since the 1970’s when the program was implemented and tested on various national and Olympic teams (Johansson & Uneståhl, 2006). The goal of mental training is to influence body and mind in a positive and goal-orientated way by being able to control our mental processes (Uneståhl, 1996). The program contains four main elements: self-images, goal-images, attitudes and an emotional factor. The use of self-images was included for improving self-confidence, self evaluation and self esteem. Goal-images were used for learning goal-setting and commitment to the goal. The use of attitudes included reality testing and reality interpretation and the emotional factor was added in order to achieve internal success (Johansson & Uneståhl, 2006). Driskell, Copper and Moran (1994) examined by a meta-analysis of conducted studies the effect of mental practice on performance which is one part of mental training. Mental practice refers to perform a task mentally in absence of physical movements in order to improve performance. Results indicate that mental practice is an effective technique to improve performance. It is not as effective as actual physical training but still an efficient means to enhance performance. The effect of mental practice on performance is stronger the more the task involves a cognitive factor but is useful on both cognitive and physical tasks (Driskell et al., 1994)

Various studies have been conducted examining the efficacy of teaching life skills through sports (Danish & Theodorakis, 2005). Sports United to Promote Education and Recreation, (SUPER), is one example where participants were involved in three types of activities: learning the physical skills related to a specific sport, learning life skills related to sports in general and playing the sport. Another example was a study of a program that was a development of SUPER but with some differences: shorter sessions that took place during practice times and the program began with a test of a sport skill. In the beginning the participants were evaluated on their sport skills related to the sport they played. The program taught goal setting, problem solving and positive thinking. Previous research on the area shows significant changes on participants’ social responsibility, emotional intelligence, goal knowledge and social interests (Danish, Fazio, Nellen & Owens, 2002). This study confirmed those findings and added to the previous findings greater knowledge about life skills, higher self-beliefs for personal goal setting, problem solving and positive thinking when the participants were compared to those in the control group. When the athletes were compared to the athletes in the control group it showed that the life skills training also improved their sport skills. The conclusion of the study was that athletes participating in a life skills program can improve both their sport performance and improve their life skills, which are necessary for coping with the complexities in life (Curry & Maniar, 2003; Danish & Theodorakis, 2005).

Implementation of Mental Training, Psychological Skills and Life Skills

Poczwardowski, Sherman and Henschen (1998) outline 11 factors that might be worth taking into consideration when planning, implementing and evaluating sport psychological services. Noticeably it is also important to consider the context of each specific situation when working with a client. Although the 11 factors can be used as a framework. The factors are as follows: (1) professional boundaries, due to, for instance, education and training; (2) professional philosophy, the consultant’s focus and view on their client; (3) making contact, establishing trust and credibility to facilitate an honest communication; (4) assessment, identifying needs, strengths and weaknesses; (5) conceptualizing athletes’ concerns and potential interventions, finding out what might be the causes behind the initial problem; (6) range, types and organization of service, (what, how, when) selecting intervention techniques; (7) program
implementation, the way the methods are delivered or taught is critical for a successful implementation; (8) managing the self as intervention instrument. To use tools from sport psychology could improve the performance of the consultant and turn the consultant to an effective role model; (9) program and consultant evaluation, establishing the effectiveness of the interventions and the consultant, evaluation is vital to understand what works, with whom and in which context; (10) conclusions and implications, enable the consultant to improve as a sport psychologist and create further insights; (11) leaving the setting, the aim of a consultant should be to by the end become unnecessary to the client. This approach should be seen as guidelines and can be developed over time. However, it requires the consultant’s time and commitment (Poczwardowski et al., 1998).

Not only how sport psychology is taught but also the way it is performed can make a difference when implementing different techniques (Driskell et al., 1994). The effectiveness depends on different variables. Mental practice, for instance, is more efficient for experienced trainees than for beginners. There is more or less an optimal length for the use of mental practice. Relatively short mental practice sessions are optimal since extended sessions can lead to loss of concentration. Since mental practice is not followed by direct feedback as physical practise is, motivation might decrease when practiced for too long time (Driskell et al., 1994). According to Weinberg and Williams (2005) 15 – 30 minutes should be used for every practice session and there should be between three to five sessions every week for learning a new mental skill. When a mental skill is acquired less time is needed for practice. It is also important to integrate the mental skills practice to physical practice sessions to be able to implement the skills when they are actually needed (Weinberg & Williams, 2005).

A study of how the most successful coaches implement life skills to their athletes has been conducted by Gould, Collins, Lauer and Chung (2006). Their findings indicate that life skills are implemented over time and that it is a never-ending process. They pointed out four primary reflections on how to teach life skills. The four reflections were as follows: (1) philosophical foundations, having a coaching philosophy that emphasizes life skill development incorporated with the regular coaching work; (2) coach-player relationship skills, the coaches had strong relationship skills thanks to their excellent communication skills. They emphasized having a good communication with their athletes and worked hard to keep it well functioning; (3) specific strategies to develop life skills, for instance using team building or having discussions with the team about life skills strategies; (4) environmental considerations and resource utilization, the coaches were optimistic but had a realistic view on their limitations. They used the environment around the players to get to them such as educating the parents and having a good relationship with them. The authors of the study also point out that the components are highly interactive, that coaches learn best how to act by examples from other coaches and that this working model needs to be verified through further research (Gould et al., 2006).

To promote the implementation of life skills a life skills training program has been used in North American schools to teach self-management and social skills to enable student to choose healthy alternatives instead of substance use (Botvin & Griffin, 2004). There are materials to facilitate the teaching of life skills which include a Teacher’s Manual and a Student Guide for each year of the program. The Teacher’s Manual contains detailed lesson plans with the goals for each intervention and provides content and activities for every session. The program is intended for middle and junior high students and includes 15 class periods. The program is supposed to be taught by using group discussion and skills training exercise but conventional teaching is used for some of the content even if the skills training is the most important part for implementing the program (Botvin & Griffin, 2004).
There are also studies showing that it can be hard to attempt a widespread implementation of a life skills program (Hahn, Noland, Rayens & Christie, 2002). An evaluation was made of the fidelity of implementation of the life skills training program in North American schools. The evidence indicated that the fidelity to the program and how it was supposed to be implemented was quite low. The teachers did not teach as many life skills training lessons as they were meant to nor did they stick to the content that should be taught during the program. Especially did most teachers only focus on the cognitive parts of the program instead of the practical parts of life skills training. Without a practical part it is much harder to influence the behavior of the students. The reasons why the program was not delivered properly included other job responsibilities, lack of time and lack of preparation time. This study therefore shows that even with the right directions it is not obvious that the implementation of a program is done correctly and therefore it can be hard to predict the outcome (Hahn et al., 2002).

PST, Mental training and Life Skills at Business Settings and Other Areas in Life

According to Lloyd and Foster (2006) healthy and high performing workplaces could be created by using sport psychology. Especially five techniques from sport psychology used in psychological skills training would be effective to create a high-performance workplace: (1) the use of mental imagery for strategic planning and for the preparation for demanding tasks; (2) use performance routines to maintain a consistent and proficient performance at work and allow employees to successfully structure time, tasks and mental efforts; (3) use positive self talk before handling challenging tasks. To practise an optimistic explanatory style is probably the most helpful way a person can talk to him- or herself; (4) employ control strategies for the self regulation of an optimal energetic state; (5) concentration techniques for sharpening focus and sustaining attention which is also helpful for maintaining a clear sense of purpose. These techniques could be highly valuable for business clients and are also well accepted by them (Foster, 2001; ref in Lloyd & Foster, 2006). Lloyd and Foster (2006) emphasize particularly on the importance of attempting to create healthy and productive workplaces and highlight that the combination of sport and health psychology would be specifically effective. Counselling psychologists are ideally suited in the process of creating healthy workplaces that promote risk-reducing behaviour of life-styles diseases and increase employee productivity (Lloyd & Foster, 2006). There are also economical proves that it is beneficial for companies to invest in health enhancing methods. In a study on health promotion The Travelers Corporation claimed a $3.40 gain for every dollar invested in health promotion and total savings of $146 million. Sick leave was reduced with 19% during a 4-year study (Golasweski, Snow, Lynch, Yen & Solomita, 1990).

Mental training started in sports but has since then been used in school education, business, public administration, health and clinical areas, personal development and leadership development (Uneståhl, 2004; ref in Johansson & Uneståhl, 2006) Various studies have also shown a connection between decreased levels of stress by mental training. Stress is according to Söderfjell (2001) probably the biggest issue for the society in the western countries. One study on stress was conducted by Johansson and Uneståhl (2006) which showed that mental training, when practised several days a week, increases the secretion of dehydroepiandrosterone sulphate, DHEA-S, and that the secretion of cortisol decreases. DHEA-S is an anti-stress hormone and works as an antagonistic action towards cortisol (Boudarene, Legros, Timsit-Berthier, 2002). When experiencing psychological stress cortisol increases and DEAH-S decreases, DEAH-S levels have also a close connection to high levels of perceived anxiety. The study was conducted on healthy subjects and various techniques
from mental training were used like muscular relaxation, self-hypnosis, self-image training, goal-image training, motivation and so forth. The results also showed emotional, psychological and physiological changes. Practising mental training can therefore be used to enhance physiological as well as psychological well-being (Johansson & Uneståhl, 2006). Another study showed positive effects on reduced stress and general symptoms with mental training and massage (Haraldsson, Fridlund, Baigi & Marklund, 2005). The mental training that was used in the study included muscular and mental relaxation, self-image and goal-image training. After eight weeks of mental training and massage the results showed, 16 weeks from baseline, significant differences between the groups, indicating fewer general symptoms and stress reduction for the intervention group (Haraldsson et al., 2005).

Life skills training is as applicable for both athletes as non-athletes (Danish, Petitpas & Hale, 1992). The life development intervention for example is partly about learning how to be able to transfer skills from one domain to another. The importance is that the consultant understands the person or persons that receive an intervention (Danish et al., 1992). As mentioned, life skills training is, for instance, often used as a substance abuse prevention program. The program has been used for more than a decade and a half and has consistently shown a 50% reduction in drug use among youth (Hahn et al., 2002). The life skills training program uses personal self-management skills and social skills to teach resistance to social influence and to cope with environment. Life skills are also used within WHO, UNICEF and UNESCO. According to WHO (1999) most professionals agree that life skills are efficiently applied in health contexts and social events.

**Sport Psychology Consultants Working in Business Settings**

A lot of sport psychologists have already a vision of not only working for sports but to help individuals to develop as human beings and give the athletes skills and resources for life (Gould et al., 2006). To be a sport psychologist does not mean that only the athlete’s sport performance is valued or worked with. Henschen (2001) stresses the importance of viewing the athlete from a holistic perspective. He sees the social, the intellectual, the performance and the spiritual part of a person as four equally important aspects to work with in a client’s life (Henschen, 2001).

According to Lloyd and Foster (2006) sport psychology could play an important role at workplaces to provide instruction and support to the employees. Sport psychology consultants could, for instance, teach employees how to develop individualized goals and performance routines for work but also provide alternatives for a healthy living. They could also incorporate the use of self-talk and imagery to enhance work performance and manage stress. The consultant could help the organization to create a more productive workforce by encouraging the leaders to provide employees with training in psychological hardiness and optimism (Lloyd & Atella, 2000; ref in Lloyd & Foster, 2006).

Uneståhl, for instance, is one of many who have gone over from sport to work in business setting. He has worked with well known Swedish companies like ABB, Astra, NCC, Nordbanken, Pripps, Saab, SAS, SE-banken among others. According to Uneståhl, 78 of the 100 biggest companies in Sweden had last year in different ways worked with mental training. His idea is to educate managers in the enterprises so that they can teach the techniques to their fellow employees and spread the knowledge throughout the company. By searching on the internet numerous coaches, sport psychologists or mental trainers can be found that previously worked with athletes and are now working in business settings. Frequent ways are to work with individual clients or to give lectures regarding, for instance, performance enhancing
techniques. According to Algotsson, Klaveskjöld and Uneståhl (2006) there is a big need for mental training in business settings but until now the knowledge about how to use mental skills to improve performance at work has been quite limited. Therefore mental training is not yet a natural part of educations of employees within enterprises but will potentially be in the future.

**Summary**

There is a potential value of using sport psychology consultants in business (Lloyd & Foster, 2006) but still very little research on the subject. Theories that can be applied are the lifespan model of developmental challenge (Hendry & Kloep, 2002), the life development intervention model (Danish et al., 1993) and the model of psychological preparation for peak performance (Hardy et al, 1996). According to research on mental/life skills used in sport it can be an effective approach for performance enhancement as well as wellbeing and human development. Although more research on mental/life skills at business settings is needed before its effectiveness can be assessed.

**Objectives**

1. To examine employees' experiences in using mental/life skills.
2. To examine sport psychology consultants' experiences in teaching mental/life skills to employees in business settings.

**Method**

**Research design**

In this study a qualitative design has been used. In order to get each of the individuals’ personal experiences on the subject, interviews were used to collect the data. Qualitative interviews were best fitted to answer the objectives and to give a more holistic picture of the individuals’ experiences. Another reason to choose the qualitative design was the fact that there no previous research have been found on the subject. For the same reason there were no quantitative instruments to use on the subject. Inductive analysis was later used on the collected data. There were no predetermined categories but categories were formulated as the data was analysed (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994)

**Participants**

In order to answer the objectives of the study two groups of participants were involved. One group contained employees who used mental/ life skills training. This group will further be called “employees”. The second group consisted of psychology consultants who were working with both sports and business clients. The second group will be referred to as “consultants”. Six participants took part in the study including three employees and three consultants. None of the participants fell off after they had accepted to take part in the study. The selection of the participants was made on accessibility and according to selection criteria for each group.

The group of employees consisted of one woman and two men, of 40 ± 5 years of age. The three employees were all working in manager positions in different companies. Employee A was working as a manager for organisation and project development for a big Swedish company. Employee A started to work at the company as an industrial engineer but changed
later to the service organisation and became a manager in 2005. Employee A went to the first mental/life skills course in March 2008 but did start to use it actively in September 2008. Employee B was a photographer and one of two owners of a smaller company working with photography. Employee B was also the operative manager for the company and had used mental/life skills for five years. Employee C was working as a group manager at a major Swedish car company. Employee C has had different positions in the company and became a group manager in 1998/1999. Employee C had used mental/life skills for four years. None of the employees had an athletic career. All of the employees met the selection criteria for the group such as: employees that practiced mental/life skills.

The group of consultants consisted of three men with mean of age of 43 ± 14. Consultant A was a sport psychology consultant that for the moment was working as a project leader for a combined sports and university project and had his own company. Consultant A had worked with consulting athletes since 2000/2001 and had held lectures for different companies for quite some time. Consultant A had been doing more work towards business settings since 2004 but was for the moment focusing on his job as a project leader. Consultant B was a registered psychologist that worked as a private consultant for both athletes and employees. Consultant B had a family company and had worked with business clients for 15 – 20 years and several years with athletes. Consultant C was a sport psychology consultant, was studying to become a researcher, worked as an assistant master at a university and had his own company. Consultant C has worked for almost ten years as a sport psychology consultant and has also worked in business settings. The amount of work consultant C has done in business settings has varied over time. All of the consultants met the selection criteria for the group such as: psychology consultants that had a sport psychology education (master’s degree) or were registered psychologists and worked with both athletes and business clients.

Instrument

One interview guide was made for the employees that is called “Anställdas upplevelse av mental/life skills” (Employees’ experiences of using mental/life skills), (see Appendix 1). Another interview guide was made for the consultants, the interview guide is named “Psykologiska rådgivares jämförelser mellan idrott och företagsvärlden” (Sport psychology consultants’ comparisons between sports and business), see (Appendix 2). The two interview guides were created and adjusted several times in cooperation with the supervisor. The interview guides were semi-structured and additional questions were asked on the interviews.

The interview guide “Anställdas upplevelse av mental/life skills” consists of three parts such as background, current situation with using mental/life skills, and perception of the situation with colleagues/ sport psychology consultants. The background part consists of around ten questions about age, professional and athletic background, motivation to start with mental/life skills and the employees’ background in using mental/life skills. The current situation part contains ten questions about the employees’ perceived demands at work, the use of mental/life skills at the moment and benefits of using mental/life skills. One example of a question is “What mental/life skills do you feel that you currently need at work?” The last part contains seven questions about colleagues’ use of mental training and the employees’ knowledge about sport psychology consultants.

The interview guide “Psykologiska rådgivares jämförelser mellan idrott och företagsvärlden” consists of two parts, background and working in business compared to working in sports. The background part consists of six questions about previous experiences in their work with athletes and employees. The second part contains 12 questions about their current work with
employees and how that differed to their work with athletes. One example of a question from the interview guide is “What mental/ life skills do employees typically want to learn? Please, compare with athlete clients.”

**Procedure**

In order to find participants which fit the selection criteria mental trainers who worked in business settings were contacted to get in touch with employees using mental /life skills. Through the mental trainers potential participants were located and then contacted by telephone. The employees who showed wish to take part in the study then got an e-mail (see appendix 3) with a short description of the study and the ethical issues. The ethical issues that were mentioned were as follows: involvement in the study was optional, the information would be treated confidentially, the interview would be recorded on tape, if they wished they could finish their participation at any time and that the participants could choose not to answer uncomfortable questions. The interviews with the employees took part at their companies and took 40-60 minutes each. Before the interview the employees were again reminded about the ethical issues.

The consultants were found through contacts to other psychology consultants and were contacted by telephone or by mail. When they were contacted they got brief information about the study and the ethical issues, the same as mentioned above. As with the employees the ethical issues were repeated by the time of the actual interview. The interviews took place at their workplaces except for one which took place over the telephone due to the participant’s location. The interviews with the consultants took between 40-60 minutes each.

**Analyses**

The interview data was analysed qualitatively using several steps as follows:
1. The interviews were transcribed word by word on a computer. Each interview text was between six to ten pages. Pauses and laugh were not included in the transcriptions (see appendix 4 for an example of a transcription).
2. After the transcription of every interview the raw data was condensed. The relevant parts of the interviews were marked to be used in further analyses.
3. The questions from the interview guides were used to make an individual profile of every transcription. The individual profiles were made out of the marked parts of the transcriptions. (See appendix 5 for employees’ individual profiles and appendix 6 for consultants' profiles). Six profiles were done.
4. From the individual profiles two group profiles were made, one for the employees and one for the consultants. (See appendixes 7 and 8). When the group profiles were made the answers from the individual profiles were put together. The raw data units were shortened and reformulated to find a sentence that described the meaning of every answer. Raw data units were counted in order to discover similarities and differences between the answers. Triangulation was made when creating the group profiles.
5. As the group profiles were made categories were formulated in order to structure the results more clearly. The profile of the employees’ was structured in five categories: introduction to mental/ life skills, current situation with using mental/ life skills, perceived effects of mental/ life skills, views on mental/ life skills among colleagues at work and opinions about sport psychology consultants working in business. Under every category different themes were created according to the interview guide. When the group profile of the consultants was made four categories were formulated: shift between consulting in sport and business, working in business compared to sports, perceived barriers and coping and benefits and acceptance of
sport psychology consultants in business. Under the categories different themes were used in relation to the interview guide. When the results were put together every raw data unit was counted and every individual unit was counted as one. It is therefore to be noted that even if one unit got high scores in the results it does not necessary mean that it was the general opinion of all the participants. At some occasions one raw data unit got a high score because it was frequently repeated by one of the participants.

Results

The results were structured in two parts according to the objectives of the study. First, the results of the employees and second the results of the consultants are presented. The presentation is based on the categories and themes that were formulated in the group profiles.

Employees

When creating the group profile of the employees five categories were formulated as follows: Introduction to mental/life skills, current situation with using mental/life skills, perceived effects of mental/life skills, views on mental/life skills training among colleagues at work and opinions about sport psychology consultants working in business. The results are presented according to the categories and the themes that were used in the interview guide.

Introduction to Mental/Life Skills

All of the participants learnt to use mental/life skills through a course which had a connection to their work. All of the participants did also still have some kind of connection with a mental trainer. They all saw mental/life skills at something to think about all the time, to be conscious about in the everyday life. Two of the employees got their mental training course paid by there job and in these cases it was the job that provided them with their course. The motivation to start with mental training was overall to develop further as a person and that they noticed a progression when practising mental/life skill.

Current Situation with Using Mental/Life Skills

Current demands at work. Overall the current depression was perceived as a challenge as well as to inspire their co-workers. Generally the participants did perceive tough situations as a challenge rather then as a demand. One of the participants felt it was challenging that her partner was not there for a longer period which meant that she had no one to lean against. Employee C is a good example of how not to see things as a demand but as a challenge:

Since we are going to dismiss a lot of people at the moment, but I have the attitude that this is interesting, I am actually going to learn how to handle dismissals and get that experience. It is going to be an exercise for me. I get to learn something new (Employee C).

Mental/life skills currently needed at work. The mental/life skills the participants perceived they needed at work were primary how to influence their co-workers in a positive direction as well as having a positive attitude to work. Other mental/life skills that were mentioned were goal images, reaching harmony and ability to see things in a broader perspective. All of the participants perceived that having a positive way of thinking was very

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important and two of them even mentioned trying to avoid negative news on the television as a way of staying positive. Employee B described it like this: “The calm, the harmony, to look away from everything realistic, everything negative, because you do not need that, it is a lot easier to work in a positive way when you call clients”. “I need to incorporate a right way of thinking and to think positive in a way that I can implement and convey it to my co-workers” (Employee A).

**Practice of mental/ life skills.** The mental/ life skills that the participants generally practiced were goal images, to have a mental picture of a goal and to work towards that goal. Relaxation was also something they practised although there were some individual differences. Skills such as reframing (i.e. to see solutions instead of problems) and to enhance self-esteem were also examples of practiced skills. Again the importance of giving relevant and positive feedback to co-workers was mentioned. Quotation from employee C: “If you have a goal image and think about that one repeatedly when you feel safe everything around you has a tendency to occur in a way that the image becomes real”.

**Help with mental training.** All of the participants got some kind of help with their mental life skills training. It could be by a mental trainer or by social support from friends or colleagues. Employee A had a mental coach which was one of the employees at the company. They met each other to start with once a week and later once a month to discuss the passed month and to put up new goals. Employee B still had private consultation with a mental trainer every month. Employee C had a social network, six managers that he met during the course that kept on seeing each other every second month to discuss about life and to do a sport activity together.

**Time spent on practice, when.** As mentioned before all of the participants saw mental/ life skills training as something to incorporate in the everyday life and that they tried to practice regularly. The participants did not really see mental/ life skills training as a training session but more as a way of thinking that is practised every time it is used. Mental/ life skills were used in all kinds of setting, at work, in sports and in the family life. Employee B used Unestål’s relaxation exercise everyday before going to sleep.

**Wish to improve in mental training.** The participants generally wanted to improve everything regarding mental/ life skills although some would have liked to be able to improve their ability to relax and some would have liked to be able to feel more energised. With that it is not said that the first one excludes the other. Employee B also worked with not being too nice since she perceived that it sometimes became an issue for her.

**Perceived Effects of Mental/ Life Skills**

**The way mental training has been beneficial at work.** The participants stated that their subordinates perceived them as more motivating managers. The participants also perceived that they had improved their relations to their subordinates. Other results that were mentioned by the participants were greater self-esteem and self-confidence, more creativity and the courage to take decisions according to personal goals. Employee B said: “I have got a better, much better connection with our subordinates”.

**The way mental training has been beneficial in other spheres of life.** The participants mentioned their relations with their children as a positive outcome of mental/ life skills training when it came to other spheres of their life. The feeling of being more harmonious and less stressed was also mentioned as well as being more positive, an improved
communication in the family. One of the employees became very athletic since he started with mental/ life skills and felt that the skills had helped him progressing in his sport. Employee A mentioned the improved relation to his children: “At home there was always a hassle to get the children ready to school but that goes without any problems now” Employee B felt much more relaxed and stated: “If I hadn’t had my relaxation CD’s I would have been burned out by now”.

The way mental training has been beneficial for the company. All of the participants reported that mental/ life skills training had been economically beneficial for the company. The participants stated that the effectiveness had increased and that their subordinates had developed. Other positive results were also mentioned like improvement in selling technique and the way the clients were treated. By one employee it was seen as the best investment the company had ever made. Quotation from employee C: “My co-workers have grown like flowers because I believe in them and I see something good and possibilities in every person”.

Views on Mental/ Life Skills Training Among Colleagues at Work

The use of mental training among colleagues. On this point there have been some contradictory answers from the participants. All of the participants had colleagues that had been in contact with mental training in connection with an education at the company or similar activities. Although the actual use of mental/ life skills among colleagues was quite limited. In one occasion the whole company, with a big number of employees, was sent to different mental training courses. In another case only managers got the opportunity to take a course although the subordinates had the opportunity to take another shorter course. In the third case the subordinates had got a little introduction in mental/ life skills through another education at work.

Obstacles for mental training. The participants showed individual differences in this question. The two main points here were that there were no obstacles or that lack of knowledge was an obstacle. Other obstacles that were mentioned were lack of interest and that it can take some time to understand certain aspects of mental/ life skills. Traditional views at the company were also mentioned as a barrier. This was explained like this by employee A: “With a big traditional company you do as it has always been done and then there is no change”.

Interest of colleagues to use mental training. There was no unanimity among the answers in this question. One participants mentioned interest of colleagues to get the opportunity to take courses in the subject. The other participants were unsure about the interest of using mental/ life skills among colleagues.

Discussion about using mental training with others at the company. One of the participants used a lot of mental/ life skills with the employees and tried to teach them a little bit about it. The other participants did not actively try to influence their colleagues. Employee B thinks the best it to show that it works by being a good example whereas employee C more actively tried to teach his employees. “I start to train with the ones that have gone the winning co-workers course” (Employee C).
Opinions about Sport Psychology Consultants Working in Business

Awareness of sport psychology consultants working in business. The participants had limited knowledge about sport psychology consultants working in business. Employee A did not want to make a difference between sport psychology consultants and mental coaches. Employee B thought there is a lot of focus on sports and selling but that there should be more focus on other aspects too. Employee B also thought that mental/ life skills should be used in all kinds of areas, especially in schools. Employee C had not heard that much about it but thought it was great since there are many connections between sports and mental/ life skills.

Potential value of using sport psychology consultant. The participants were very positive towards sport psychology consultants working in business. The participants thought it could be valuable for companies and improve the effectiveness at companies. The participants thought that the employees are valuable resources for companies and that it is worth the money to invest in the staff. One of the participants thought that the methods from sport psychology needed to be adjusted towards business settings to get the best possible effect. The importance of having a competent consultant was also mentioned. Employee C was very positive and stated as follows: “Definitely, there is so much knowledge within sports, you can train managers to do things differently” Whereas Employee A looked at it this way:

There are probably many similarities but it probably takes adjustment and furthermore research and development in the area. You can’t just use what you learn from sports. You probably have to adjust it to get the best possible effect.

 Consultants

The results of the group of consultants are structured according to the categories that were used in the group profile. The categories are as follows: shift between consulting in sport and business, working in business compared to sports, perceived barriers and coping and benefits and acceptance of sport psychology consultants in business. Under every category several themes are used to further structure the results.

Shift Between Consulting in Sport and Business

Reason for the shift. It should be mentioned that none of the consultants have actually made a complete shift from one area to another. All three consultants worked or had worked simultaneously with sports and business clients. The reason for starting to work in a new area (sports or business) was mostly due to a request from a client. Consultant A mentioned that money was the reason for the shift, that there is not enough money to work exclusively in sports. The other consultants also mentioned the lack of money in sports even if that was not the main reason for making the shift. Especially consultant C also stated that it is probably not possible as a new sport psychology consultant to work only with sports. Although consultant C mentioned that there could be enough money to work with sports when working with the really big associations like “Allsvenskan”, the premier division of the Swedish football league. Consultant A and consultant C also stated that they preferred to work with athletes. Consultant A and consultant C were sport psychology consultants from the start whereas consultant B was a registered psychologist.
Experience of the shift. There were quite some big individual differences on this question. Consultant B and consultant C mentioned several times during the interview and on this question that they perceived it as very similar to work with employees and athletes. They stated that they used pretty much the same methods for both groups and they did not find the shift from one area to the other difficult. Consultant A on the other hand mentioned several times that there was a big difference between working in sports and in business. Consultant A experienced the shift from sports to business to be difficult. All of the consultants had an education in cognitive behavioural therapy and other complements to a sport psychology education which they used in their work. Consultant A and consultant C perceived it as important to have a broader base to stand on and to complement their sport psychology education with other educations and experiences. One quotation from consultant A and one from consultant C could demonstrate the different opinions: “You can hold a lecture from sport psychology for a company one or two times but to work with a company you have to have some kind of background in work psychology.” (Consultant A). “The main part is about developing people further, if you look at human resource literature, human development in groups or as individual is the same as in sport psychology. It has just a different package.” (Consultant C).

Working in Business Compared to Sports

Getting in contact with clients. The consultants did not find that it varied between sports or business how they got in touch with their clients. The consultants got in touch with new clients through previous contacts. By doing a good job at one place or with one client the word spread to others.

Employees wish to develop mental/ life skills. A lot of different areas of development were mentioned but three main areas were formulated: to work more efficiently, improving performances in different areas and how to get balance in life. To work more efficiently was about time management at work and how to get things done. To improve performances could be about everything, to improve performance at work but also about being a good family man or woman. Balance in life was about being able to find time and prioritise work, family or social life and personal time. A lot of other mental/ life skills were mentioned too, for instance: how to handle conflicts or criticism, stress management, communication and efficient leadership. Consultant B formulated it like this: “Managers that want to get better at their jobs but at the same time having a good family life”.

Athletes wish to develop mental/ life skills. The results on this topic were much more similar to each other than the view on what employees wanted to develop. The consultants perceived that athletes first of all wanted to develop goal setting, or rather, how to reach their goals. Second athletes wanted to perform better. The consultants agreed on that athletes in general had clearer and more specific goals than employees. According to consultant B it would be beneficial for companies to have clearer and more specific goals as they have in sports. Consultant C mentioned that it is also clearer in sports what is to be expected from the athletes and that unfortunately that was not the case at workplaces.

Experienced needs – similarities. The results showed that the similarities between the needs of athletes and employees were as follows: athletes and employees wanted to improve their performances, they needed acknowledgement, they wanted to learn more about themselves and develop as a person. The consultants did not perceive it to be big differences between athletes and employees. “The similarities are that everyone wants to learn
more about themselves, develop and improve their performances in different contexts” (Consultant C).

Experienced needs – differences. The perceived needs of the athletes were to get their basics right. Since their performance in sports is so important for them it is vital that they get enough sleep, eat right and have a life outside of sports, something a lot of athletes seemed to forget. For employees it was more about recognising that they had needs and what those needs could be. Often the needs were about having more time just for themselves and the opportunity to do something fun. The answers of the consultants differed a bit from each other on this topic. Other needs that were mentioned were more towards the athletes’ performances and the athletes’ needs to be able to handle criticism and the media. Generally the consultants did not perceive the needs to differ a lot between employees and athletes. “The difference is only that they need acknowledgement on different things” (Consultant A).

Experienced demands – similarities. According to the results both employees and athletes put very high demands on themselves. Consultant A pointed out that especially top-level managers and women in general had the same kind of pressure on themselves as athletes. Consultant A also stated that younger women in their career connected performance to self-esteem the same way as athletes did. According to consultant A this was not the case for other employees. The other consultant did not perceive it to be any differences between employees and athletes.

Experienced demands – differences. Consultant A thought that athletes put higher demands on themselves and that they to a higher degree connected performance with self esteem. Consultant B also mentioned that for athletes the importance lay in winning and being best. Consultant C though that even if employees also put high demands on themselves to perform well business life was more about relations then sports.

Theoretical framework used. The consultants did not perceive it to be a difference between employees and athletes in terms of what theoretical framework that was used. All of the consultants emphasized the importance of the relation between academic knowledge and the art of consultancy when working with clients. The consultants perceived theoretical framework as an important base to have but as important was also to find the right way to handle every unique situation. The consultants all used a variety of different theoretical framework such as: cognitive behavioural therapy, general psychological theories, psychodynamic theories and specific theories from sport psychology. Consultant B mentioned that he used more cognitive theory with athletes but otherwise no real differences were found. Employee C explained his work like this: “It is a handicraft, you have to be good at that part too, not only the academic knowledge”.

Professional strategies/techniques/tools used. Again the consultants did not perceive it to be any differences how they worked with employees and with athletes. The consultants worked with all kinds of tools from different theories depending on each individual case. Consultant B had a specific strategy he more or less always used with his clients. Consultant B started to discuss the profession of the client, in sports or in business and then looked at other areas in life. According to consultant B it was very important to have balance between work, social life and the individual him- or herself. Consultant B worked a lot with helping his client to find balance in life, his strategy was that: “… if you have a good life you become a good manager, if you have a good life you become a good athlete”. It should also be mentioned that consultant B was very concerned about that he and his client agreed on what needed to be worked with in the client’s life. Later in the process consultant B
used all kinds of tools. Consultant A describes his work like this: “The goal can be the same but the way to get there can look different”.

**Organisation of your services to employees.** There were some differences between the consultants how they organised their services. Consultant A worked as an individual consultant when working with athletes but as an educator when working with employees. The reason for this division was that it had developed that way but also because he perceived that he had a higher credibility as an individual consultant when working with athletes. Consultant A felt that he was too young and did not have enough experience from life to be able to consult older managers about how they should live their lives. Consultant A felt that he had a higher credibility as an educator or as a group consultant when it came to business settings. Consultant B worked as an individual consultant with both employees and athletes, Consultant B had previously worked as an educator at companies, worked with organisations and groups but worked for the moment only with individual consultations. Consultant C worked as an individual consultant in sports and in business but held also at times lectures for companies or worked with the whole organisation. Consultant C had more and more chosen to only work in sports because he perceived it as more fun.

**Perceived Barriers and Coping**

**Barriers to start with mental life/ skills training.** Barriers that were mentioned were mostly that people hesitate to seek help from others. People in general think that they can handle potential issues on their own or that it could be handled within the company. Other barriers were money, maybe the company prioritised spending money on more material investments. Old prejudices about psychology were also mentioned, such as the belief that there has to be something wrong with a person to go to a psychologist. The prejudices were also mentioned to become fewer. Other barriers that were mentioned were also lack of time, lack of support from managers and misbelieve against the coaching conception. That a lot of people worked as a coach without an adequate education which created misbelieves against people calling themselves coaches. Quotation from consultant B: “In our culture we are not used to ask for help”.

**To overcome barriers.** The best way to overcome barriers was to do a good job when working. To always offer good quality services, to give people a good experience when meeting with a consultant. Also if a person had heard positive references about the consultant before coming to the consultant the person already had a positive attitude and it was a lot easier to get good results. It became a self-fulfilling prophecy. Other ways to overcome barriers could be to show how it could be economically beneficial for a company, to create trust and to have humour when working with clients. It was again mentioned the importance of being able to translate theoretical knowledge to practice and that the development was already going the right way. The barriers were becoming fewer.

**Benefits and acceptance of Sport Psychology Consultants Working in Business**

**The benefits of sports psychology consultants in the business world.** Mostly mentioned was the way sport psychology was working with goal setting. Also mentioned was the clarity and the structure from sport psychology that would have been useful to apply in business settings. Consultant A was more critical against sport psychology in business setting and thought that sport psychology could be used in certain smaller areas in business. Consultant A also thought that to work in sports and business it is important to have knowledge about both sides and that a sport psychology consultant should be working
How to increase the acceptance of sport psychology consultants in business. To show how sport psychology works was perceived as the best way to increase the acceptance for sport psychology consultants in business. Advertising and to give students the opportunity to get out to companies to learn and to talk about sport psychology was also mentioned. Consultant A thought that sport psychology consultants should be accepted in business settings as long as they talked about sport psychology aspects. Other ways of increased acceptance was to show that there is a lot of competence in the area and to get a broader base. To get an understanding for traditional psychology. Consultant C put it like this: “Finding the basic understanding for what it is about, that it is easy and that it works”. Whereas Consultant B gave this advice: “The companies do not know about sport psychology, you have to go out and tell them about it”.

Discussion

Summary of Results

The results were structured in two parts according to the objectives of the study: (1) to examine employees' experiences in using mental/life skills and (2) to examine sport psychology consultants' experiences in teaching mental/life skills to employees in business settings. The first group was called employees and the second consultants.

What generally can be said about the results of the first group, the employees, is that there were many similarities. Naturally there were some individual differences but overall there was unanimity in many questions. It is probable that some of the individual differences were due to the difference in time practiced mental/ life skills. Employee A had only practiced mental/ life skills for a couple of months whereas employee B and employee C had practiced mental/ life skills for four to five years. It is also noticeable that the way to practice mental/life skills is very individual and depends on the special needs of every person. It is therefore to be expected that the answers would differ a bit depending on the participant. To summaries the results the employees were overall very positive towards mental/ life skills training. The employees perceived that mental/ life skills had been beneficial for them in their private life, at their workplace and for the company they worked for. The way it had been beneficial was that the employees perceived that they had obtained a better relation with there co-workers, improved their self-esteem and improved their relation with their children. The employees also perceived mental/ life skills to have been economically beneficial for the company due to increased effectiveness and development among other employees. The employees were mostly unsure about their colleagues’ interest in mental life skills. They perceived that the colleagues were positive towards work related courses which included mental/ life skills but that the colleagues did not actively seek knowledge on the topic. The employees had limited knowledge about sport psychology consultants but were generally positive towards the idea of using sport psychology consultants in business settings.

In the consultant group there was unanimity in many questions but there were also at times big differences. Two consultants participating in the study had very similar opinions but the third one had quite different views. The main differences were that two consultants were very positive towards using sport psychology in business whereas the third was quite critical. The third consultant thought that there were big differences between working in sports and
working in business, the two other consultants thought it to be more or less the same. It is possible that these diverse views were due to that the consultants worked quite differently. The consultant with a contrary opinion worked as an educator and held lectures at companies whereas the other two worked as individual consultants. It is probable that there are many similarities between employees and athletes at an individual level but when working with groups or when holding lectures it is likely that the content needs to be quite different. The general conclusion from the results is that there seems to be many similarities between working in sports and working in business settings and that consultants probably could use mental/ life skills training in a similar way with employees as with athletes. Although it should be mentioned that it is almost certainly a big advantage to have a broader base of experience or complementally educations to stand on beside of sport psychology. Some barriers that exist for sport psychology consultants to work in business were mentioned such as: the companies perceive that they can handle their own problems, lack of money, lack of time and prejudices about sport psychology. To handle these barriers consultants should, according to the results, always deliver high-quality services, show how sport psychology works and the Universities should broaden the knowledge about sport psychology through advertising.

Results in Relation to Previous Studies

Employees

The results of the employees are discussed in relation to the literature that was presented in the introduction and structured in three parts: potential benefits of mental/ life skills, implementation of mental/ life skills and opinions on sport psychology consultants in business.

Potential benefits of mental/ life skills. To keep evolving as a person and to avoid stagnation it is important to seek challenges and to learn new things (Hendry & Kloep, 2002). When a person seeks challenges and handles them efficiently, the person will add new skills and by that new resources to the resource pool. The results indicated that the employees generally started with mental/ life skills because they wanted to develop their personalities further. This is directly linked to Hendry’s and Kloep’s theory. By starting to use mental/ life skills the employees potentially got the chance to gain new resources, to meet the everyday challenges more efficiently and to develop as a person. The employees also mentioned that when they started with mental/ life skills they noticed that they progressed and the progress motivated them further. In other words, they increased there amount of resources which made them more positive towards new challenges. This is a very applicable theory in many areas of life and can be seen as a useful framework for studying human development in sport and other psychology domain. The Life development intervention, (LDI), by Danish et al., (1993) emphasizes on personal growth and the goal is to enhance personal competence. To become competent a person must attain interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. A person must be able to communicate with other people in different situations and to develop their own psychological skills. Danish et al., (1992) also emphasize the transferability of skills, that what is learnt in one domain could equally be used under other circumstances. This would imply that new resources could be gained quicker if already acquired skills easily could be used in new situations. It could, however, in some settings be necessary to acquire new skills that are suited for that particular setting. It could therefore be problematic to assume that all skills can be transferable. It is
good to keep in mind that every situation is unique, the same with people. Already learnt skills will certainly be helpful in new situations but should probably not be totally relied on.

The LDI also emphasizes on goal setting which is seen as a way of empowerment. According to the LDI goal setting is a way to take control over the future and to respond to the environment rather than to adjust to it. Many of the finding of the present study could be direct related to the LDI. The employees used a big amount of goal setting and they were, probably as a consequence of their goal setting work, very skilled at seeing potential demands as challenges and to look for solutions instead of problems. The employees also mentioned communication, to influence their co-workers in a positive direction, as a skill they wanted to improve but also as a skill they felt they had already developed further. Unestål (1996) also mentioned goal setting as a way of being able to control our mental processes. Goal-images, as the employees called it, came originally from Unestahl (Johansson & Unestål, 2006) and means to make a mental picture of a goal in order to learn goal setting and commitment to a goal. Without being aware of it the employees seem to have used Unesthål’s theories and the LDI in order to stick to their goals and to be able to feel more in control of their lives. By using the LDI and by reaching new goals more resources would also be gained which would in turn give better chances to reach new and higher goals.

According to Lloyd and Foster (2006) healthy and high performing workplaces can be created by using sport psychology. Especially five techniques used in mental/ life skills training would be beneficial: (1) mental imagery; (2) performance routines; (3) positive self talk; (4) self regulation; (5) concentration techniques (Foster, 2001; ref in Lloyd & Foster, 2006). Especially the first, the third and the forth technique were used by the employees and perceived to be very beneficial. The first technique was specially used by one of the employees who used goal images and stated that it gave him the courage he needed to take decisions according to his goals. All of the employees were very optimistic and as stated before tried to use a positive explanatory style and to focus on the solutions instead of the problems. The employees also tried to control their own energetic state, at some occasions to become more relaxed or at other times to become more energised. The employees were very positive towards mental/ life skills and perceived it to be very helpful in various aspects of life. The employees did not use all of the five techniques recommended by Lloyd and Foster (2006) but it is probable that they would experience even more advantages at work if they did.

One technique that the employees specially used was reframing, that is they tried to see the positive sides of problems and to look away from the negative aspects. This can be positive since the employees stated that they felt happier and worried less. It should however be remembered that it can also at some points be problematic not to see life how it actually is. When a person live in a fantasy world that obviously starts to cause problems instead of solving them. At some occasions in life it is also important to face negative things that happen. It is almost certainly not healthy to avoid every negative emotion. Negative emotions have to be dealt with just as positive once. To be able to see the solutions instead of the problems is doubtless something positive but it is important not to loose contact with reality on the way.

Several studies have shown that mental/ life skills training can be stress reducing (Boudareene et al., 2002; Haraldsson et al., 2005; Johansson & Unestål, 2006). Particularly one of the employees used mental/ life skills as a way to reduce stress and to feel more relaxed. Some of the techniques that were used was to listen to relaxation CD:s, to try to see things in a bigger perspective and not being stressed up by things that can not be changed. The employee stated that she would probably have been burned out if she had not learnt how to relax. Findings that
confirm that mental/ life skills could be stress reducing should be of major interest since stress is such an important issue in the Western community (Söderfjell, 2001). Even though mental/ life skills might not be the solution to all the problems with stress. Simply to have the time to relax can stress many people and it can be hard to find a way to perceive relaxation as pleasant instead of just one more thing to do. To get the best stress reducing effect the solution is probably to use all the aspects of mental/ life skills such as time management, goal setting, prioritising, relaxation et cetera. If those skills are practiced it should potentially result in additional personal time. That time could for instance be used to relaxation, physical activities or time with the family.

**Implementation of mental/ life skills.** According to Weinberg and Williams (2005) there is a quite strict schedule how to learn a new mental skill. Every practise session should take between 15 – 30 minutes with a frequency of three to five times a week. The employees did not practiced mental/ life skills in a way that resembled Weinberg’s and William’s suggestions. The employees preferred to actively use the way of thinking according to mental/ life skills at different situations in their lives. This is interesting since mental/ life skills have been seen in sport psychology as skills that need to be practised in a certain way. However the results indicate that there is a possibility that it might be enough to have a consciousness about different actions during the day and to relate them to mental/ life skills. Although it should be mentioned that Weinberg and Williams (2005) also emphasized the importance of integrating the practice of mental skills to the situations when they are needed. Nevertheless it is possible that there are differences between practising mental/ life skills in sport and in other spheres of life. During a competition the athlete probably do not have the time to make rational decisions, a lot of things need to be automatic. Therefore mental skills need to be practiced in advance. In the everyday life mental/ life skills can be used, for instance, in the decision making and to make us conscious of the influence of our thoughts and actions. It is for that reason probable that mental/ life skills also can be practised through consciousness about our actions instead of through training sessions.

Two other studies about the implementation of mental/ life skills were presented in the introduction (Poczwardowski et al., 1998; Gould et al., 2006). Both called attention to the relationship between the consultant and the client. Important factors that were mentioned were to establish trust and credibility and the consultant’s relationship skills. It was also stated that to become a skilled consultant it takes a lot of time and commitment. The answers of the employees further illustrate the importance of having a trustworthy consultant in order to efficiently acquire new mental/ life skills. The employees all learnt mental/ life skills trough a course and two of them were after four and five years still in regular contact with their consultant. The third employee was planning to attend to more courses over the coming months and was in regular contact with a mental coach that was a colleague at the company. In either case it seems that to have support from a consultant or an outsider is a successful concept in order to succeed in the implementation of mental/ life skills. This founding however leads to the question if it is necessary to have a consultant to be able to use mental/ life skills successfully. Are the skills to hard to implement without help? If that is the case, this would be an obvious problem with the skills. Not every person has the possibilities to employ a consultant. Although, it is very likely that these results are due to the way the informants were found (through a mental trainer) and not because of the necessity of having a personal consultant.

Mental training started in sports but has according to Unestål (Unestål, 2004; ref in Johansson & Unestål, 2006) been used in school education, business, public administration, health and clinical areas, personal development and leadership development. If this is taken
into consideration mental/ life skills should be something broadly used and acknowledged. Unfortunately the knowledge among the ones that have not been introduced to mental/ life skills seems to be quite poor. According to the present study the interest among other colleagues seemed quite limited. Although there seemed to be a big interest to attend to mental/ life skills courses there did not seem to be an interest to try to acquire the knowledge on their own. One of the employees tried to actively teach the employees more about mental/ life skills. This is in accordance to the way Unestål works with companies. Unestål works with educating the managers so that they can spread the knowledge among the colleagues. The conclusion remains however that in spite of an interest to take courses in mental life skills none of the colleagues seemed interested to gain the knowledge on their own. This could again be due to that mental/ life skills potentially could be perceived as hard to implement without additional help or support. It should also be mentioned that mental/ life skills will probably have no impact for a company if the manager, that is due to teach the subordinates, is not able to actually convey the skills properly.

Opinions on sport psychology consultants in business. According to Lloyd and Foster (2006) counselling psychologist are ideally suited to create healthy and high-performing workplaces. The employees in the study did have poor knowledge about sport consultants working in business but were positive towards the idea. The employees thought that sport psychology consultants would be able to increase the effectiveness at companies and that knowledge from sports could be used in business settings. Although one employee felt there might be some adjustments needed. It is on the other hand quite surprising that the employees were so positive towards using a sport psychology consultant considering that they had such limited knowledge about what a sport psychology consultant did. Probably they used the knowledge and the attitude they had towards mental/ life skills and made a picture of how they perceived a sport psychology consultant. Nevertheless this can have positive outcomes: since mental/ life skills are perceived as something very positive the positive emotions will be transferred towards sport psychology consultants. As one of the consultants mentioned in the study: “if a client has a positive attitude towards a consultant already before meeting the consultant it will be much easier to reach good results”. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

One of the employees mentioned that mental/ life skills should also be used in schools so that children could benefit from the knowledge already from an early age. This is actually already a reality in some places, although not always effectively as in the study by Hahn et al., (2002). Maybe a solution could be to use sport psychology consultants even in schools to teach mental/ life skills? As not being part of the teaching staff the sport psychology consultant would not have to take time from other lessons and would probably have more time to implement a whole mental/ life skills program correctly. This would obviously mean an extra cost for the schools but could potentially be beneficial in terms of calmer and more effective students.

Consultants

The discussion according to results of the consultants and the introduction is presented in three parts; working in business compared to sports and acceptance of sport psychology consultants working in business and potential value of sport psychology consultants working in business.

Working in business compared to sports. It is common among sport psychology consultant to work with the development of athletes not only in sports but in all areas of life (Gould et al., 2006) For instance, Henschen (2001) emphasizes on the importance of using a
holistic perspective when working with athletes. The social, the intellectual, the performance
and the spiritual part are four equally important aspects when working with a client. It is
therefore not surprising that all three consultants mentioned that they used the same methods
when working with employees and with athletes. This is understandable since a consultant is
working to develop the individual. One individual that wants to develop might not differ that
much from another individual that is looking for development. There are probably big
differences but at some times it can be presumed that the differences between diverse
individuals are bigger then the difference between an athlete and an employee.

In order to create a peak performance in sports a multitude of different factors need to
simultaneously influence the athlete in a positive way (Hardy et al., 1996). Factors that could
influence the athlete’s ability to achieve a peak performance are personality, dispositions,
attributes psychological skills, coping strategies and the ideal performance. However, there
are also factors that are not under the athlete’s precise control that influence the performance
such as the physical, social, psychological and organisational environment around the athlete.
In other words, a lot of things need to work together to create a peak performance. The athlete
needs therefore to make all these factors to work the right way, or at least, handle them in a
positive and constructive way (Hardy et al., 1996). The ordinary life is in a way less obvious
then in sports, in sports it is very clear if a strategy works or not. However, it is as important
for an employee as for an athlete to know how to handle different factors and situations
correctly. According to one of the consultants in the study, the most important was often to
make sure that the basics were handled correctly and that a person had balance in life. The
basics in life were referred to as eating right, sleeping right and to have social support.
Balance in life was explained as making sure there was balance between time and engagement
spent on work/sports, family and the self. The consultant meant that if you had a good life you
became a good manager and if you had a good life you became a good athlete. This statement
can also be related to Bohem and Lyubomirsky’s (2008) article. According to cross-sectional,
longitudinal and experimental studies happiness leads to better jobs, higher incomes,
appreciation from colleagues and better evaluations from superiors. It is not as could be
assumed that better job leads to happiness but the opposite (Bohem & Lyubomirsky, 2008).
Precisely as the employee in the present study suggested. In other words this indicates that in
various ways taking care of oneself is the best investment a person could ever make. Mental/
life skills could potentially be a part of that investment and sport psychology consultants
could almost certainly be helpful in order to make it possible.

Weinberg and Williams (2005) claimed that the successfullness of mental/ life skills depend
on the consultants understanding for how to implement an effective intervention. The
intervention should be done in an individualised, systematic manner over time and by using a
variety of different techniques. Overall the results from the consultants indicated that working
in business is not very different from working in sports. Especially the ways the consultants
worked with athletes and with employees were very similar. The strategies and the theoretical
framework the consultants used depended on the individual and are independent on the
profession of the clients which can be related to Weinberg’s and Williams’ (2005) directives.
One consultant also stated that there is a need to understand traditional psychology and to
have a therapeutic understanding when working both in business and in sports. According to
Weinberg and Gould (2006) psychological skills training, which is often used in sport
psychology, originally came from mainstream psychology like cognitive theory and behaviour
modification. This implicates that sport psychology is not very far from traditional
psychology. As mentioned, all of the consultants stated that it was essential, or at least
beneficial to have a cognitive behavioural therapy education or other additional educations or
experiences in order to work as a consultant. The question is, is it enough to have a sport
psychology education if you wish to work as a consultant, in business and in sport? Maybe not. On the other hand most students, especially in Sweden have additional experiences from other jobs or educations when finishing a degree. Plus, if you are interested in a subject, almost certainly you try to broaden your knowledge. Therefore the answer is probably that a sport psychology education is a very good start. Because out of interest and out of the wish of doing a good job more knowledge, experiences and educations will most likely be acquired during the way. This was exactly the case for the consultants in the study. There is probably no education that is ever going to cover everything there is to know about a job but most times an education is giving us a good base to start from.

Acceptance of sport psychology consultants working in business. According to Algotsson et al., (2006) the knowledge about how to use mental skills in order to improve performance at work is limited even if there is a big need for it. Lack of knowledge was also a barrier to start with mental/ life skills that was mentioned among the consultants. The consultants mentioned for instance prejudices and the belief that a person should handle their own problems as barriers which both can be translated to lack of knowledge. To overcome barriers the results in the present study indicated that the best way was to deliver high quality services and to give good experiences. As mentioned by Danish et al., (1992) the importance when giving an intervention is that the consultant understands the person that receives the intervention. The same statement was made by one of the consultants. The consultants agreed on the importance of being professional and to show how sport psychology works in order to overcome barriers. A positive result was however that the consultants perceived the barriers as becoming fewer.

Potential value of sport psychology consultants working in business. As mentioned earlier Lloyd and Foster (2006) were very optimistic about using sport psychology consultants in business. Consultants could for instance help the organisation to create a more productive workforce (Lloyd & Atella, 2000; ref in Lloyd & Foster, 2006). When the consultants in the study mentioned potential benefits from using sport consultants in business it was primary goal setting but other potential benefits were also mentioned such as: competence development, get a better structure and prioritising. As well as helping the companies to outline the developmental process from start until end. These are all examples of factors that would potentially lead to a more productive workforce. It should also be mentioned that increased effectiveness was the answer that the employees gave on the same question. It is therefore a natural conclusion that using sport psychology consultants would most likely lead to a more productive workforce and as a result economical benefits for companies. This is all very positive and would probably be beneficial to be used in many more companies. Although one question to be asked is why sport psychology? Would not consultants from health, work or traditional psychology be able to deliver the same services with the same benefits as sport psychology consultants? Potentially, yes, because they would probably do more or less the same job. As one consultant stated during the interview, work psychology and sport psychology is pretty much the same thing in different packages. The reason though that it might be more advantageous to use a sport psychology consultant in some cases is the goal-orientated focus. To work towards a goal and to find the best way to get there is a philosophy that delivers concrete results. Sport psychology is also more focused towards performance enhancement, which is also a big focus within business settings. Therefore the philosophy of sport psychology is actually most likely to be especially appreciated in the business world.
Implications

The results of the present study indicate that mental/life skills could be very beneficial for employees to use at work and in their private life. According to the results it is also almost certainly beneficial for companies to invest money in educating their employees in mental life/ skills. It could therefore be useful for companies to take these results into account. If companies invest in developing their employees they would probably benefit economically and create a more positive atmosphere at the workplace. With a more positive atmosphere at a workplace the chance of getting satisfied and healthy staff would most likely increase. There are many proves that it can be beneficial for companies to invest money in health enhancing methods taking for instance Golasweski’s et al., (1990) study into account. Some of the results of the present study also indicate that the employees felt more relaxed and less stressed when using mental/life skills, this could imply a reduced cost not only for companies but also for the whole community. As mentioned earlier stress is, according to Söderfjell (2001), probably the biggest issue for the society in the Western countries.

The results also indicate that sport psychology consultants might successfully work in business settings. The consultants can help employees to develop, to become more efficient in their work and to obtain a greater life quality outside of work. These results could be used in sport psychology educations as a source of information about alternative job opportunities. For instance, the results could be used in an applied sport psychology course, to show the students the possibilities but also the potential barriers with sport psychology consultants in business. The study could also be used when planning new educations or restructuring old ones. The results point towards that a broader basis with cognitive behavioural therapy and work psychology would be beneficial for an applied sport psychology education. It would most certainly be valuable for sport psychology consultants to have a broad understanding of psychology whether they work with athletes or with employees.

The results also illustrate that there is a pretty poor understanding of sport psychology in business settings. As one of the participants pointed out it would probably be most advantageous for future sport psychology consultants if a practical part was included in sport psychology educations, where the students got the chance to visit and work with different companies. It would in all probability be favourable for the students to get out to different workplaces and the companies would learn more about the potential benefits of using a sport psychology consultant.

Reflections on the Research Methodology

A qualitative design was used in the study. Mental/life skills are about human development, the way a person structure their impressions and thoughts and the way they are able to put different skills into practice. It is also about people’s needs to develop different skills according to the situation and their already existing recourses. In depth studies and interviews is therefore a useful tool to get a deeper understanding for how different people use different skills and if they experience them as useful or not.

As in most studies there are some advantages and some limitations with how the study was conducted. One limitation with the study is the number of people used in the study. Due to the size of the study and to limited resources six people took part in the study. Because of the objectives of the study the participants had to be divided in two groups which resulted in a number of three participants in each group. Out of three participants no general conclusions can be made. This study can only illustrate the experiences of the participants used in the
study. On the other hand the study has nevertheless given us more knowledge about the subject than before. The acquired knowledge from the essay can still be useful for practical use and as directions for further research on the subject. Other limitations with the participants were the age and gender distribution. Only one female took part in the study and there were a bit of an age difference between the youngest participant, 34 and the oldest 59.

The validity of the study was partly secured by constructing the interview guides according to the objectives. When the interview guides were constructed triangulation was made with a supervisor and the interview guides were adjusted several times to be as adequate as possible. Since the selection was made on accessibility it reduces the possibility of drawing general conclusions from the study but it increased the probability of finding participants with valuable information.

The data was collected through interviews which were all, except for one, conducted at the workplace of the participants. The participants were therefore in a familiar environment where they could feel safe and relaxed. The interviews took generally one hour and the participants had therefore a lot of time to formulate their opinions and experiences. One of the interviews took place through the telephone because of the participant’s location and due to limited resources. A telephone interview is a bit different from the other interviews and could lead to some variations in the results. For instance the participant might not feel as comfortable talking over the telephone as if meeting the interviewer in person. A conversation could also be more stressed over the telephone than in real life. Although it should be mentioned that very concrete and useful answers were collected from the particular interview.

The participants were informed about the ethical issues according to the American Psychological Association (2001). The participants should therefore felt safe to be open at the occasion of the interview. The interviewer showed interest in there statements and encourage them to be as informative as possible. There is always a risk when meeting with informants that the informants tell the interviewer what they think that the interviewer wants to hear (Mitchell & Jolley, 2001). This is a limitation which is difficult to restrict without having a control group. The interviewer tried to be as objective as possible when meeting the participants in order to reduce the informants’ bias. However, even if the interviewer tried to be objective the informant could probably guess the objectives and might have tried to give positive answers. The interviewer is not experienced in conducting interviews and since qualitative research is an art that is learnt by time this could have influenced the interviews.

Another limitation when conducting interviews and analysing results is the researcher’s bias (Mitchell & Jolley, 2001). Researcher’s bias signifies that the researcher unconsciously interprets the results in a way that would be beneficial for the interviewer and for the objectives of the study. To reduce researcher’s bias the interviews were recorded on tape and were then transcribed word by word. When the data was analysed both negative and positive arguments were perceived as important. Triangulation was also done between the author and a supervisor. In order to improve the quality of the analysed the triangulation could have been made with a third person. However, again due to limited resources this was not done. There was no purpose with the study other then interest for the topic. The author did not have anything to win on negative or positive results. Meaning there would not be a reason for directing the results in a certain direction which might have reduced the researcher’s bias.
Work is one of the most time-consuming activities people take part in during their lifetime. Little could be more important than to find ways how to be healthy, productive and happy at work. Research regarding mental/life skills at business settings, workplaces or enterprises is almost down to zero. The same regarding studies on sport psychology and business. Although the internet is full of mental training consultants offering their services to companies and enterprises, there are very few studies on its effectiveness. This study is an indication that mental/life skills are beneficial at business settings. The present study also shows that sport psychology consultants potentially could be valuable at workplaces. However, this study is just a first step on the way and no general conclusions can be made out of this study. More scientific research would be useful in order to improve and adjust the services provided to business but also to guarantee that the enterprises or the individuals get the services they pay for. As seen earlier, more research meeting rigor scientific standards is needed to be able to prove the effectiveness of different methods (Gardener & Moore, 2006). Regarding mental/life skills, longitudinal studies would be valuable. Such studies would show the potential effects of mental/life skills over time. Experimental studies could also be of interest. With experimental studies it could be explored if mental/life skills work with all kind of personalities and to what extent the effects of mental/life skills depend on the individual.

Additional studies on the potential effects of using mental/life skills training at business settings would be helpful. Another aspect of research would be to look at which methods of mental/life skills might be the most efficient and how they should be implemented. Is Uneståhl’s way to teach employees how to transfer mental training skills to the other employees at the company the most beneficial approach or are there other more advantageous ways? There is also a need for more studies on different groups of people. According to Weinberg and Williams (2005) more studies on mental skills training should be conducted on different skills (i.e. different sports) and age groups. For example, different sports and different work areas might need to develop different skills. Athletes who practise team sports certainly need to improve different skills than individual athletes. The same in business settings, managers probably need to develop different skills than their subordinates. As mentioned previously, one of the participants in the study wished that the schools would start with mental/life skills at an early age and preferably educate the parents as well. This is definitely realisable and would furthermore be an interesting topic of research. The whole area of mental/life skills at business settings and other spheres of life are quite unexplored so far. By starting with some research in the area other aspects will probably be discovered to be equally valuable topics of research. Our future society relies on a healthy and competent workforce. Additional research could be a help in creating that society.
References


Appendixes

Appendix 1

Anställdas upplevelse av mental/ life skills

Bakgrund
- Ålder
- Yrke
- Professionell karriär
- Atletisk bakgrund?
- Hur blev du introducerad till mental träning?
- Vad motiverade dig att börja med mental träning?
- Hur har du lärt dig att använda mental träning?
- Vilken slags hjälp har du haft?
- Hur länge har du tränat mentalt?
- Hur ofta?

Nuvarande situation
- Vad upplever du som mest krävande i jobbet just nu?
- Vilken mental (livs) färdighet upplever du att du behöver för tillfället i jobbet?
- Vilka mentala färdigheter tränar du?
- Får du någon hjälp med din mentala träning?
- Hur ofta träner du mentalt i nuläget?
- När? (på arbetstid, fritid)
- Vad skulle du vilja utveckla i din mentala träning? (vilka färdigheter)
- På vilket sätt har mental träning hjälpit dig tycker du?
- i arbetslivet?
- inom andra områden i livet?

Kollegor, idrottssykologer
- Använder dina kollegor sig av mental träning?
- Varför?
- Är dina kollegor intresserade av att använda mental träning?
- Har du diskuterat användning av mental träning med andra på företaget?
- Känner du till att många idrottspsykologer numera jobbar inom näringslivet med mental träning?
- Tror du att användningen av en idrottspsykolog skulle kunna vara värdefullt för företaget?
- På vilket sätt?
Psykologiska rådgivares jämförelser mellan idrott och företagsvärlden

**Bakgrund**

- Ålder? Utbildning? Yrke?
- Vilka erfarenheter har du från att arbeta inom idrottens?
- Vilka erfarenheter har du från att arbeta inom näringslivet?
- Hur bytte du mellan att jobba inom idrotts till att jobba inom företag (eller vice versa)?

**Att arbeta inom näringsvärlden jämfört med att jobba inom idrottens**

- Hur kommer anställda i kontakt med dig? Var vänlig och jämför med idrottare
- Vilka mentala färdigheter vill anställda generellt sätt utveckla? Var vänlig och jämför med idrottare
- Vilka skillnader har du upplevt mellan att arbeta med idrottsmän och anställda?
  - Angående krav som de upplever eller behov som de har
  - Angående teorier som du använder
  - Angående tekniker/strategier/verktyg som du använder dig av
  - Angående hur du administrerar dina tjänster
- Vilka generella hinder finns det för anställda att börja träna mentalt? Hur kan de här hinder förebyggas?
- Vad tror du att idrottspsykologer har att erbjuda näringslivet?
- Hur kan idrottspsykologer bli mer accepterade inom näringslivet?
Hej!

Det var jag som ringde angående mental träning inom företag.

Jag skriver som sagt just nu min C-uppsats om mental träning inom företag. Jag läser tredje året på idrottvetenskapligt program på Halmstad Högskola med inriktning på idrottspsykologi. Mitt mål med min C-uppsats är att undersöka de anställdas upplevelse av mental träning.

Min uppsats kommer att bestå av intervjuer med personal på olika företag som har använt sig av mental träning. Alla intervjuerna kommer sedan att sammanställas för att få fram ett resultat. Det är lite olika hur lång tid intervjuerna kommer att ta beroende på vad personen ifråga har att säga men jag skulle tro att det rör sig om 30 till 60 minuters intervju. Inga namn kommer att nämnas i uppsatsen, allt deltagande är frivilligt och kan avbrytas när som helst om intervjupersonen ångrar sig. Intervjuerna kommer att spelas in på band.

Jag tycker att det är jättekul att ni vill samarbeta med mig och naturligtvis får ni tillgång till uppsatsen att använda hur ni vill när den är färdig. Kan tänka att det kan vara intressant även för er att se vad mental träning kan ge för resultat.

Jag åker gärna ut till er för intervjuerna och är flexibel då det gäller tidpunkt men intervjuerna bör ske någon gång i slutet av oktober eller under november. Jag anpassar mig gärna efter vad som blir absolut enklast för er.

Med vänliga hälsningar

Alexandra Fürst
Mail: iv05alfu@student.hh.se
Tel: 0732 545853
Appendix 4

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- Hur gammal är du?
- Jag är nyss fyllda 40.
- Och ditt yrke?
- Jag är det man inom våran bit kallar för gruppcchef inom xxx, så det är gruppcchef.
- Hur kom du dit? Kan du berätta lite om din professionella karriär?
- Ja, jag är alltså, om man går tillbaka jag gick ut gymnasiet 87 och om man går tillbaka till den tiden så var det många, framför allt killar som gjorde lumpen, framför allt i Göteborg för det är ju där jag är uppvuxen så är det alltid så att banan på jobbet fick alla jobb på. Man började ju bygga den här xxx så jag började jobba i fabriken och bygga den hära, jobbade skift och byggde xxx. och då är det ju som det är och då tänkte jag att det är ju bra då gör jag det här innan lumpen. Så gör jag lumpen och sen efter lumpen så vet jag nog lite mer vad jag vill göra med mitt liv. Så jag kom in och gjorde lumpen 87 och låg i lumpen tio månader och kom tillbaka till xxx och kände väl att ja nu är det dags att göra någonting annat och jag kände väl att min gymnasiokompetens på ekonomi var väl en liten del, alla hade ju läst ekonomiskt och man ville ju börja göra någonting annat och då började jag ju läsa på handels en utbildning som heter ADB linjen som då var 60 hp poäng.
- ADB vad står det för?
- Administrativ data behandling. Så då tog jag tjänstledigt från xxx och började den här utbildningen. Och då fick man liksom lära sig grunderna i databehandling man fick lära sig att programmera och sådana här data och it utbildningar. Och den håll på i ett och halvt år och jag kände liksom det att jag vill inte tillbaka till xxx, jag vill ju fortsätta att läsa för man fick ju blodat tand och allt det här praktiska och studentlivet och jag hade ju lägenhet så då gick jag lite fördjupningskurser på chalmers och på informations, informatik hette nog den fakulteten så jag läste så att jag fick 110 poäng, fick jag totalt och kände väl att ja nu är jag färdigutbildad och nu får jag väl ett jobb med en gång, så jag gick tillbaka till min gamla arbetsplats xxx och sa liksom att jag vill börja jobba här och det var det året som man la ner produktionen på xxx man skulle bygga xxx så det var ju egentligen en helt ny modellserie och det här var ju egentligen förra om man säger lågkonjunkturen för då valde xxx att alla dom som var inom produktionen fick möjlighet att ingå i ett projekt med länssatsnamnden och då gick alltså länssatsnamnänden in och sa att jo men vi säkerställer att alla inom produktionen ska få en utbildning för då var det ju alltså många icke svenskar som kanske inte ens hade någon grundskola så då inom ett år som dom byggde om fabriken så fick dom alltså möjlighet att gå i skola och även jag då som precis hade kommit ut från universitetet och allting fick ju då möjlighet att gå i skolan vilket jag tyckte var lite konstigt men jag fick ju betalt och allting och fick igen, läsa engelska och svenska och matematik som jag hade…

- Så man fick inte välja då?
- Nej det var ett paket som man fick då va och då läste jag det och sen 94 när jag kom tillbaka då sökte jag ett jobb på xxx som skiftekniker eller system, alltså övervaka man jobbar med att övervaka maskinella larm, alltså allt som en dator sprutar ut och som kan bli fel hade vi jobb att övervaka det var ju min, mitt första jobb inom dator då va och det gjorde jag i två år och vi jobbade mycket skift och nätter och min kropp klarade inte av det då va så jag sökte mig till ett dagstidsjobb och kände väl under tiden att det här med teknik var väl inte så roligt utan jag ville jobba mer med människor. Och då har vi inom xxx någonting som heter vårbet me s mål och planeringssamtal som man har med sin chef och då går man igenom dom här målen
- Ja, jätte bra. Har du någon atletisk bakgrund?
- Nej, eller jo, egentligen när man tittar på den delen så när jag var liten så spelade jag ett tag badminton gjorde jag faktiskt en del men slutade med det faktiskt när jag började högstadiet så det var ju många år sedan.
- Så du har aldrig kommit i kontakt med mental träning inom idrotten?
- Nej, ingenting
- Hur blev du introducerad till mental träning då?
- Då var det så att när jag 2004 gick jag en utbildning på xxx som heter erfarna ledare, en ledarskapsutbildning som heter erfarna ledare med en mental tränare och han var den som höll utbildningen och började liksom prata mer med, jag förstod ju att jag jobbade med mentala bilder men när han började prata om det så kom den här aha upplevelsen ytterligare när han drog det här och målbilder och de här sakerna och det här blev grunden. Och det var efter det här som den utbildningen som vi bestämde att vi skulle fortsätta att träffas, vi är ett antal chefer en herr klubb kan man säga som bestämde att vi ska fortsätta och träffas och prata ledarskap och hjälpa varandra med att liksom dels prata om sådant som man inte vanligtvis gör med män och dels så dela med oss av våra erfarenheter och även då så började det här då med min atletisk grej kan man säga och jag var då i en period i mitt liv då precis fanns inte och det fanns ju inte ens på banan. Och då på det här 2004 det var ju tre tillfällen vi träffades varje gång vi träffades så sa han att varje gång vi träffas på min utbildning så måste vi ha med er löpargrejer för att varje gång så ska vi ut och springa. Så varje gång så var vi ju ute och sprang 2.5km och du vet att varje gång, man var ju helt förstörd men då så satte vi oss och började att sätta upp mål, vad ville vi med vår träning? Och då började vi ju egentligen med det här med måländringen då och på sommaren där 2004 sitter hemma hos en av de här kompisarna och helt plötsligt tar min mentala tränare fram liksom sin medalj, han har sprungit Stockholms maraton och tar fram sin medalj och säger vill ni känna på den här? Och alla ja det var ju liksom... Hur känns det att hålla en sådan här i handen? Jo, med det är ju häftigt tyckte vi. De var ju... Skulle ni vilja ha en sådan här medalj? Jaa, sade vi, det är ju klart att man skulle vilja ha det. Okej, hur mycket
- Så alla gick med på det här?
  - Det gjorde alla. Så samtidigt som det här då som jag fick den här utbildningen så gick min dotter igenom…hon är född med för kort ben så hon gick igenom en väldigt tuff benförlängning och den gick egentligen ut på att man gick in och bröt benet och satte upp en ställning på benet och går in och drar isär benet. Man expanderar, man låter det bli ett brott i benet men när det väl börjar liksom läka så drar man sönder benet så att man förlänger benet med fem cm.
  - 
  - Det låter väldigt smärtsamt
  - Ja så herregud om vi jobbar positivt med den här operationen och börjar jobba med målbilder så kan den här operationen bli någonting bra. Och jag och min fru försöker hela tiden återanvända den erfarenheten man har fått och det jag gjorde var att jag hela tiden försökte involvera min dotter Agnes när folk frågade runt operationen så låt jag det liksom hända jag sa att om ni har frågor om operationen så prata med min dotter Agnes hon är i och för sig sju år men hon kan liksom berätta det som är för vi valde att ha en väldigt öppen dialog om det här som skulle ske därå. Och många av dom här läkarna sa då att ni får vara beredda på att under den här läkningsprocessen så kan nog varken du eller din man jobba över huvud taget men vi tänkte att det kommer att bli bra vi kommer att fixa det här vi ska fira olika delar i operationen som går bra och göra någonting roligt. Och vi, jag var i skolan och informerade alla elever och lärare om lite vad som kommer att hända och dom fick ställa frågor till Agnes. Sen så var vi även med då med det här med målbilder och var med Agnes och innan operationen runt oxsjön sissjön och sa att här Agnes inom ett år ska du och jag kunna springa och kan du se dig själv hör om ett år komma springandes sen när du har gjort den här operationen och vi försökte bygga upp positiva delar och gick där och firade framgångar. Mycket av det här med att vi under den här läkningsprocessen så körde vi mycket med det här med high-five och liksom tog och gjorde något extra med henne och under hela den här processen så om man tittar bakåt så hon tog alltså inga starka mediciner alls hon fick några gånger bara äta alvedon. Och min och min frus syn var ju då att detta kommer att gå bra och vi räds inte för det utan vi såg inga problem utan vi såg möjligheterna med detta då va och det är återigen en grej som var med det här med målbilder att man kunde jobba med det här och se effekterna av det här då va. Så där var det något jag kunde ta till mig på en gång att man kunde jobba med positiva målbilder och när vi sen gick med Agnes när hon sen hade sina kryckor så sa vi ju det att snart kommer du att kunna springa så sen sprang hon ju då rätt snart efter operationen.
  - Vilket är var det här?
  - Det här var, det måste ha varit då…2004, 2005 jag tror att det här började då samtidigt som jag gick utbildningen.
  - Och den här utbildningen den var tre gånger?
    - Ja
  - Hur många timmar och så var den då?
    - Då var den, såg att det var tre tillfällen så gick vi sex, nio dagar totalt
Men efter den första UGL utbildningen då var det inte så att du började tänka på mental träning?

Inte lika mycket men jag fick väl lite självinsikt om mig själv men inte riktigt så medvetet som jag gjorde sen då i efter den utbildningen då.

Om man säger, vad motiverade dig till att börja?

Att utvecklas att, det är väl lite den delen som är och sen så förstår vi lite den delen som är mental träning att man liksom kan klara så mycket mycket mer och det är bara här upppe i huvudet som vi sätter våra begränsningar då va. Öh och sen tycker jag hela tiden att det är kul att se när man håller på både då med jobbet och framför allt också med idrotten så är det hur det fungerar i praktiken. Jag byggde ju upp en målbild när jag började den här verksamheten, där jag försökte se vad vill jag att, vad vill jag med den här gruppen? Och vilken bild vill jag att vi ska vara om tre, fyra år? Och på något sätt så är det ju då mentalt när man sitter och funderar på det och gör reflektioner vad ser jag då med den här och den här, så här skulle jag vilja se att vi jobbar om tre år. Så tänker man och här har du en bra målbild på det och tänker på det flera gånger när man är trygg och gör detta så har allt en benägenhet att det händer saker runt omkring sig som på något sätt blir den bilden, beslut som händer och man tänker varför hände det och omedvetet och det är det som jag tycker ibland när man pratar om mental träning och målbilder att det är det som ibland är det otäcka när man ser att saker faktiskt händer och är det förbestämt? Och jag jobbar väldigt mycket och försöker alltid se motigheterna i allting det är den grejen som jag har att istället för att se problemen så ser jag motigheterna. Alltså när dom frågar mig vad har du misslyckats med dom senaste åren så säger jag misslyckats? Jag tar fram det som har gått bra istället.

Hur ofta skulle du vilja säga att du träna mentalt?

Hm, jag jobbar ju mycket med alltså känsla alltså om jag ska göra, om man går inför ett lopp så lägger jag ju upp väldigt mycket målbilder på hur det ska gå, alltså jag är ju till och med sådan att när den här blåa linjen på göteborgsvarvet ritar så tar jag mig fysiskt till ett ställe på lindholmen ställer mig där och ser mig själv komma springande och ser liksom fasen att om tre dagar när jag kommer springande så kommer jag att vara glad och leende på läpparna och det kommer att gå snabbt liksom då va och då sätter jag mig och försöker att se den delen och och då är också det otäcka att då fungerar det ju också. Och då är det också det där igen att fasen det var ju här jag var och hur skulle jag känna mig? Jo jag skulle ha ett leende på läpparna och det skulle att gå lätt. Och så har man en sådan positiv bild i huvudet då. Så inför löpning när jag har sådana prestationer så jobbar jag väldigt mycket med att liksom att antingen springa banan i förväg så att man liksom har gjort en testomgång och liksom då bygger upp lite sådana positiva bilder som man vill känna, vad jag vill känna det kan vara den sista träningen innan jag springer så kanske man känner fasiken vad bra det känns och då känner jag mig som en antilop det här känslan ska jag ta med mig tills i övermorgon. Och så har man med sig den här bilden då rå.

Skulle du vilja säga att du använder det lite varje dag?

Jaa, jag försöker ju alltid att använda det men sen så är ju så va att, ta varann dag då, som jag försöker jobba med det och skapa mig bra bilder då, ochh och nämnen varann dag blir nog bra.

Använder du dig av avslappningsband och så?

Det gör jag faktiskt inte. Det kan jag säga att den delen gjorde jag en del i början men det gör jag ingenting nu. Däremot så tar jag mig ofta till mentala rum att jag tar mig till ställen där jag har varit dit jag kan förflytta mig till, oftast så försöker jag göra så att när jag är på ett ställe där jag känner att mina sinnen är positiva så kan jag ju sätta mig ner där och försöka titta och aha, försöka ta in positiva intyck och sen kan jag liksom ta mig dit, det skulle jag lika gärna kunna göra här att jag tar mig till platser där
Avsätter du tid för det här med mental träning eller försöker du att inkorporera det i vardagen?
- Jag sätter nog inte medvetet av tid men jag jobbar ju på något sätt med det och försöker att hela tiden göra aktivt val. Jag vet inte hur mycket jag ska berätta men jag har ju till exempel valt att inte titta på nyheterna för jag tycker bara att det är elände det är ingenting som tillför utan då har jag istället valt att läsa tidningen och då har jag ju valt att jag kan vånda sidor och försöker se andra saker då va. Jag vet inte om jag avsätter så mycket tid egentligen jag får ju väldigt mycket reflektion och tankar när jag springer. Och det är väl lite den delen som jag tycker är väldigt skön med löpning om man jämför det för man har ju väldigt mycket förväntningar och krav på sig, man har mål då vad man ska prestera på jobbet å hur man har det hemma men när jag är ute och springer då är det jag själv som bestämmer om jag springer till höger eller vänster eller rakt fram det är jag själv som bestämmer och har kontroll över min kropp. Och det blir någon slags mental stärkelse för mig då va.

Då har vi kommit in lite på din nuvarande situation.
- Aha
- Vad upplever du som mest krävande i jobbet just nu?
- Vad kan det vara? Vi ska ju gå igenom det blir ju lite som man vänder det hela du har säkert hört talas om, du har säkert läst i tidningen vi ska ju varsла massa folk men jag har ju liksom gått in med den inställningen okej, intressant, jag får ju faktiskt lära mig att hantera ett varsel, och ta med mig de erfarenheterna. Alltså jag har ju varit med om en period där man bara har anställt så nu får jag träna på det som har med varsel att jag göra och på så sätt så känns inte det så, då blir det ju en träning för mig då så då ser jag det som att då får jag lära mig något ting nytt. Sättas på min kunskapsdatabas och då tänker jag då vad är det värsta som kan hända mig? Jag försöker ofta tänka som olika situationer så här att om man sätter en livslinje och om detta är död och här är livet liksom då och då börjar man fundera på om jag blir av med jobbet kommer jag att dö? Nej förmodligen inte, och om jag blir av med jobbet kommer min familj att bli berörd? Nej, förmodligen inte. Och då tänker man mer herregud varför lägg ner energi på saker som förmodligen inte kommer att inträffa, och som inte på livslinjen är några strategiska beslut då va. Så försöker jag tänka mycket och så tänker jag även med det här om jag skulle bli av med jobbet säkert så skulle det bli någon påverkan men det är liksom inte här.

Det inte så mycket i det stora hela.
- Nå, men den delen som kommer att vara min stora utmaning framöver det är ju att min dotter kommer att opereras igen så hon ska ju opereras den 27 november då har hon fått operationstid så det är väl det som jag ser som den främsta grejen som kommer att hända. Sen är allting som jag ser det som spännande och sen är det ju massa saker som jag ska göra jag ska göra förutom jobbet, jag ska åka vasaloppet och jag har inte åkt skidor på 25 år och det kommer ju så klart bli en utmaning men det kommer ju bra att bli roligt då va och jag ska cykla vätternrundan och det är ju 30 mil som jag ska göra på det och det kommer ju också att gå bra och sedan ska jag göra sådan riktig ironman…
Är det svenskklassikern?
Ja, svenskklassikern plus att jag ska ehm dessutom så ska jag göra sådan riktig ironman nu i kalmar så man simmar 3.8km cyklar 18 mil och springer ett maraton då och det är väl lite den delen som man märker, det öppnas upp portar hela tiden och när man har klarat av ett maraton då så märker man ju att herregud vilken bra kondition jag har då kan jag ju göra detta också så hela tiden så kommer det ju nya möjligheter och det är väl också så som man försöker se det med jobbet att att varsel okej det kommer att hända grejer men jag är trygg i mig själv och vill utsätt mig jag vill ju komma ifrån min trygghetszon och på så sätt se nya möjligheter då.

Vilka mentala färdigheter behöver du just nu?
Målbilder, alltså det kan jag känna är oerhört viktigt att ha en bild på vad man vill med verksamheten, och framför allt att den bilden дlas med alla medarbetare så att domvet att vi drar åt samma håll då.

Får du någon hjälp i din mentala träning?
Ja, jag har ju egentligen förmånen då att ha det här mentala nätverket, de sex cheferna, som jag har kvar sedan utbildningen.

Hur ofta träffas ni?

Men din mentala träning har du ingen regelbunden kontakt med?
Jo han är med i den herrklubben, jag träffar honom och pratar med honom säkert två gånger i veckan.

Och böcker och så?
Ja, jag läser faktiskt inte så mkt.

Så det är mest genom det här nätverket och din mentala träning då som du får stöd?
Ja.

När använder du den mentala träningen? På arbetstid, fritid?
Jag använder ju det mycket när jag kör min egen träning och så använder jag det mycket här för att man ska kunna jobba med, alltså jag jobbar ju mycket med människor och att man ska kunna fira framgångar lite den delen att man sätter upp mål och även firar dom och lite det sättet att man någon gång när vi starter upps den här gruppen då hade liksom jag ordnat med att första mötet hade jag köpt fullt med, det ska ju inte vara alkohol men jag hade köpt fullt med sån här champis, sån här mousserande och jag hade köpt fullt med sådana här fina typ champangeglas och jag hade gjort fullt med olika snittar med gurka och så här. Och så när folk kom in då så undrade dom väl vad som häller på att hånda. Och då sa jag vi ska bara fira för att vi ska bli världens bästa serviceset och jag vill bara skåla och tacka er för det fantastiska
- Den utbildningen du gick var det på arbetstid?
  - Ja, det var arbetet som betalade ja.
- Vad skulle du vilja utveckla i din mentala träning?
  - Det som man ibland skulle kunna kanske bli bättre på som jag känner som man är det är väl på att köra mer sådana avslappningsövningar som är. Och det är väl lite det som man känner på något sätt att komma ner i det tillståndet och att lära sig det och kunna göra det hade varit bra.
- Känner du ett behov att det, att kunna slappa av?
  - Ja, jag tror att det hade varit bra och det är ju lite det när man har kört dom här skivorna med Uneståhl att man kommer till ett läge där det står fortsätta, avsluta och det är kanske det att man skulle ha kört hela vägen så att man váldigt snabbt, typ på en buss kan ta sig hela vägen ner i det det tillståndet då va.
- På vilket sätt har mental träning hjälpt dig om vi börjar med i arbetslivet?
  - Det har ju hjälpit mig öhört att kunna våga, dels att man har byggt up en målbild och sen utför från den målbilden att kunna och våga ta beslut framför allt att man involverar övriga och vi ha haft jätte...det är framför allt den delen när jag tänker efter ibland hur det har varit så är det ju jag mår ju váldigt, är váldigt positiv och det är väl lite den delen man får man smittar av folk på, man smittar av sig man ger energi och det är väl lite det jag kan känna att varje dag som jag går till jobbet så har jag roligt och i och med att det är roligt på jobbet så är det ju liksom inte mina åtta timmar bara ett arbete utan om man lägger så mycket av sin tid på ett jobb så ska det ju ändå vara roligt och att man känner att man utvecklas med dom människorna som man har omkring sig och det är väl ändå det roligaste med jobbet det är helt klart när man märker att ens omgivning och andra börjar leva. Och jag kan ta ett exempel när jag var på mitt första jobb så hade jag en person som var överviktig och hade, åt väldigt dålig mat, fränskild och hade, livet var liksom inte roligt för honom. Och jag liksom började peppa honom att det där med att börja röra på sig är bra och jag anmälde honom och sa det att om du är med och springer Göteborgsvarvet så ska vi görta det tillsammans, jag är med och springer och så i Skatås vi bygger upp gemensamma träningstillfällen då vad. Och han hoppade på den och vi sprang det och nu om du hade träffat den, jag tror att han hade storlek 34 eller 35 på jeans, jag tror att han gick ner till storlek 29 är idag en atlet och gör Ironman, han har gjort Vätternrundan och allting och nu när jag ser honom så är han ett energiknappe själv och mår hur bra som helst då va och det är ju också lite den delen som är med det som jag tror att på jobb och allting att mår människor bra och har en fysisk aktivitet och allting så ger det så mycket tillbaka till jobbet. Så jag har haft, vi har dragit igång någonting som heter Sverigeloppet här som vi har haft för hela vår avdelning som haft att liksom inte fysiskt men bildligt ska vi under 2008 ta oss från Luleå ner till Södra Sverige och tillbaka till Göteborg. Och så hade vi ett excell ark och så tar man så fick man olika poäng på olika kriterier, springer man ett antal eller går på bodypump så får man sätta in ett antal poäng så för varje gång så kommer man ett antal km och sen så hade vi premier den första som kom till exempel till Stockholm fick då en, alla som startade fick en vattenflaska och sen premie två det var en ryggsäck och premie tre var en handduk och så avslutade vi hela den aktiviteten att vi tog hit en friskvårdsinspirator som höll en föreläsning om hälsa och hela den grejen och så fick man en bok om vad man ska tänka på lite med det här med hälsa och
Du sa förut att det gick väldigt bra för er ekonomiskt eller produktionsmässigt.
Ja, väldigt väldigt bra.
Tror du att det även har att göra med den mentala träningen?
Absolut, absolut
Om du tar hur det har hjälpt dig inom andra områden?
Idrottsliga, har jag ju gjort fantastiska framsteg och sen har det gjort att även mina barn, vi har ju jobbat väldigt mycket med det här med min dotter Agnes i att våga se möjligheterna och i hennes del i hennes operation hade jag inte gått den, och fått dom delarna så hade vi inte fått den, det hade varit en helt annan del i livet på något sätt då va och det märker man liksom på barnen. Och barnen vi jobbar ju väldigt mycket med det här att man kanske inte mentalt men att när man sätter sig och åter så ska man berätta det som har varit bra på dagen inte det som har varit dåligt utan det som har varit bra och när, ibland kör vi nämner tre saker som har varit bra och det som har varit positivt så.
Upplever du att det finns några hinder för din mentala träning?
Nej jag har inte sett några.
Då har vi kommit över till övriga frågor, använder dina kollegor sig av mental träning?
Vissa, då har jag ju mitt nätverk då givetvis.
Det är alltså det är andra chefer på xxx?
Inte så mycket jag har ju det här nätverket dom är ju dom som gick på erfarna ledare dom använder ju det givetvis.
Och dom är på xxx?
Dom är på xxx, men inte så mycket i övriga som är på samma sätt som jag kan känna direkt så.
Varför tror du inte att dom gör det?
Jag tror inte att dom, dels så tror jag inte att dom har fått den kunskapen och så har dom nog inte kunnat se vad det faktiskt är. Alltså erfarenheterna dom… jag har ju många saker som jag liksom kan förknippa med.
Men man kan ju tycka då att de borde ju se på dig då som är en väldigt inspirerande chef?
Ja, ja, ja och jag pratar ju mycket med den delen om att allting är möjligt men det är ju också mycket med den delen… sen så är det ju mycket med den delen, mitt nätverk med min mentala tränare det är klart att det är ju en oerhört förmån. Där jan kan liksom hjälpt oss alla och det har ju blivit att saker som vi inte tänker på längre gör vi. Som innan va, det är ju tränings och tränings och att få det att bli en naturlig sak då va så jag tror att liksom många, sen är det ju så att många har ju också gått, dom personerna som har gått min mentala tränare utbildning och det är ju många, dom använder det. Så jag har ju en del kollegor i närområdet som har gått utbildningen och dom har ju mer kunskap om det och kan det. Men det är ju tack vare min mentala tränare att själva den dragningen då va.
Tror du att dina kollegor är intresserade av att använda sig av mental träning?
Absolut, får man gå den, alltså den va väldigt bra och det finns jätte fina inspelningar på xxx och jag vet att min mentala tränare har en annan utbildning som han drar du där han går igenom det här med akutcoachning och allting så det är ju mer att få gå utbildningen då va.

**Hur väljs det ut?**
- Det är ju alltså, dels så får man ha det i sitt, nu hiter det ju inte mopps längre nu hiter det personal business plan, man har ett pbp med sin chef så det är ju klart att det beror hela tiden vad man vill i livet och vad man har för dialog med sin chef och vem dom satsar på, alla kan ju inte gå den. Utan det är några som får göra det då va och det är ju en sådan grej som man kan få fundera på att jag har fått gå jätte mycket bra utbildningar och det kanske är bara för att som jag tänkte att jag ser möjligheterna då va sen är det som senast fick jag gå en väldigt bra utbildning betalt och jag tror det är, och liksom lite den här delen att det är också lite med allting sånt här bara händer på något konstigt sätt som man inte kan förklara.

- **Nä men då så får man visa intresse för sin chef.**
- Ja absolut
- **Är det mest cheferna som man skickar?**
- Ja det är ju cheferna, den erfarna ledare är ju grundkriteriet att man är chef och har en grupp som man liksom jobbar med. Så det är ju en förutsättning sen så har ju vi, jag har skickat all min personal till en, det finns en utbildning som heter, det finns en kurs som min mentala tränare har som heter vinnande medarbetarskap där min mentala tränare är här och håller en tredagskurs med medarbetare, och det skickar jag despot alla mina anställda till. Så att har dom samma kunskap och vet vad det är så är det ju mycket lättare när jag börjar prata i dom här termerna då va och det är ju jätte uppskattat.

**Diskuterar du användning av mental träning med dom andra?**
- Ja, alltså dom som gått kursen då börjar jag ju träna med dom själva förstå när jag vill utsätta dom för vissa saker och mycket det här med trygghetszonerna vill jag ju gå in och jobba mer med vad som kan hända och om du ser dig själv i detta vad kan hända och folk utsätter sig för det och tänker herregud det var ju inte farligt då va och det är ju också lite det som händer är ju att många har ju växt upp som blommor för att jag har trott på dom och det har ju också lite med möjligheter att göra jag ser ju i varje person något gott och jag ser möjligheterna i dom. Och tror att man med hjälp av rätt coaching och allting så kan man komma oerhört långt med människor, man vill göra bra ifrån sig och vi vill utvecklas.

**Nu börjar ju även idrottspsykologer att gå över och jobba mer med näringslivet. Är det något som du känner till?**
- Inte så mycket men jag vet ju att det är mycket sådana delar och det är ju jätte bra.

**Tror du att användning av en idrottspsykolog skulle vara värdefull för företag?**
- Ja absolut man kan se det är ju så mycket kunskap inom idrotten som är när man tränar, sen är det ju inte den grejen man kan träna någon för att hoppa två meter upp men man kan även träna chefer för att göra andra, det behöver ju inte vara just den delen utan att göra saker annorlunda då va så jag tror mycket på den delen.

**Du tror inte att det krävs någon anpassning att det kanske krävs någon forskning på hur man ska gå över till att jobba med företag och så?**
- Inte på den delen, alltså min känsla är ju att går man det ger ju saker ja,alltså man använder en liten del alltså man sätter ju så mycket begränsningar här och det behöver man inte ha någon forskning direkt för tycker jag. Det finns så mycket fakta som visar att det är möjligt.

- Och du tror även då att det lönar sig inte bara för dom anställda utan även ekonomiskt?
Ja, ja, absolut, absolut. Har man ett sådant klimat där man har människor och tittar på gemensamma, samma målbild så är jag övertygad om att man kommer oerhört långt. Och alltså jag kan ju bara dra dom erfarenheterna som jag har från verksamheten att båda dom grupperna som jag har varit chef för har det blivit väldigt väldigt bra och det kan ju bero på att jag har haft tur men jag menar jag har tagit över grupper som inte har fungerat, jag har tagit över människor som inte har fungerat och helt plötsligt så börjar folk jobba och det kan ju vara en kombination av dom grejerna att jag själv ser möjliheterna och jobbar med att våga sätta folk i nya situationer och att dom får träning på det va.

Men tror du att det beror på dig? Om någon annan kommit och gjort samma sak skulle det ha gett samma effekt?

Ja, det är ju det som jag inte vet, man har ju pratat mycket om förebilder för det här med ledarskap handlar ju mycket om förebilder och jag kan ju inte i ena stunden säga det här va att ni måste ut och röra på er och sedan så sitter jag själv och är en någon liksom som bara sitter på stolen och tar det lugnt va och jag tror att det är att man försöker hela tiden liksom jobba med som jag säger men herrgud cykla till jobbet någon dag, dom ser mig komma cyklandes till jobbet i regn och rusk och jag tror att mycket gäller det att vara en bra förebild då va. Och att man ska skilja på att man är, i vissa fall så går jag in och är chef men det kanske är mer i de situationer då jag behöver gå in och rätta till saker som inte fungerar men att vara ledare och det är ju oftast att se till att man jobbar mot samma mål sedan så tar ju alla människor ett ansvar. Och det är som jag säger att ser vi samma bild så ta beslut och man får misslyckas för det är det som är träning och det bästa är som jag säger har man ett schackparti och ingen drar första draget då händer ingenting och det är lite det inom en verksamhet och så att vi måste våga testa nya vägar för vad är det värsta som kan hända? Jo det är ju inte så mycket och då skapar vi också ett klimat där folk känner sig trygga att göra det och det är väl där då man går in som chef för att man ska se till att folk mår bra och det här med balans med kroppen och knoppen och att man känner den tryggheten då va. Då kan man komma oerhört långt.

Har du något som du känner att du vill lägga till?

Nej jag tror att du har fått en bra bild utav det.
Introduction to mental/life skills:

Introduction to mental training:
- Through a mental training course (3)
- Mental training course for leaders that was paid by my job (2)
- Mental training course that I took on my spare time (1)
- I suddenly understood what I had already been doing a little bit been doing unconsciously
- At the same time as this education my daughter went through a very tuff leg extension. I thought if we work positively with this operation it can become something good.
- Six years ago we were about to start with massage at the company so we went to a girl that started to talk about reiki, healing, and that was kind of the start of it.

Motivation to start with mental training:
- I noticed that I progressed and that it works (3)
- To develop myself further (3)
- To get rid of mental barriers
- I think it was my mental trainer coach that told me a bit about it and that made me interested
- Because of a leadership program about mental training at work.

Way to learn how to use mental training, help:
- Through mental training course (3)
- I still get help from my mental trainer (2)
- After the course we were a couple of managers that decided that we were going to keep seeing each other, talk about leadership and help each other, we created a network
- By listening to Unestål’s relaxation program
- I have also read a few books.

Time spent to use mental training:
- Mental/life skills is something you use all the time (3)
- 4 years
- 5 years
- Leadership program started in March 2008
- Started using mental training actively since September 2008.
- I have been practising mental training before going to bed every night the last two months

Current situation with using mental/life skills

Current demands at work:
- The current depression (2)
- To inspire the employees (2)
- My companion is away so I have no one to lean against
Mental/life skills currently needed at work:
- To be able to influence my co-workers in a positive direction (4)
- A positive attitude (3)
- Goal images
- I’m trying to see things in perspective to life
- The harmony

Practice of mental/life skills:
- Goal images (4)
- Relaxation (2)
- Reframing
- Self-esteem
- I-training
- Giving relevant and positive feedback to my co-workers.

Help with mental training:
- Help from mental trainer (2)
- Regular support from other person(s) practising mental training (2)
- Unesthål’s relaxation cd:s

Time spent on practice, when:
- I try to always use it (4)
- I use it a lot during my own physical training (2)
- Every second day I work with creating good images for myself
- I use it a lot at work
- 2/3 of my mental training is on my spare time and 1/3 is during work.

Wish to improve in mental training:
- Everything (3)
- To be able to relax at all times (2)
- To create more energy (2)
- I always work with drawing lines in a positive way, not being to nice

Perceived effects of mental/life skills

The way mental training has been beneficial, at work:
- I think my co-workers perceive me as a more motivating manager (3)
- My relation to my employees has improved (3)
- It has given me the courage to take decisions according to my goals
- Greater self-esteem and self-confidence
- I get a better connection with the clients
- I have become more creative

The way mental training has been beneficial, in other spheres of your life:
- It has helped my relation with the children (3)
- I am more harmonic (2)
- I am more positive
- The communication in the family has improved
In sports I have done an amazing progression
It helped us to deal with my daughter’s operation in a positive way

The way mental training has been beneficial for the company:
- Economically (4)
- The effectiveness has increased (3)
- My employees have developed a lot (2)
- It helps people getting rid of their mental barriers
- The communication competence course was the best investment we have ever done
- It has improved my selling technique
- It has improved the way that we treat our clients

Views on mental/ life skills among colleagues at work

The use of mental training among colleagues:
- All of the employees got a little introduction to mental training (3)
- Some use it (2)
- It is the managers that get the opportunity to take the course
- The whole company was sent to a mental training course
- No, not as much as I do, I don’t think so
- Everyone has taken a small step forwards

Obstacles for mental training:
- No, I haven’t seen any (2)
- Lack of knowledge (2)
- Lack of interest
- Not having relaxation exercises on my iPod.
- With a big traditional company you do as you have always done and then there is no room for change.
- It takes some time to understand certain things but it becomes clear when you keep practicing

Interest of colleagues to use mental training:
- There is a big interest to take the mental training course
- The winning co-workers course has been very appreciated
- At the beginning some were a bit sceptical but I am convinced that it has changed now.
- One, or two maybe

Discussion about using mental training with others at the company:
- Yes, I start to train with the ones that have gone the winning co-workers course
- I talk a lot about it and that everything is possible
- I haven’t, but I think the mental coaches did it at the course
- I think you have to show it, open up and show that it works
Opinions on sport psychology consultants working in business

Awareness of sport psychology consultants working in business:
- I have heard of it.
- Not that much but I know that there are many parts from sports so that is great
- No, but I have discovered that there is a lot of focus on selling and sports but not so much on other areas

Potential value of using sport psychology consultant:
- I think sport psychology consultants can be very valuable for companies
- It would improve the effectiveness at the company
- I think it is important to invest in the employees
- It would be beneficial to take advantage of the knowledge from sport and to adjust it to suite workplaces and private life
- The benefits depends a lot on the consultants
- I think education in mental training should be for everyone, not just the managers
- It would improve the atmosphere at the company
- I don’t know if I want to make a difference between sport psychology consultants and mental coaches.
- It would be valuable for the creativity
- I think it is needed everywhere in the society
- I believe it would be good to start in school
Group Profile – sport psychology consultant

Shift between consulting in sports and business

Reason for the shift:
- There is not enough money in sports (4)
- I got a request (3)
- I started and then it just spread (2)
- I have not done any publicity
- If I had the opportunity I would work with two athletes exclusively
- The world of sport psychology is a pretty strict world already and it is not easy to come forward as new
- The really big sport associations pay as good money as the companies but then we are talking about Premier division of the Swedish Football League et cetera

Experience of the shift:
- You use pretty much the same methods in sports and in business (5)
- The business world is very different from sports (4)
- I think you need some competence in cognitive therapy to work outside of sports (2)
- It depends what you are going to talk about some topics could work for both athletes and employees (2)
- To work with a company you have to have some kind of background in work psychology
- I did not find it difficult
- It was difficult
- It is good be broad and to learn more about clinical sports psychology
- It is important to have a therapeutic understanding
- A broad base with connection to sport psychology is probably the best

Working in business compared to sports

Getting in contact with clients:
- Through contacts (5)
- No differences between athletes and employees (3)
- We do a work at one place and they tell someone else about the job we made (3)
- 5% from my website
- We use were little on publicity

Employees wish to develop mental/ life skills:
- To work more efficiently (3)
- Improving performance in different areas, at work and in the everyday life (3)
- Getting balance in life (2)
- Communication
- How to handle conflicts
- Efficient leadership
- Motivation according to health orientated issues
- Create perspective and structure
• How to handle criticism
• How to respond on different aspects of life
• Stress management
• Life skills management, how to handle coping skills in different situations
• Very similar to athletes but it is different environments
• Depending on which areas you advertise yourself towards you will get work in those areas

*Athletes wish to develop mental/life skills:*
• How to reach their goals (6)
• Performing better (2)
• It is clearer what athletes want and what is to be expected from them unfortunately that is not always the case at workplaces
• Self confidence

*Experienced needs – similarities:*
• Improve their performances in different contexts (2)
• No differences between employees and athletes
• Acknowledgement
• Everyone wants to learn more about themselves
• Develop as a person

*Experienced needs – differences:*
• Athletes need to get the basics right (3)
• Employees have often forgotten their needs (2)
• Employees have the need to do something fun just for them (2)
• The difference is only that they need acknowledgement on different things
• The difference is that it is different environments, sports have their demands and business settings have their demands
• Athletes need to learn how to handle performances
• Athlete need to learn how to handle criticism
• Athlete need to learn how to handle media
• Employees need more time for themselves

*Experienced demands - similarities:*
• Both athletes and employees put very high demands on themselves (3)
• No differences between athletes and employees
• Top-level managers and women in the career put the same kind of pressure on themselves as athletes
• Younger women in the career tend to connect self-esteem with their performance at work the same was as athletes do

*Experienced demands – differences:*
• I think the athletes put a little bit higher demands on themselves (2)
• Athletes self-esteem is often connected to their performances (2)
• The athletes have higher expectations on their performance then employees
• For the athletes it is a lot about winning and being best
• In business settings it is more about relations
• Employees do not connect self-esteem with their performance at work
Theoretical framework used:
- No differences between employees and athletes (3)
- I have a cognitive point of view in my working philosophy (2)
- Theories are models that you never employ just as they are but they are good as a starting point (2)
- Every situation is unique (2)
- It is a mix of general psychological theories and more specific theories from sport psychology
- I use both psychodynamic theory and cognitive theory
- There is a cognitive base in all traditional psychology and sport psychology nowadays
- In the beginning is easy to make the mistake to support yourself too much on the theories
- It is a handicraft
- Forget about following theories, it is not the way it works
- It is about having a broader perspective
- I use more cognitive theory with the athletes
- Sport psychology has the advantage that it is more goal orientated and more structured

Professional strategies/techniques/tools used:
- No differences between employees and athletes (4)
- I use all kinds of tools depending on the situation and the individual (4)
- You are a certain way and if you want to change something you have to start with analyzing yourself (3)
- I get all kinds of different tools from both worlds (2)
- The goal can be the same but the way to get there can look different (2)
- I use traditional tools from sport psychology and many tools from the cognitive behavioural therapy
- I work a lot with the basics
- The base of my strategy is that I am trying to get people to think broader, to get the basics in life right
- You have to have balance between work (or sports), family and yourself in life
- My main strategy is that if you have a good life you become a good manager, if you have a good life you become a good athlete
- I often start with the profession (work or sports) and then move on to other areas in life

Organisation of your services to employees:
- No differences between athletes and employees
- It depends on their request
- Companies often send you individuals that they perceive have some difficulties
- I have more and more chosen to work only in sports because I think it is more fun
- Nowadays I work only with individual counselling
- You can work with individuals, groups, organisations or give lectures, it is good to be all round
- When we work with an organisation we start with doing an investigation to locate the problems and then we educate the employees and talk with groups, it is a very long process
- I work as an educator on a group level with companies
• It is often a bigger commitment, an educational assignment that has sometimes developed to individual consultation
• I feel that I have a higher credibility as an educator when working with companies
• Since I am quite young I don’t feel that I have the experiences from life that is needed to be a credible consultant for older managers
• If the consultation is connected to health or sports I feel that I have credibility
• I think it is easier for the employees to accept my message when I work with a group

Perceived barriers and coping

Barriers to start with mental life/ skills training:
• We think that we can handle everything on our own (3)
• Money (2)
• Some believe that there has to be something wrong with you if you go to a psychology consultant (2)
• There are some prejudices against sport psychology but they are becoming fewer (2)
• Some people can feel a little uncomfortable telling a stranger private things
• The manager can be a barrier, you have to have support from the manager
• Time
• I think there might be a some misbelieves against the coaching conception since there are many people who have taken a coaching course over a weekend and start to work as a coach but have not got the competence.

To overcome barriers:
• Good experiences (4)
• If people have heard about you and come with a positive attitude it is a lot easier to get a good result (2)
• To always offer good quality services (2)
• Many psychology consultants are very good at theories but you have to be able to translate it to action (2)
• Show how it can economically be beneficial for the company
• Education
• Even if it takes time things are starting to happen so it is just to keep up the good work
• To create trust
• To make sure that you have understood what exactly your client wants to get help with
• To have humour
• Many psychologist and therapist do only work with sick people, it is important to also work with healthy people

Acceptance of sport psychology consultants in business

The benefits of sports psychology consultants in the business world:
• Goal setting (2)
• You could use the clarity from sports psychology and bring it to the business setting (2)
• In certain small areas you can draw parallels from sport psychology to business (2)
• You have to have knowledge about both sides if you want to work with both sides (2)
• Most things when it comes to developing competence
• Better self consciousness
• Get better structure
• Outlining the whole process from start until end
• Prioritising
• There are many similarities but the differences are bigger than the similarities
• If you are a sport psychology consultant that is what you should be working with

How to increase the acceptance of sport psychology consultants in business:
• Show how it works (4)
• Sport psychology consultants should talk about sport psychology aspects (3)
• Advertising (2)
• The Universities have to give students the opportunity to get out to different workplaces (2)
• A lot from the sport psychology could work in business but it depends on the company (2)
• Try to get away from people who creates a lot of weird myths around it
• To show that there is a lot of competence in the area
• There are many good ideas, like the program in Halmstad where you get a basic understanding for traditional psychology, that opens up more and creates a broader base
• They have to understand that there is a difference between working life and sports
• You can go out and talk about sport psychology but do not talk about clichés because they will see through you
Profile – employee A

Background:
Gender: Male
Age: 45
Profession: Manager

Professional career, athletic background:
- Went to Chalmers, started at xxx as an industrial engineer, became manager for the section but changed 1999 to the service organisation. 2005 manager for project development and organisation. No athletic background.

Introduction to mental training:
- Through leadership programs at work.

Motivation to start with mental training:
- Because of a leadership program about mental training at work.
- The trainer made us realise what a strong tool it is to work with mental skills to achieve a better result.

Way to learn how to use mental training, help:
- Through lectures at the leadership program.
- Have also read a few books.

Time spent to use mental training:
- Leadership program started in March 2008, 4 times, 2 days each time (on workdays).
- Started using mental training actively since September 2008.
- Mental training is something you do all the time, I don’t see it like a physical training session, it is about awareness about these factors and how to use them.

Current situation

Most demanding at work right now:
- The biggest challenge for a manager is to be able to motivate you employees and get them to perform well. Or to be able to inspire them to become self-motivated.
- My task is to keep up their (the employees) mental/ life skills and to augment the total performance of the group.

Mental/ life skills currently needed at work:
- To be able to influence my co-workers in a positive direction, doing that I think I will get my own mental training since everything builds on knowledge and a awareness about the right way to think and to focus.
- I need to incorporate a right way of thinking and to think positive in a way that I can implement it and convey it to my co-workers.

Practice of mental/ life skills:
- Right now I work with to give more and more relevant and positive feedback to my co-workers.
• Privately me and my wife will work more together with goal images.

Help with mental training:
• Got a mental coach through the leadership program, we got one of the others from the program to coach each other two and two. During the program we spoke, me and my coach to each other once a week but now we have put aside time for this once a month, to give each other a mental driving mirror and to put up new goals.

Time spent on practise, when:
• The optimal would be to use mental training all the time but the more you use it the more it becomes natural to you, to keep a higher lowest level all the time.
• 2/3 of my mental training is on my spare time and 1/3 is during work.

Wish to improve in mental training:
• To create more energy (by being more skilled at mental training).
• To be able to be more active and positive during my spare time.
• I have only come 20% on the development (of mental skills) and it is already a good way and there is a great potential to work against new goals.

The way mental training has been beneficial:
• I have become better in the dialog with my co-workers.
• I think my co-workers perceive me as a more motivating manager.
• At home there was always a hassle to get the children ready to school but that goes without any problems now.
• I think it has to do with a more positive thinking and the way we communicate with each other.

The way mental training has been beneficial for the company:
• I think working with these things (mental training) would be beneficial for every company, economically too.
• I think there was and is a big need for this (mental training). We develop a lot of new good things but we do not succeed in the implementation and I think that 80% of that is due to deficient mental attitudes.

Obstacles for mental training
• Not having relaxation tapes, exercises on my iPod.
• With a big traditional company you do as you have always done and then there is no change.

Colleagues / Sport psychology consultants

The use of mental training among colleagues:
• All of the employees at the company have learnt mental training through this program. (2 times 2 days for the employees and 4 times 2 days for the managers).
• I think the strength here is that it is for everybody, a lot of companies only send there managers and then it is very hard to get an impact.

Interest of colleagues to use mental training:
• At the beginning some were a bit sceptical but I am convinced that it has changed now.

(Discussion about using mental training with others at the company:)

Awareness of sport psychology consultants working in business:
• I have heard of it.

Potential value of using sport psychology consultant:
• I don’t know if I want to make a difference between sport psychology consultants and mental coaches.
• There are obviously similarities between sports and working life but since we are in the working life and not in sports the best thing would be to take advantage of the knowledge from sports and to apply them not exactly as they are but in a broader perspective on working and private life to accomplish the best possible.
• There are probably many similarities but it probably takes adjustment and furthermore research and development in the area. You can’t just by what you learn from sports you probably have to adjust it to get the best possible effect.
• I think it is beneficial with the right concept and then I obviously think it is very important who it is, that it is a competent person and that the person is competent in relation to the task that is put upon him or her
Appendix 7

Profile – employee B

Background:
Gender: Female
Age: 35
Profession: Photographer, operative manager

Professional career, athletic background:
- Worked as a photographer trainee in Oslo, worked for Svensk fastighetsförmedling in Gothenburg but I didn’t like it and looked for a job as a photographer. I found a marketing company that also worked with photography and I kept asking for half a year for a job, finally I got it. At that time there were three partners and after two years I and my companion also became partners. The other partners drop off one and one since they wanted to work more with marketing and then I and my companion was left since we wanted to keep working with photography. No athletic career.

Introduction to mental training:
- Six years ago we were about to start with massage at the company so we went to a girl that started to talk about reiki, healing, and that was kind of the start of it. And then a mental coach offered us a course in mental training so we went to her ten times.

Motivation to start with mental training:
- I think it was the mental coach that told me a bit about it and that made me interested and once I started to try I noticed the difference from every time.

Way to learn how to use mental training, help:
- Through mental training course five years ago, ten times, four hours each time (spare time)
- Communication competence course one year ago, seven times, four hours each time (workplace)
- By listening to Uneståhl’s relaxation program
- I have coaching with my mental coach one time every month

Time spent to use mental training:
- Since the first course in mental training five years ago and more intensively lately
- I have been practising mental training before going to bed every night the last two months

Current situation

Most demanding at work right now:
- The most demanding for me is the obvious depression in addition to that my companion is away so I have no one to lean against

Mental/ life skills currently needed at work:
- The calm, the harmony, to look away from everything realistic, everything negative, because you don’t need that, it is a lot easier to work in a positive way even when you call clients
• Optimism
  • It is so nice to have my relaxation cd:s then I can relax before I go to bed and sleep for a whole night and wake up completely rested in the morning

**Practice of mental/ life skills:**
• Self-esteem, I-training and relaxation
• Then you can practice sell technique too but I think that it comes automatically one you have self-esteem

**Help with mental training:**
• My guidance with my mental coach every month, it is both privately and the company, it is about me as a person, to build me
• Unestål’s relaxation cd:s

**Time spent on practise, when:**
• All the time, always
• It becomes a part of me in a way, to handle all kind of situations there are always things that you can practice

**Wish to improve in mental training:**
• Everything
• I always work with drawing lines in a positive way, not being to nice
• To be able to relax at all times

**The way mental training has been beneficial, at work:**
• Greater self-esteem and self-confidence, I am proud of what I’m doing, I use that when I am selling now
• I get a different connection with the clients, it is more personal and not only business
• I have got a better, much better connection with our employees
• I have become more creative, I am not blocked, there are no obstacles, I have all the resources that I need
If I hadn’t had my relaxation CD’s I would have been burned out by now

**The way mental training has been beneficial, in other spheres of your life:**
• I am calmer, I don’t get stressed
• I am more harmonic
• I have more patience with my son

**The way mental training has been beneficial for the company:**
• The communication competence course was the best investment we have ever done
• The effectiveness has increased
• In the way that I am selling
• In the way that we treat our clients, we have learnt a bigger understanding for why people react in a certain way
• In the way that we treat each other
• Economically, we have raised our prices during the depression
• By being confident on what we are selling, we are very good, by realising that we can raise the prices
Obstacles for mental training:
- No, it takes some time to understand certain things but it becomes clear when you keep practicing

Colleagues / Sport psychology consultants

The use of mental training among colleagues:
- All of the employees at the company have been a little bit introduced to mental training through the communication competence course (seven times, four hours)
- No, not as much as I do, I don’t think so
- Everyone has taken a small step forwards

Interest of colleagues to use mental training:
- One, or two maybe
- I think the interest has to be there, everyone is in different stages but the course did a lot anyway

Discussion about using mental training with others at the company:
- I haven’t but I think the mental coaches did it at the course
- I think you have to show it, open up and show that it works

Awareness of sport psychology consultants working in business:
- No but I have discovered that there is a lot of focus on selling and sports but not so much other areas.

Potential value of using sport psychology consultant:
- The creativity and I think that a lot of companies don’t see the value in their employees, it is the employees that do the work at the company
- The harmony, the atmosphere at the company, everything, it is where you are eight ours of the day
- A lot of companies probably have coaches or psychology consultants to their leaders but not to the staff but I think you should have it right though the company and then have a flat organisation, I believe that’s when you succeed
- I think it is needed at all levels actually, and something that I believe would be good is to start in school
Appendix 7

Profile – employee C

Background:
Gender: Male
Age: 40
Profession: Group manager

Professional career, athletic background:
- Started to work at xxx in 87 with the production of xxx, went to do military service for ten months the same year. Came back to xxx and felt that I wanted to do something else. I started to study at Handelshögskolan in Gothenburg an education called ADB which was 60 credits. At the end of the program I felt that I didn’t want to go back to xxx, I wanted to keep on studying so I took some extra courses at Chalmers and studied until I got 110 credits. When I got back to xxx they closed down the production of the 240 and rebuilt the industry and everyone at the production got a year of education. A lot of the people who worked at xxx didn’t have elementary education so I had to study everything again, Swedish, English and mathematics, it was a package so you couldn’t choose. When I came back to xxx in 94 I got a job at xxx computers, I did that for two years and then I felt that I didn’t want to work with technique anymore, I wanted to work more with people. I had a meeting with my boss and said I wanted to work more towards management. I got the opportunity to go UGL (leadership program) and there I got some insight about myself and what kind of person I am. In 98/99 I got my first job as a group manager and three and a half year ago I changed job to this position. No athletic background.

Introduction to mental training:
- It was when I 2004 got an education at xxx that is called experienced leaders. I understood that I worked with mental images and when my mental coach talked about it everything became clear.
- At the same time as this education my daughter went through a very tough leg extension. So I thought if we work positively with this operation it can become something good. We thought that everything is going to be alright, we will handle this and we will celebrate different parts of the operation that goes well and we will do something fun. And we worked a lot with goal images, building up positive parts and celebrating successes.

Motivation to start with mental training:
- To develop
- With mental training you can accomplish so much more and it is only in our head that we put up limits
- It is so much fun to see at work and in sports that it actually works in practice

Way to learn how to use mental training, help:
- Through mental training course, experienced leaders, 2004, 9 days (through work)
- After the course we were a couple of managers that decided that we were going to keep seeing each other, talk about leadership and help each other, we created a network
Time spent to use mental training:
- Since the course experienced leaders 2004

Current situation

Most demanding at work right now:
- Since we are going to dismiss a lot of people at the moment, but I have the attitude that this is interesting, I am actually going to learn how to handle dismissals and get that experience. It is going to be an exercise for me, I get to learn something new
- I’m trying to see things in perspective to life, if I loose my job, am I going to dye? Probably not. If I loose my job, will my family be affected, probably not. And then you think why put energy on things that probably wont occur and that is not a strategic decision in your life

Mental/ life skills currently needed at work:
- Goal images, if feel it is extremely important to have a image of what you want with the organisation, and most of all that the image is shared with all my co-workers so that everyone is going to do same direction

Practice of mental/ life skills:
- Goal images
- If you have a good goal image and think about that one repeatedly when you feel safe everything around you have a tendency to occur so that the image becomes real
- I work a lot with trying to see the possibilities in everything, see the opportunities instead of the problems
- I work a lot mentally before a competition, I make a lot of goal images, I see myself running, happy, with a smile on my face and it will be fast

Help with mental training:
- I have the privilege of having my network, the sic managers that I met during the course, we see each other at least every second month.
- My mental coach is also a part of the network and I talk to him probably twice a week

Time spent on practise, when:
- I try to always use it
- I would say that every second day I work with creating good images for myself
- I work with it and try to always make active choices
- I get a lot of reflection and thoughts when I am running
- I use it a lot during my own physical training
- I use it a lot here, at work, I work a lot with people to celebrate successes and to put up goals

Wish to improve in mental training:
- To do more relaxation exercises, to be able to get down to that mental condition would be good and to do it very fast, for example on the bus, that would be good

The way mental training has been beneficial, at work:
- To have the courage, to have a goal image and to have the courage to take decisions
- I am very positive as a person and that influences others
• To have fun at work and that you feel that you evolve with the people around you and when you notice that your surrounding starts to live up

The way mental training has been beneficial, in other spheres of your life:
• In sports I have done an amazing progression
• We work a lot with the children, to tell what has been positive during the day and not what has been bad. Sometimes we do: mention three things during the day that has been god
• We have worked a lot with this with my daughter and her part in her operation, if we hadn’t got those parts then (the mental training) that would be a different part of our lives.

The way mental training has been beneficial for the company:
• I work a lot with world-class, we should be best, and this is about finding triggers and celebrating successes and if you look at the development that has been on the group then everything has just gone straight up
• We deliver amazingly good numbers
• I think it definitely has to do with the mental training
• My co-workers has grown like flowers because I have believed in them and I see something good and possibilities in every person
• My experience from the two groups that I have been manager for it has become very very good and it can be because I have been lucky but I have taken over groups that hasn’t functioned and I have taken over people that hasn’t functioned and suddenly people starts to work. It can be a combination of that I see the opportunities and work with having the courage to put people in new situations so that they get to train on that
• We create a climate where people feel safe and that is when you walk in as a manager and make sure that people are feeling well and that there is a balance between the body and the mind and the you feel secure. Then we can come incredibly far.

Obstacles for mental training:
• No, I haven’t seen any

Colleagues / Sport psychology consultants

The use of mental training among colleagues:
• Some
• I don’t think they have the knowledge
• They haven’t had the chance to see what it is actually about
• I send all my employees to a three day course called winning co-workers
• The people that have gone my mental coach’s courses and they are many, they use it
• It is the managers that get the opportunity to take the course, you have to be a manager and be working with a group and it depends on your relation to your boss, what your goals are and who they are ready to invest in

Interest of colleagues to use mental training:
• Absolutely, if you get the opportunity to take the course but not everyone can take it so it is more about getting the opportunity to take the course
• Since I send all my employees to the winning co-workers course everyone has the same knowledge and it has been very appreciated
Discussion about using mental training with others at the company:
- Yes, I start to train with the ones that have gone the winning co-workers course
- I talk a lot about that part and that everything is possible

Awareness of sport psychology consultants working in business:
- Not that much but I know that there are many parts like that so that is great

Potential value of using sport psychology consultant:
- Definitely, there is so much knowledge within sports, you can train managers to do things differently
- If you have a climate when people are striving towards the same goal image I am convinced that you can come very far
- I think that with the help from the right coaching you can come extremely far with people, people wants to make a good job and to evolve
Profile – sport psychology consultant A

Background
Gender: Male
Age: 36
Education: Swedish master sport psychology
Profession: Project leader for a combined sports and university project, has an own company

Experience from working in sports:
Professional athlete 93-96, national team coach for and national team manager for the Swedish snowboarding team, coach OS in Nagano 98, trainer at the alpine national sports-gymnasium in Malung and has worked as a sport psychology consultant since 2000, 2001. Works today as a project leader and has cut down the work as a consultant, still works with three athletes.

Experience from working in business:
Has been teaching work psychology at a Swedish university. Has held lectures for different companies for quite some time but has been doing more and more work towards business settings since 2004.

Reason for shift towards business setting:
- Not enough money in sports, there is a lot more money to make in a business setting
- If I had the opportunity I would work with two athletes exclusively
- To brake even I would have to work with a big amount of athletes at the same time and since I want to work qualitatively with the athletes it would not be possible

Experience of the shift:
- It was difficult
- I find that a lot of people believes that it is only about getting out and start to hold lectures for companies but that wont work
- You can hold a lecture from sport psychology for a company one or two times but to work with a company you have to have some kind of background in work psychology
- It depends what you are going to talk about, health and social psychology are topics that could work for both athletes and employees.
- If you talk about leadership, communication and organisation it is not the same kind of world
- The motivational factors are completely different since athlete do sports because they perceive it as fun but employees go to work because they have to make money
- It is naïve to think that you can go straight from sports to business settings

Business compared to sports

Getting in contact with clients:
- No differences between athletes and employees
- 95% from other contacts
- 5% from my website
- If you have done a good job at one place someone has heard about that and it goes around
• Contacts is definitely the most important asset

Employees wish to develop mental/ life skills:
• Communication
• How to handle conflicts
• Efficient leadership
• Motivation according to health orientated issues
• Depending on which areas you advertise yourself towards you will get work in those areas

Athletes wish to develop mental/ life skills:
• How to get a maximal performance at one specific occasion
• They know what they want to achieve but not how to get there
• Finding the best way for every person to reach his or her goals
• Goal setting
• Self confidence

Experienced demands – employees:
• Not as high demands on themselves as athletes
• Do not connect self-esteem with their performance at work
• Top-level managers and women in the career put the same kind of pressure on themselves as athletes
• Younger women in the career tend to connect self-esteem with their performance at work the same was as athletes do

Experienced demands – athletes:
• They experience very high demands that they put on themselves
• They put together their performances in their sport to how they are as a person
• Their self-esteem is often connected to their performances

Experienced needs:
• No differences between employees and athletes
• Acknowledgement
• The difference is only that they need acknowledgement on different things

Theoretical framework used:
• No differences between employees and athletes
• It is not possible to look at it like that, that you work with a specific theory
• Forget about following theories, it is not the way it works
• It is about having a broader perspective
• Make up a plan what you think from the beginning but be ready to change it
• I have a cognitive point of view in my working philosophy
• We can influence what we think and what we do as long as we are conscious of our thoughts and actions

Professional techniques/ tools used:
• No differences between employees and athletes
• None, I adapt everything depending on the situation
• The important is to find something that works for that specific individual
I use all tools but I use them in different ways
The goal can be the same but the way to get there can look different

**Organisation of your services to employees:**
- I work as an educator on a group level with companies
- It is often a bigger commitment, an educational assignment that has sometimes developed to individual consultation
- I feel that I have a higher credibility as an educator when working with companies
- Since I am quite young I don’t feel that I have the experiences from life that is needed to be a credible consultant for older managers
- If the consultation is connected to health or sports I feel that I have credibility
- I think it is easier for the employees to accept my message when I work with a group

**Barriers to start with mental life/skills training:**
- It has a little bit of a “psychology stamp”, they think that they don’t need a psychology consultant if there is nothing wrong with them
- Some people can feel a little uncomfortable telling a stranger private things
- Economics, is it something worth prioritising
- The manager can be a barrier, you have to have support from the manager
- Time

**To overcome barriers:**
- Show good references
- Good experiences
- Show how it can economically be beneficial for the company
- If you have done a good job it goes around
- If people have heard about you and come with a positive attitude it is a lot easier to get a good result

**Sports psychology consultants in the business world:**
- In certain small areas you can draw parallels from sport psychology to business
- If you are a sport psychology consultant that is what you should be working with
- You have to study and get experiences from work psychology
- You have to have knowledge about both sides if you want to work with both sides
- There are many similarities but the differences are bigger then the similarities
- Some parallels in communication and social psychology

**The potential benefits for companies to use a competent consultant:**
- Have an objective outlook
- Raise the effectiveness
- Solve problems
- Get people to start reflecting, to think in new ways
- Leadership
- Communication

**How to increase the acceptance of sport psychology consultants in business:**
- Sport psychology consultants should be accepted if they do what they are supposed to do
- They have to understand that there is a difference between working life and sports
• They should not be anything they do not know
• They should talk about sport psychology aspects
• Talk about successes in sports and let the company decide wherever it could be useful or not
• A lot from the sport psychology could work in business but it depends on the company
• You can go out and talk about sport psychology but do not about clichés because they will see through you
Profile – sport psychology consultant B

Background
Gender: Male
Age: 59
Education: Registered psychologist
Profession: Registered psychologist, work as a private consultant, has a family company

Experience from working in sports:
It started with a bandy team, and has now worked with a football team from the Premier Division of the Swedish Football League for six years and is involved in a combined University and top level sports program with golf players. Has worked with trainers, with teams and with individual players

Experience from working in business:
Has worked as a private consultant for the last 15 – 20 years. Worked for the municipality and the county council as a psychologist. Worked as a school-psychologist and worked with education of school leaders, he became interested of working with companies and started his own firm. The firm works with leadership, personal development, family consultation and sports.

Reason for working with sports:
- By chance
- I worked with a head master that was involved with the local bandy club, they needed help with some mental elements, how to focus and concentration and so on.

Experience of the shift:
- I did not find it difficult
- You use pretty much the same methods as in business setting
- How to focus in sports is the same thing as how to focus in the every day life

Business compared to sports

Getting in contact with clients:
- No differences between athletes and employees
- Mouth to mouth
- We do a work at one place and they tell someone else about the job we made
- We use were little on publicity

Employees wish to develop mental/ life skills:
- To work more efficiently
- Doing the right things when you are at work
- Create perspective and structure
- How do you use your energy when you are at work?
- Getting balance in life
- Managers that want to get better at their jobs but at the same time having a good family life
- How to handle criticism
Athletes wish to develop mental/life skills:
  • Performing better

Experienced demands:
  • No differences between athletes and employees
  • Both athletes and employees put very high demands on themselves
  • 95% of the demands they experience come from themselves
  • You are your own worst enemy

Experienced needs – employees:
  • They have often forgotten their needs
  • They need to stop and reflect about what needs they have
  • A lot of people have the need to do something fun just for them
  • To experience a little more fun in the every day life
  • They need more time for themselves

Experienced needs – athletes
  • To handle performances
  • To handle criticism from the environment
  • To handle media
  • It is often the easy parts that are difficult
  • A lot of top level athletes lack knowledge about the basics, like eating right, getting enough sleep and rest
  • Getting the basics right

Theoretical framework used:
  • I use both psychodynamic theory and cognitive theory
  • I use more cognitive theory with the athletes
  • Sport psychology has the advantage that it is more goal orientated and more structured

Professional strategies/techniques/tools used:
  • No differences between employees and athletes
  • I work very similar with athletes and employees, very similar
  • I work a lot with the basics
  • The basic of my strategy is that I am trying to get people to think broader, to get the basics in life right
  • You have to have balance between work (or sports), family and yourself in life
  • My main strategy is that if you have a good life you become a good manager, if you have a good life you become a good athlete
  • I often start with the profession (work or sports) and then move on to other areas in life
  • You are a certain way and if you want to change something you have to start with analyzing yourself
  • You have to become conscious about how you work
  • Often people want to change pattern in their life and then you have to start with investigating how you live your life
  • What tools I use later depends on the person
Organisation of your services to employees:
- No differences between athletes and employees
- Nowadays I work only with individual counselling
- You can work with individuals, groups, organisations or give lectures, it is good to be all round
- When we work with an organisation we start with doing an investigation to locate the problems and then we educate the employees and talk with groups, it is a very long process

Barriers to start with mental life/ skills training:
- In our culture we are not used to ask for help
- We think that we can handle everything on our own
- Some perceive mental training and psychology to be unserious and do not believe that it actually works but that mentality is starting to disappear
- Some believe that there has to be something wrong with you if you go to a psychology consultant

To overcome barriers:
- To always offer good quality services
- To create trust
- To make sure that you have understood what exactly your client wants to get help with
- If you have done a good job it goes around
- If people have heard about you and come with a positive attitude it is a lot easier to get a good result
- To have humour
- Many psychologist and therapist do only work with sick people, it is important to also work with healthy people
- Many psychology consultants are very good at theories but you have to be able to translate it to action

The benefits of sports psychology consultants in the business world:
- Clear goals
- Goal setting
- Get better structure
- Outlining the whole process from start until end
- Prioritising
- You could use the clarity from sports psychology and bring it to the business setting
- Sports has clearer goals then what you can see within companies

How to increase the acceptance of sport psychology consultants in business:
- Advertising
- The universities are doing a very poor job at advertising themselves
- The Universities have to give students the opportunity to get out to different workplaces
- The companies do not know about sport psychology, you have to go out and tell them what about it.
Appendix 8

Profile – sport psychology consultant C

Background
Gender: Male
Age: 34
Education: Swedish master in sport psychology, is studying to become a researcher
Profession: Assistant master at university, has his own company

Experience from working in sports:
Has worked for almost ten years with individual consultation, with a wide range of different sports. Has worked with teams, individual athletes and coaches.

Experience from working in business:
It has varied over time, has worked with well known Swedish companies and institutions with individual consultation, group consultations and some lectures now and then as a complement.

Reason for shifting towards business:
- I got a request
- Someone who knows someone and the word goes around
- I started and then it just spread
- I have not done any publicity
- But I think that many sport psychology consultant have to work with both sides in order to break even
- You have to work for a long time as a sport psychology consultant before you can live simply on sports
- The world of sport psychology is a pretty strict world already and it is not easy to come forward as new
- The really big sport associations pay as good money as the companies but then we are talking about Premier division of the Swedish Football League et cetera

Experience of the shift:
- You use pretty much the same methods as in sports
- The main part is about developing people further, if you look at human resource literature human development in groups or as individual is the same as in sport psychology it has just a different package
- The basics are the same and it is also the same when it comes to implementation
- I also have an education in cognitive behavioural therapy which I use a lot in business settings as well as in sports
- I think you need some competence in cognitive therapy to work outside of sports
- It is good be broad and to learn more about clinical sports psychology
- It is important to have a therapeutic understanding
- A broad base with connection to sport psychology is probably the best

Business compared to sports

Getting in contact with clients:
- No differences between athletes and employees
- Mouth to mouth
- Through contacts
- I know the most of the coaches in my city
- I know different networks of sport psychology consultants

**Employees wish to develop mental/life skills:**
- How to respond on different aspects of life
- Balance
- Stress management
- Life skills management, how to handle coping skills in different situations
- How to develop in their profession and as a person
- Performance in different areas
- Very similar to athletes but it is different environments

**Athletes wish to develop mental/life skills:**
- Athletes have pretty clear goals about what to achieve during a limited period of time
- Athletes have a clearer goal setting
- It is clearer what athletes want and what is to be expected from them unfortunately that is not always the case at workplaces
- Athletes are more goal orientated

**Experienced demands:**
- I think the athletes put a little bit higher demands on themselves
- The athletes have higher expectations on their performance than employees
- For the athletes it is a lot about winning and being best
- In business settings it is more about relations

**Experienced needs:**
- The similarities are that everyone wants to learn more about themselves develop and improve their performances in different contexts
- To perform, it is a different situation for athletes and employees but they experience the same demands
- The difference is that it is different environments, sports have their demands and business settings have their demands

**Theoretical framework used:**
- No differences between employees and athletes
- It is a mix of general psychological theories and more specific theories from sport psychology
- There is a cognitive base in all traditional psychology and sport psychology nowadays
- Theories are models that you never employ just as they are but they are good as a starting point
- In the beginning is easy to make the mistake to support yourself too much on the theories
- Every situation is unique
- It is a handicraft, you have to be good at that part too, not only the academic knowledge
Professional strategies/techniques/tools used:
- No differences between employees and athletes
- I use all kinds of tools depending on the situation and the individual
- It is traditional tools from sport psychology and many tools from the cognitive behavioural therapy
- I get all kinds of different tools from both worlds
- It goes both ways

Organisation of your services to employees:
- It depends on their request
- Companies often send you individuals that the perceive have some difficulties
- I have more and more chosen to work only in sports because I think it is more fun

Barriers to start with mental life/skills training:
- Money
- The companies think they can handle things by themselves
- I think there might be some misbelieves against the coaching conception since there are many people who have taken a coaching course over a weekend and start to work as a coach but have not got the competence.
- There are some prejudices against sport psychology but they are becoming fewer

To overcome barriers:
- More students with a basic competence in the area
- More people are getting started and demand competence, skills and handicraft and that is the way to work
- Even if it takes time things are starting to happen so it is just to keep up the good work

The benefits of sports psychology consultants in the business world:
- Most things when it comes to developing competence
- Better self consciousness

How to increase the acceptance of sport psychology consultants in business:
- Make it clear and visible
- Be open with it
- Try to get away from people who create a lot of weird myths around it
- Finding the basic understanding for what it is about, that it is easy and that it works
- To show that there is a lot of competence in the area
- There are many good ideas, like the program in Halmstad where you get a basic understanding for traditional psychology, that opens up more and creates a broader base