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Improving the Order Receiving Process

Case Study: Ekmans AB

Bachelor Thesis in Business Administration

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of the thesis is to identify problems cooperating departments suffer from, create solutions and discover ways to successfully implement the changes. A case study of Ekmans AB has been conducted to accomplish this.

Background: In today's business world competition is fiercer than ever. New companies enter the market and new technologies and working methods are introduced which requires the companies to work proactively to foresee opportunities. But even if the companies are aware of all these external factors, they also need to look internally to see what they can improve and make more efficient in order to stay competitive. Therefore, it is important for companies to be ready to change both structure and culture to be more efficient.

Method: The method is based on a qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews. A total of 20 interviews were conducted. The interviewees possess different positions within the company, ranging from the top management down through the organizational hierarchy.

Conclusion: The study shows that problems can arise from miscommunication, outdated ways of handling order receiving and a poorly chosen organizational structure. To solve these problems companies has to realize the importance of change. When modification the organization a company has to take the organizational culture into consideration. It is important that the employees feel that they are a part of the change instead of just seeing it from sideline. Moreover, the management has to make sure they are thoroughly in their work regarding change; they have to follow up each alteration to make sure that it is actually implemented. Moreover, standardization is the key for organizations wishing improve and become more efficient. The result of the study showed that it is first when these criterions are fulfilled that the company can expect to successfully implement changes.

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1 Introduction

The first chapter introduces the reader to the case study. It begins with the background of the subject of the research and of the company investigated. The section then presents the problem discussion and purpose of the thesis.

1.1 Background

In today's volatile business environment companies suffer from problems of staying competitive and sometimes even surviving. New companies emerge which makes the competition tougher and the battle for the existing customers harder. Furthermore, new technologies and working methods are introduced which requires the companies to work proactively to foresee possibilities and windows of opportunity in the market. Along with the development technology-wise the globalization and customer demand has increased (Gu & Xue, 2009) creating a harsh environment for company to exist in and make a living off. Moreover, cooperation between the departments is of increasing importance to improve different processes (Jacobssen & Thorsvik, 2002).

With increased competition and fewer options to stay ahead, companies today have started to focus on internal processes. Concepts from Asia, such as Total Quality Management have created new opportunities for companies to change and become more efficient (Johnson, 2004). The focus today lies in being fully aware of every little part in the production process. There is a need to constantly search for improvements which can lead to shorter lead times and in the end make to company more efficient. However, when the Production department has become more efficient organizations need to look into the remaining areas to achieve maximum efficiency.

Production is only one out of many steps a manufacturing firm takes to develop and deliver an order. Focusing on improving the other, more administrative processes is a way for companies to increase their competitiveness and reduce lead times. This area has not got the same attention as manufacturing processes most likely due to the fact that increasing production efficiency is of more relevance and use. However, when manufacturing has been improved companies need to look into their other processes to reduce all possible waste of time.

Discover ways to improve a process involving several departments are difficult. It is not only about identifying the issues but also about creating solutions. This involves changing the company and this has proven through history to be easier said than done (Beerel, 2009). The organizational culture plays a vital part here and needs, among many different aspects, to be analyzed and investigated.

Ekmans Jönköping AB is specialized in printed packaging's which includes printed industrial packaging, cartons and retail packaging. They employ approximately 150 people and have a turnover of SEK 350 million.

For years Ekmans has been the dominant player in the market. They were having almost 90 % market share in the plastic bag-industry in the Nordic countries a few years back (E. Liljegren, personal communication, 10/03/2010). They managed to achieve this by creating and keeping a good relationship with their customers at an early stage of their life span. As their customers (which include companies such as H&M, Gina Tricot and Stadium) grew, so did Ekmans. The company remained unrivalled in the 80s, 90s and beginning of the new millennium. The strategy to remain ahead of any competitors was to keep investing in capital and always have the latest technology available (E. Liljegren, personal communication, 10/03/2010). This was a successful strategy for a lot of years but after some time the evolution of the technology inevitable slowed down. Competitors were finally able to get machinery of equal quality and started to take market shares from Ekmans.

Ekmans are suffering from inefficient administrative processes (E. Liljegren, personal communication, 10/03/2010). The time between an order is received until production starts are taking too long. They know problems exist but they do not know how they emerged and how to get rid of them. The company has always done things “their way” and has difficulties to see the organization from an objective point of view. They have therefore decided to outsource the task to get a fresh approach for how the flow should be handled.

1.2 Problem Discussion

For a company to stay competitive it has to work internally. The organizational body can be the difference between success and failure. Having one department fully functional in its most efficient way is often a rather straightforward task. The problem is when several departments have to cooperate and still reach the individual maximum efficiency.

In order for a company to reach their best possible practices they must continuously learn from experience and adapt (Dosi, Nelson & Winter, 2001). Knowing what kind of faults one have is the first step towards a more efficient organization. When problems are found they need to be dealt with. Since every part of the company will affect the products and services sold to the customer, whether indirect or direct, all need to strive towards the same goal.

After discovering and creating solutions for how to deal with the problems the next part is changing the organization. It is important for an organization to learn how to change or risk failing (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008). Organizational change is a broad subject and an important part of this thesis. Therefore the research will identify some theoretical concepts within the subject to increase the knowledge in the area. The culture of an organization is one subject which almost always receives attention when it comes to change in an organization (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008). It is important to understand the culture of a company to be able to change it successfully and Ekmans is no exception.

Ekmans is a SME with a rather rich organizational culture because of its history and ways in how processes have been handled. This has lead to the company has got stuck in old habits (M. Månsson, personal communication, 23/02/2010). Ekmans has implemented many efficiency processes in the production part of the company but still the administrative department has not come as far (E. Liljegren, personal communication, 10/03/2010). Utilizing the administrative departments as efficient as their production process is something Ekmans must be able to handle to stay competitive.

Ekmans concern with the order receiving process serve as a great opportunity for an academic research and as an example for similar studies. Ekmans is an ordinary company suffering from unidentified problems. By investigating the company it is possible to discover and thoroughly investigate certain problems that are most likely found at many manufacturing companies around the world. There is also an opportunity to investigate how to successfully change and the importance of the organizational culture.

Most research on how to improve efficiency in manufacturing companies are about how to improve production. The process from order receiving to production is an area which sometimes gets overlooked. Investigating, evaluating and ultimately helping Ekmans is an opportunity to shed light on these problems and more thoroughly scrutinize them. A focus on administrative process improvements creates an interesting opportunity to investigate a topic less focused on. This increases the possibility to discover new aspects and therefore contribute to the field of study. Lastly, part of the research involves gathering a quite heavy empirical base and this allows the authors to create their own ideas, in addition to the aforementioned improvements suggestions, regarding change and culture in general.

Efficiency and change are topics which have received a lot of attention lately (a search through academic databases using 'efficiency' and 'change' as key words resulted in 794,761 and 2,791,058 hits) and are definitely of great academic interest. Firms have spent a lot of time and resources to improve the efficiency of production these last couple of years and there are a lot of academic research covering it. Next natural step for firms to increase efficiency is a focus on administrative processes and therefore academic research targeting this is relevant. Furthermore, administrative processes exist in every type of company and findings in the thesis should be applicable to other industries as well increasing the relevance and interest of the chosen topic.

The problem discussion is narrowed down to the following research questions:

- *How can the administrative part of the order receiving process at* Ekmans *be improved?*
- *How much impact has organizational culture on implementing change?*
- *Based on theory and empirical materials, why is there a resistance towards change and why is it so difficult to alter an organization?*

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of the thesis is to identify problems cooperating departments suffer from, create solutions and discover ways to successfully implement the changes. A case study of Ekmans AB has been conducted to accomplish this.

2 Research Design and Method

This chapter begins with a discussion about the chosen school of science and research approach used in the thesis. The section then continues with describing the chosen method for gathering the empirical data and how the data was collected to allow the reader to fully understand how the research has been conducted.

2.1 Theory of Science

It is important to choose a relevant scientific approach to understand the aim, methodology and purpose. There are quite a few schools of thought in this subject and the two most commonly used are positivism and hermeneutics. The main differences between those two are a focus on explanation and on interpretation (Andersson, 1979).

The school of thought that is used in the thesis is the hermeneutic view and compared to its counter-part positivism it is focused on interpretation. The hermeneutic approach was first a way of interpreting texts, publication and scripts, mostly theological ones. The central idea that lays the foundation for hermeneutics is that the researcher analyses the text meanwhile he or she tries to understand it from the author's point of view (Bryman & Bell, 2003). When applying the hermeneutic school of thought a qualitative approach is usually selected. The researcher tries to understand and interpret the result rather than to find the absolute truth, since according to hermeneutics there is no absolute truth because every person interprets what happens around him or her differently. Therefore, the scientist therefore takes a subjective role (Patel & Davidsson, 2003). Wallen (1996) explains it as "learning through interpretation".

Language and dialog plays an important role in this school of thought and the researcher's previous understanding leads to new understanding about the subject through interpretation of the dialogue (Eriksson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 1997). Moreover, Eriksson & Wiedersheim (1997) talks about in order to understand the organization in one's study one must also understand the individuals in the organization. The hermeneutic view seeks to see the theoretical problem in its entirety instead of dissecting it into smaller pieces (Patel & Davidsson, 2003). The hermeneutic view is a common tool within social- and cultural science and focuses a lot on human emotions, feelings and reaction (Patel & Davidsson, 2003). In the beginning of the interviews the authors did not have a lot of knowledge about the company and the problems they were suffering within the order receiving process. With the help of the dialogue from the interviews an understanding was created and the authors could expand their knowledge about the company and its problems through interpretation of the results.

An important difference between the two schools of thoughts is their view of the researcher's previous experience, in positivism it is a hinder which needs to be taken out of the equation but in the hermeneutic school of thoughts it is seen as an asset (Patel & Davidsson, 2003). This thesis applies the hermeneutic assumptions but it is not followed it in the strictest sense. However, the purpose of the thesis is interpretive and investigating in nature which makes the hermeneutic view the best choice. The way data is collected in the research is in a good fit with the hermeneutic view.

When conducting an interpretative study with a hermeneutic foundation it is important to be aware of the pre-understandings the authors might have from previous experience. However, pre-understanding does not have to be something negative since the purpose is to interpret and get a deeper understanding of the topic. The importance lies in finding a balance between using previous experience as an asset and not getting stuck in old ideas and perceptions.

2.2 Research Approach

There are three major research approaches; deductive-, inductive- and abductive approach. To be able to analyse and interpret the empirical findings it is important to choose a research approach which fits with the selected school of science and purpose of the thesis.

This research will have an inductive approach. The premise behind the inductive approach is that theory is a result of observations (Bryman & Bell, 2003). The thesis is about discovering problems and not hypothesis testing which makes the inductive approach the rational choice. The thesis is using the hermeneutic school of science and the inductive approach is often used associated with that school of science (Bryman & Burgess, 1999).

Furthermore, the inductive approach has proven to be a better fit than the deductive in similar researches conducted through history; when Sackman (1992) was appointed to study existence of subcultures in an organization he choose the inductive approach because it created the possibility to discover unidentified cultures. This is something a research with a deductive approach would not be able to do. The purpose of this thesis shares a similarity with Sackman's research in its way of trying to discover something unknown. The abductive approach is the most suitable for the type of research the thesis conducts because of its opportunity to verify the theory created from an inductive approach with a deductive structure (Bryman & Bell, 2003). However, time- and scope-constraints hinder this approach from being an option.

With this thesis the researchers are trying to reach a deeper understanding of how problems emerges in administrative processes and the inductive way of approaching and tackling a research problem is without a doubt more suitable than the deductive approach and is therefore selected.

The inductive approach is not without weaknesses and there are pitfalls that need to be avoided and taken into consideration when analyzing the empirical material:

There is a risk involved with the inductive approach that the researcher lacks knowledge about the scope of the theory and if it is general in nature. This is a result of the theory being based on empirical data gathered from a special workplace (Patel & Davidson, 2003). To avoid suffering from this issue the researchers read a lot of theories and previous research within the subject (a more thorough description of the process can be seen below). Still, the issue has to be acknowledged when interpreting and drawing conclusions from the data since only one company is used in the empirical findings.

The use of the word “theory” in the inductive approach can sometimes be deceptive. Because of the structure of the approach sometimes the end result is nothing more than empirical generalizations (Bryman & Bell, 2003). It is important to scrutinize the conclusion and try to objectively question if the end result is more than generalizations.

Lastly when performing an inductive research the researcher also needs to be aware of his or her previous ideas and assumptions about the topic, since they will most likely affect the result (Patel & Davidson, 2003). It is debateable though if this actually is a concern but rather a benefit. However, the researchers lacked experience in the field (hence the research and search for increased knowledge in the topic from the very beginning) and this possible concern is therefore of very little relevance.

The research is conducted with hermeneutic traits and with a type of an inductive approach. As aforementioned the inductive approach is about creating theories from research (Bryman & Bell, 2003). This research however included theory-gathering in the earliest step of the process. This is because a hermeneutic approach is about interpreting data (Andersson, 1979). To make a good interpretation of the data an increased knowledge base within the area was needed. Moreover, the researchers also needed to improve their ability to understand the subject. Therefore theories within different related topics were studied before the gathering of the empirical data. After the first meetings and interviews the researchers continued to deepening the knowledge through more theory-gathering. It became clearer which theoretical areas should be focused on and because of this some theories which had previously been collected were scrapped. There were a constant going back and forth between theory and practice until the two became a good fit.

What this practically meant was that the theory gathered made it possible to interpret the nature of the problems and discover the reasons behind them. By involving theory at an early stage and constantly returning to it through the research it became possible to make a better interpretation of the data and increase the academic relevance of the thesis.

2.3 Choice of Method

When choosing a method it is important to have one that is in line with the previously selected inductive approach. There are two major schools of methods with several subclasses: qualitative and quantitative. The first is the method mostly associated with the inductive approach (Bryman & Bell, 2003). The method is interpreting, by investigating how players interact in a certain environment it is possible to grasp functions of society as a whole. It is also constructional; by interaction between individuals the social features are created (Bryman & Bell, 2003). The qualitative method is sometimes characterized by a lack of structure and the researchers usually tend to create their own interpretation on how to use the method (Patel & Davidson, 2003). In the beginning of this thesis a rather unstructured approach was chosen, different theories were studied to aid the researchers in the interpretation of the results. After most of the interviews were done, patterns were found, and some of the earlier studied theories could be removed.

The quantitative approach focuses more on testing theories and following strict rules of observation (Bryman & Bell, 2003). Some important differences between qualitative and quantitative research are as follows: Qualitative are focused on words, perception of attendees, proximity, creating theories, focusing on processes, unstructured, rich data, micro focus against the quantitative which is focused on numbers, perception of the researcher, distance, testing of theories, statistics, reliable data, macro focus (Bryman & Bell, 2003).

The purpose of the thesis is to investigate, discover and solve a problem; there are no intentions of testing theories in the research. A qualitative approach was chosen because of its connection with the inductive research approach, its fit with the purpose of the thesis and its lack of structure which allows a free and flexible use of it.

When using the qualitative approach it is always important to scrutinize the data, because of the approach the reliability of the research is not an important aspect. It is not reasonable to expect this research to be repeated with the same-end results. Instead it is more relevant to focus on trustworthiness and authenticity (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Trustworthiness can be divided into four subcategories: credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. It is important when the empirical data is gathered and analyzed to go back to these criterions to test the academic relevance of the research. The data is gathered through relatively large in-depth interviews. This enhances the trustworthiness of the data. By interpreting the information gathered from several employees, combining them and discovering a pattern or recurring theme the trustworthiness and authenticity of the research will become clear. The transferability of the data is questionable for this thesis. Some of the problems were very general in nature and could be applied to many other companies while other problems were very specific to Ekmans and will be difficult to apply to other scenarios.

The majority of the empirical data is gathered through interviews. A qualitative approach to interviews has a focus on the interviewee's opinions rather than the researches goals. It is also less strict and the interviewee is encouraged to "run wild" with his or her thoughts (Bryman & Bell, 2003). The interviews in this research are of a semi-structured nature. When conducting a semi-structured interview the researchers have chosen themes or questions that are going to be discussed with the interviewee. The person is allowed a lot of freedom when answering the question and extra question may be added during the interview. It is all very flexible (Bryman & Bell, 2003). During the interviews the authors wanted to have rather a consistent discussion with all of the interviewed people while still give them the chance to "run wild" in their thoughts when necessary. Therefore a manuscript was created beforehand with both open and closed questions. This also gave the opportunity to include follow-up questions during the interviews. Semi-structured interviews are also chosen because of the good fit between the model and the purpose of the research. If the research has a very specific and concrete focus the semi-structure interviews are the best option within the qualitative method of conducting interviews (Bryman & Bell, 2003). There are several strengths with qualitative interviews, and the most important one is that every interviewee can give more information and be more thoroughly with their opinions, they can explain their reasoning. The most obvious weakness is time. This method of interviewing people is a lot more time-demanding then a quantitative approach but due to the construction of the research and the size of the group involved it was still an obvious choice.

The biggest issue with qualitative data is that it often generates a large amount of material which can be complicated to analyze (Bryman & Bell, 2003). It is therefore important to choose the right way of interpreting the data. Some strategies which can be used are analytic induction and grounded theory. Analytic induction is a method where a hypothesis is created; it is then compared to gathered data. If the hypothesis fails it gets reformulated and tried again. This process is ongoing until the hypothesis is accepted (Bryman & Bell, 2003). Grounded Theory is the most common way of analyzing qualitative data (Bryman & Bell, 2003). The basic idea behind Grounded Theory is that theory is created through gathering and analyzing data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The problem statement is formulated in a very open and wide way and is expected to change during the research. The gathering of data and creating of theory goes hand in hand during the process (Patel & Davidson, 2003). The material is then entered into a process called Open Coding. The process is about breaking the information gathered from the data down into smaller aspects called codes. These codes are then named, conceptualized and finally put into larger categories (Patel & Davidson, 2003). These categories are scrutinized and finalised into "concepts". They are distinguishable phenomenon from the coding and the base of the theory (Bryman & Bell, 2003). A common problem when coding is that information is lost because of problem of categorizing it. Furthermore, context may also disappear when the information is remodelled (Bryman & Bell, 2003). This thesis is compiling and analysing the empirical data in the light of Grounded Theory. After the interviews were conducted several main problems areas were created. The information gathered was put in the different categories depending on the fit between information and area. Grounded theory is straightforward and easy applicable which encourages the use of it.

2.4 Gathering of Data

To conduct the research, a company suffering from internal organizations problems was needed. Ekmans was approached and the research was done in the shape of a consulting assignment.

The research was done by focusing deeply and thoroughly on one company. This option was selected because it made it possibly to dig deep and understand why certain problems arise and create realistic solutions. The idea was to present fewer problems but deeper understanding of the nature of them.

The first step was to have a meeting with managers and key people within the organization to discuss and create a clear purpose of the audit. This was followed by getting a bird-eyes perspective of the information flow from order receiving to production. This was done by receiving different sheets about the structure of the organization, in order to see how the managers intended and wanted the organization to work.

After this, 20 interviews with people within the organization were conducted. The interviewees were the employees working at the different related departments and their managers. The process took three days and all of the interviews were done in Swedish. The questionnaire was sent to the management beforehand so they could give feedback and input about it. The interviews where done face-to-face with two researcher and one interviewee per time. One was asking the questions and the second person documented the information. During the interviews audio recorders were used in order to make sure that all the information was saved. This also gave the possibility to listen to the interviews several times again and get a clearer picture of re-occurring patterns. The questionnaire was from the beginning quite large and the first interview took approximately one hour. This was because the first person had to give out basic information about the culture, how the organization was structured and describes the order-process very thoroughly. The questionnaire was quite heavily reduced after this since it became obvious many questions where repetitive and redundant. The other interviews varied between 25-40 minutes depending on the interviewee willingness to contribute and give relevant information. The interviewees did not get much information pre-hand and this was a way of keeping the interviews less formal and more like a discussion.

After the interviews were conducted several main problems had been observed and the next step in the process was gathering and putting all information together which concerned a certain problem to get a clear overview of the data.

3 Frame of Reference

This chapter begins with presenting ideas and the basic concepts of organizational structure, culture and change. These are broad correlated subjects directly related to the company investigated and to the purpose of this thesis. The section then provides theoretical tools commonly used for improving organizations and processes which will be implemented when crafting the suggested solutions.

3.1 Organizational Structure

According to Mintzberg (1983) organizations and the structure of such are related to two fundamental requirements. The first is dividing labour into certain tasks and tell how these tasks are coordinated in order to reach a goal or perform an activity. Hatch and Cunliffe (2006) also states that organizational theory is important in most parts of a company. Strategy, finance, marketing, IT, operations, HR and communication are all affected and people working in these areas must be aware of how the organization are functioning (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006). Because of these connections to many areas of the firm the reason for studying organizational theory becomes obvious according to them. Structure comes from the Latin word “structura” which means conglutination, lying of masonry or building system (Bakka, Fivelsdal & Lindkvist, 2006). They continue to define the expression as how to order and arrange multiple components into one working entity.

Within an organization, management usually try to visualize a formal structure where roles and responsibilities are planned. This is often displayed by different positions in the organization arranged in a pyramid like hierarchy (Bakka, Fivelsdal & Lindkvist, 2006). An example of this formal structure at Ekmans AB is shown in the appendix (see Appendix. 4). This map of authority inside an organization is important in order for employees to see a clear and direct link between people and departments (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006). The hierarchy is one out of three parts of the social structure of an organization presented by Hatch and Cunliffe (2006). The others are division of labour and coordination mechanisms. The division of labour is who does what in the organization in terms of task assignment (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006). Compared to hierarchy of authority which is more concerned with the relationships between people in their reporting duties, the division of labour also states the fact of who is dependent on whom and what expectations that will bring on. Coordination mechanisms refers to formal rules and informal given routines that the organization uses to prosper the social structure (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006).

The physical structure of organizations are concerned with how department are located within an office and how the physical appearance of an organization can affect the impression from outsiders (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006). Hatch and Cunliffe (2006) argue that the physical location of employees can have affect on their performance and be an effective tool for management to improve the company. The identity and team spirit are also influenced by how the workplace is arranged (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006).

3.2 Culture

A vital part for a company’s success is their competitive advantages. The Windows operating system from Microsoft and Dell’s mass customization are both important reasons for the impressive performance made by these firms. However, these capabilities can be learned and imitated by others. What makes the difference and cannot be replicated as easily is the culture within the organization that makes these creations possible (Charan, 2002).

The culture in an organization or for that matter in a country is an abstraction but creates powerful forces that shape the organization. Not understanding these forces and how they work will make us vulnerable to them (Schein, 2004). Culture is clearly an important subject and according to Martin (2002) a strong culture will lead to organizational progress such as increased productivity and profitability. Furthermore, Alvesson and Sveningsson (2008) conclude that the culture within an organization is an essential part for success and even more crucial when the organization is going through changes. Several managerial issues are linked to the culture, such as commitment and motivation, prioritization and resource allocation and competitive advantages (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008). Mole (2003) takes this argument even further and states that everything we do is a result of the culture we are living in.

Martin (2002) argues that in order to do an analysis or study of culture one must first define the expression. However, the definition is ambiguous because there is no common definition that researchers have agreed upon (Martin, 2002). Taking a broader view of the context and meaning for culture one have to go back to the anthropologist definition. A widely used and accepted one is that of E. B. Tylor (1871): “A complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (cited in Crognier, 2005, p.2). Schein (2004) argues that culture has been used to describe several different meanings over the years. Through a more social point of view, the word has been adapted to define people such as “cultured” suggesting someone to be sophisticated. Another use is the description of rituals and traits developed within a society shared by its members.

Organizational culture as a term was first debated in 1979 in the article “On Studying Organizational Cultures” by A. M. Pettigrew (Hofstede et al, 1990). Emphasize is put on the climate in the organization, practices undertaken and the handling of people (Schein, 2004). A shared meaning, interpretation, values and norms are constant characteristics that occur in the literature regarding the subject (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008). Out of these terms Schein has developed a definition of culture in groups and organizations as: “a pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptations and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (Schein, 2004, p.17).

3.3 Change

3.3.1 Organizational Change

According to most authors who writes about change today is a time of turbulence and radical change (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008).We are constantly fed with information and pieces of news that tells about changes in the consumption- and labour markets, globalization and new values among employees which create the need for organizational change (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008). It is often said that organizations needs to learn how to adapt to these changes or risk meeting a dark future (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008). In today’s modern society situation the role of change is exceptionally high: “Not since the industrial revolution has the stakes been so high concerning how companies have to handle change” (Beer & Nohria, 2000, p.133). Most traditional types of businesses have in theory accepted that they need to change or simply disappear (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008). The general opinion about change is that it is seen as something positive and necessary, but the topic has rarely been critically scrutinized (Sturdy & Grey, 2003). Initiative for organizational change is common and requires a substantial amount of time from both the managers and their employees. In a British study 94 % of the investigated organizations had experienced planned organizational changes during 1997 (Ogbonna & Wilkinson, 2003).

The art of understanding and handle change has developed to an industry that comprises of consulting companies, management- and leadership gurus, the media, business magazines, CEOs, politicians and business schools (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008). This has led to managers having a large amount of different theories and tools to their assistance when trying to conduct an organizational change.

A recurring theme when discussing organizational change is culture (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008). Organizational culture is either seen as the most prominent factor or at least something that has to be taken seriously if one wants to create good conditions for change (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008). Many researchers believe that one important reason to why attempts to change organizations fails is that the organizational culture has been neglected (Balogun & Johnson, 2004). With this in mind one could say that very few, or if even any organizations are "free" from a culture (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008). Therefore the organizational culture is one important factor that one has to be aware of when trying to change an organization (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008).

3.3.2 Cultural Change

Linked to the organizational change comes the cultural change within the organization. Often changing the way a business works and thrives will mean making a cultural change within the organization. This one thing might be the most important way to complete a transformation for the better (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008). However, Alvesson and Sveningsson (2008) also refer to the fact that there are three different views on this matter. The first one is that a change of culture is possible by actions taken by top managers. Using managerial techniques to shape values, traditions and rituals at the workplace the manager is able to convert bad habits into useful solutions.

Bernick (2002) has written an article supporting this approach were a company succeeded in changing their performance for the better by first changing their culture within the organization. The managers in the particular firm focused on four areas where they implemented tools for cultural change. First they made culture visible in the organization. Stating goals, values and desired behaviours made employees aware of how everyone should contribute (Bernick, 2002). Second, a creation of "growth development leaders" to mentor the change gave the vision hands on access and thirdly surveys among the employees gave the managers updated information (Bernick, 2002). Lastly the company developed a habit of celebrating progress and success with internal awards and prizes (Bernick, 2002). Taking these actions gave the business a new start in a different cultural behaviour which leads to increasing performance and lower employee turnover (Bernick, 2002).

Alvesson and Sveningsson (2008) continues to describe the second view out of the three mentioned above which is that the managerial actions does not have such a large influence towards changing the organizational culture. The view emphasizes the fact that the deep characteristics imbedded in the organization are very difficult to influence. In this way, managers can only remotely affect the culture for the better. The last view says that organizational culture cannot be controlled and that the outcome of it is mostly influenced by the local cultures, work tasks and personal background (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008).

Schein (2004) chooses another approach when he describes change through culture in the organization. It beings by realizing the difference between an organization in various stages; founding and early growth, midlife and maturity and decline, the culture changes by diverse means. In the start-up phase the culture has positive characteristics and managers should promote it via articulating values and developing the culture further (Schein, 2004). In the midlife the culture becomes more diverse and different groups of cultures might be present within the organization. Locating those that gives the business an advantage and encouraging these are vital for management. Likewise, to find and remove those that harm the organization or turn those into something better (Schein, 2004). At the end of the organizations life-cycle cultures are stuck and very deeply imprinted in the minds of employees and managers. Trying to change the culture at this stage often turns into dramatic events such as scandals or turnarounds (Schein, 2004). Finally, culture and above all cultural change is hard to define and therefore difficult to evaluate. The interpretation of individuals is often what makes the difference (Martin, 2002).

Problems that occur when trying to change the culture within a company are many. According to Gagliardi (1986) organizational culture can be seen in different ways. One is the understanding of culture as a vague and not so easy to spot phenomenon that is virtually impossible to change. At a deeper level people feel connected and part of the same group. This unity becomes stronger as the values and rituals coherent to the group becomes more diffuse and rooted (Gagliardi, 1986). Trying to change such a culture will take large efforts from the organization in forcing individuals to use new rituals and believe in new values. However, when this pressure of change is lifted most of the new cultural identities will get lost and the organization will go back to its previous culture (Gagliardi, 1986). Organizations do however evolve and so does the culture within. In these cases Gagliardi (1986) states this is closely linked to charismatic leaders that bring new and different values with them to the organization.

In the cultural theories of organizations the role of the leader is divided. The first view argued by researchers are that a leader has no real power to change culture but only to affect it to a very small extent (Gagliardi, 1986). Actions taken in order to impact culture at a company might therefore be useless and unnecessary. There is though another view that says that these actions are actually effective and that leaders can change the culture around them to a greater extent (Gagliardi, 1986).

Gagliardi (1986) also talks about the virtuous circle and the vicious circle regarding cultural change. The good version, the virtuous circle is present in organizations where values and identity of the organization are defined and strengthened in order to be more cohesion. In the end this brings the group of people together and competences can be used to its most efficient levels (Gagliardi, 1986). If tasks that the firm is facing fits to these competences a circle is formed where culture is further developed and strengthened (Gagliardi, 1986). If they do not fit, the vicious circle is formed where bad habits and an inefficient culture is nurtured for the worse (Gagliardi, 1986).

3.3.3 The Forces Behind Change

3.3.3.1 External Forces

In many cases organizational change are seen as a direct result of external political, cultural, technical, demographical and economical forces (Child, 2005).

Political forces are for example new laws or changes to the current laws, especially when it comes to international trade with both products and services (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008). It is often said that the competition is developing from being just local to being global. Therefore globalization is often mentioned as an important factor that affects organizational change (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008). Along with the internationalization comes increasing demands on the organizations to standardize and make their processes more efficient. Moreover, they need to become more transparent towards the general public, partially through the use of control systems and tools such as lean thinking and Total Quality Management (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008). Societal and cultural values push for organizational changes. Organizations follow popular trends and changes according to what is seen as acceptable by the general public (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008).

Technological changes affect organizations in several different ways. The development of new and sophisticated technology creates new methods for how the organizations can do their work which creates another demand for them to change (Child, 2005). For example the Internet has revolutionized the way organizations handle their business today and an organizations that do not take advantage of the opportunities the Internet provides are very likely to fail. Demographical changes may affect the organizations recruitment possibilities, for example the supply of highly educated personal versus people with lower or none education at all (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008). Lastly economical forces may play a big role, a recent example is the last recession, the number of people who got laid off and the amount of companies that did not or just barely survived (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008).

3.3.3.2 Internal Forces

There are internal forces that affect organizational changes, even though they are a bit fewer (Dawson, 2003). Internal forces are employees which have new ideas how things could be done as a result of new technological changes. Another internal force is new people in management roles that have a new perception on how things should be done in the company (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008). Lastly people in management positions may find new goals or interests in life which in turn can lead to organizational change (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008).

In most cases there is not one single force alone that contributes to an organizational change but in most cases it is a combination of several of them or all, both external and internal, that contributes to the organizational change (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008).

3.3.4 Why Change Fails

There is quite a low success rate of change for many organizations (Beerel, 2009). It is therefore important to identify the reasons behind this to be able to counter it when trying to implement a change project oneself.

One common reason behind the failure of implementing changes is that the change responded to a reality created by the management and not the actual new reality (Beerel, 2009). Moreover, in many cases, people fail to understand the change required to adapt to the new reality (Beerel, 2009). There are several reasons why changes fail which involved the employees and the management; in many cases the people involved in the implementation does not believe the change will respond well to the new reality, this causes them to feel forced into the situation. In others situations the management fails to deal with the employees inherent resistance to change (Beerel, 2009). Moreover, employees affected by the change are often not involved in the decision-making. Furthermore, the management sometimes does not plan the change-process thoroughly enough. This causes problems to quickly emerge and creates stress (Beerel, 2009). Lastly, in some cases, they impact of the value tensions for the involved people are not scrutinized (Beerel, 2009).

Miller (2004) found that 70 % of projects fail to secure their anticipated benefits because organizations install new systems, processes, practices, but fail to implement them fully. Miller (2004) presents several common reasons why change so often fails:

- Changes take too long to deliver their intended benefits.
- People get overwhelmed by the workload.
- It is increasingly difficult to build sustaining employee commitment to new changes.
- Organizations become unable to deliver their core strategies owing to high levels of resistance.
- Limited genuine individual and organizational learning takes place, leading to over-reliance of external expert support.
- Leaders' credibility is undermined as they "over-promise and under-deliver".

In the same article Miller (2004) followed a company that was installing a new business system. The net result of the installation was customer attrition and increasing numbers of sales staff leaving (Miller, 2004). An independent audit showed that it was not the system itself that was the cause to the problem, but it was the management. The leaders in the company had failed to acknowledge the importance of following through the implementation fully (Miller, 2004). The employees did not understand the importance and the reason for the change, the change was implemented in only some parts of the organization and the leaders themselves were inexperienced in implementing change.

3.3.5 Resistance to Change

Different actors in- and outside the company might be resistant to organizational change because of a different opinion about what is good for the company compared to the advocators of the organizational change (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008). According to Sennet (1999) employees that has been working at the company for a long period of time are more loyal towards the company itself rather than their super ordinates and can gainsay the latter's plans to organizational change if they feel it is not in the best interest of the company. Therefore it is important to see every employee as an individual rather than treating them as a big group (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008). According to Reicher et al. (1997) the management cannot implement an organizational change in a perfect way without having the ones affected by the change in mind and listen to their concerns. To prevent the possibility of resistance towards change the managers can involve the employees in the changes, make them a part of them and be open-minded about their opinions (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008). Dawson (2003) discusses about that resistance is often seen as a result of:

- Substantive change in the job (changes in competence and skill demands)
- Reduction in economic security or loss of work (loss of employment)
- Psychological threat (real or perceived)
- Disruption of social arrangements (new working conditions)
- Lowering of status (redefinitions of working relations)

There is a general opinion in the mind of people that change is bad, it is something we dislike (Beerel, 2009). To understand this opinion one must first understand the nature of change. Changes arrive with new realities (Beerel, 2009). Most new realities do not affect one self and are therefore often ignored. This instinct causes problems because sometimes new realities which concerns one ends up being overlooked (Beerel, 2009). With the new realities follow value tensions. This means that one's priorities and behaviour are forced to change because of the new reality (Beerel, 2009). This involves changing our belief systems, concepts and skills set. To be able to handle change well one has to have good adaptive capacity (Beerel, 2009). As the name suggests, this is one's personal capacity to respond to change. This is not something inherent but a skill one needs to learn, it takes practice (Beerel, 2009). Taking these different aspects into consideration it is not hard to see why people resist change and when these factors are taken into an organizational context it becomes even worse. Beerel (2009) states a couple of explanation behind this:

- People are less in control since the system is greater than them
- In most cases someone else is leading the change process and other people's problems has to be taken into consideration
- The losses from change are easier for others to notice
- An underlying fear that change leads to letting people go
- There is a group dynamic in the organization and people are caught in a groupthink about change being a bad thing
- Changes raises the stake for everybody in the organization

Beerel (2009) has also referenced Ackoff who has identified three types of management where two of them are causes of resistance to change. The first is the Reactive manager and this type prefers the way things used to be. They are constantly trying to remove or suppress effects of change. The second one is the Inactive manager. These managers like the way things are and their purpose is to prevent change. They have a mindset of "if it isn't broken don't fix it". If a crisis occurs they try to prevent it but not a moment too soon. Moreover, they generally try to avoid identifying issues.

3.3.5.1 A Cognitive Approach

In a research done by Reger, Gustafson, DeMarie and Mullane (1994) they discuss through a cognitive view the underlying reasons why fundamental organizational change efforts so often fails. Reger et al. (1994) introduces the concepts of schemas. A schema is a person's way of seeing the world around them and it is through one's schema information are interpreted. Moreover, a schema combines a person's prior knowledge about an area with newly received data (Reger et al, 1994). Once a schema is created it is difficult to modify it and it causes a resistance to information which would change one's schema (Reger et al, 1994).

According to Reger et al. (1994) the reasons behind a change can only be understood by employees if it fits their current schema. Reger et al. (1994) continues their presentation with the concept of organizational identity. The organizational identity is beliefs which people uses to describe the company and it is a strong schematic filter (Reger et al, 1994). Therefore, employees have difficulties interpreting actions taken by managers which are not in the line with the organizational identity (Reger et al, 1994). Trying to drastically change the organizational identity will therefore often be met with resistance according to Reger et al. (1994). Furthermore, if the people have a positive view of the organizational identity they will in general be even more negative about changes (Reger et al, 1994). The last cognitive theory presented is about personal construction. The basic assumptions behind it is that people organizes and simplifies the large amount of data they receive everyday through a limited set of constructs (Reger et al, 1994). These constructs are used to create one's "theories" about the surrounding world (Reger et al, 1994). According to this theory the personal construction hinders change in two ways: comprehension and opposition (Reger et al, 1994).

A person can easily fail to comprehend change suggestions which involve fundamental modifications (Reger et al, 1994). As aforementioned a person is using a finite number of constructs (Reger et al, 1994). If the change-suggestion shares few similarities with the current organizational identity the employees will have difficulties understanding the concept and key-aspects according to Reger et al. (1994). If employees are ordered to implement a fundamental change without knowing how it connects to the current organizational identity it will most likely fail (Reger et al, 1994).

Secondly, change-suggestions which are framed as the contrary to a positive attribute of the organizational identity will be met with resistance (Reger et al, 1994). An example is low cost vs. high quality: If the organizational identity includes a belief that their products are of high quality a change to lower the costs could be met with resistance even if it does not affect the quality (Reger et al. 1994). This is because the employees see higher costs as the price to pay for a better quality. By introducing a cost-lowering change people might feel the company are abandoning its identity (Reger et al. 1994).

To counter this resistance Reger et al. (1994) presents two ways to reframe the organizational identity: Manipulating ideal organizational identity and leveraging organizational image.

According to Reger et al. (1994) there are two organizational identities; the current (beliefs about the organization) and ideal (desired beliefs). If these two are not the same there is an identity gap (Reger et al. 1994). The management should market the ideal identity to their employees and make them want to reach the new identity (Reger et al. 1994).

Leveraging the organizational identity is about increasing the awareness of the surrounding world and the organization's capabilities. By showing how well similar organizations perform or customers' opinion about the company the managers can make employees aware of their shortcomings and change their schema (Reger et al. 1994).

To make change possible it is important to reach an identity gap which is neither too narrow or too wide. If it is too narrow employees will fail to see the need for the change and if it is too wide they will perceive it as unattainable (Reger et al. 1994).

There is an obvious need of sometimes changing a process, organization structure or culture. There is also an inherent resistance to it and there are many success factors as well as pitfalls to identify to make the change possible. This section has focused on these different factors. When the need for change has been identified and the aspects which will affect the success of the change has been realized the next step is implementing the change. The important part here is finding ways to change to organization into some better, to actually achieve an improvement. The next part of this chapter will therefore discuss tools to restructure and change an organization to make it more efficient and well-functioning.

3.4 Improvement Tools

3.4.1 Total Quality Management (TQM)

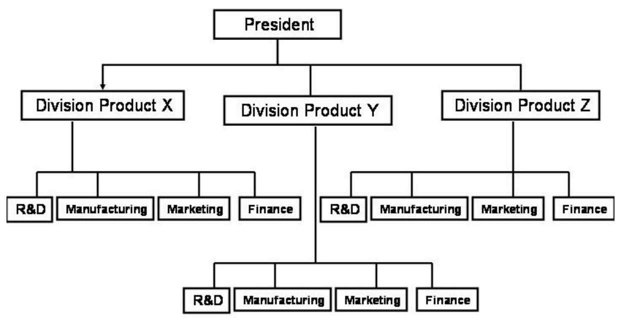
Total Quality Management is a concept founded by Japanese firms. The basic idea is to manage the organization in a way that aims to achieve maximum quality in everything they do (Grimsdal & Gunnarson, 1993). The main purpose is to avoid any kind of mismanaging and the end goal is to reduce costs, increase productivity and focus on customer relationships. There are five important areas that TQM focuses on to improve (Grimsdal & Gunnarson, 1993):

- Customer Focus
- Base decisions on facts
- Work with processes
- Always thrive for continuous quality improvement
- Empowerment and Teamwork

TQM can be applied to improve Customer-Supplier relationship, teamwork and organizations (Grimsdal & Gunnarson, 1993).

3.4.1.1 Designing an Organization

To design an organization according to TQM there are some of the traditional ways of thinking about organizational structuring that first to be modified (Evans & Dean, 2000). A lot of manufacturing companies are using the classical functional structure for their organization. That is when the organization is divided into functions and in a hierarchical structure as seen in the figure below.

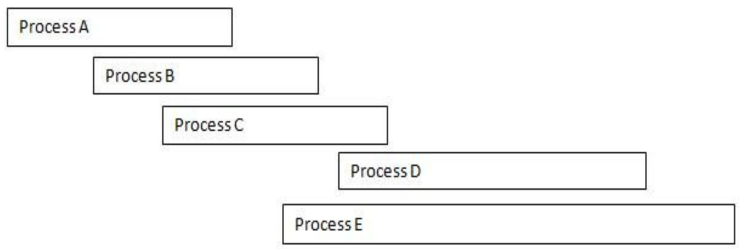


According to Evans and Dean (2000) the functional structure can cause several problems which stop a company from being in line with TQM; they separate customers and employees and they could cramp the possibilities for process improvement. The first creates a problem since often in a company only one department is in direct contact with the customers and the other departments are therefore not fully aware of customers' expectations. This makes the company very rigid. The latter can be a problem because dividing the organization into different functions can make it difficult to improve the product or the process. The departments are only focused on improving their own part in the process which actually can cause the process to become less effective if the situation causes the next department in the chain to suffers from these "improvements" (Evan & Dean, 2000).

Evan and Dean (2000) state the basic idea behind the concept is to remove the barriers between the different departments and turn the organization into one single entity. Customer satisfaction is one of the end goals and it is impossible for employees to find ways to contribute to this if they cannot see the customers (Evan & Dean, 2000). An option to change the organization into one in line with the TQM-concept is to change organizational structure:

3.4.1.1.1 Focus on Processes

The process is what creates value for the customers (Evan & Dean, 2000) and the company's goal is to have the processes which maximises this value. The processes can be divided into two different types; core and support processes. Core processes are the ones that are the base for creating products and vital for customer satisfaction. Support processes are, as the name state, supportive for the core processes but do not create any direct value by their own. Processes driven by customer needs are the core processes and support processes are driven by the internal customers. Instead of dividing the organization into functions it gets separated into processes which show how the product goes from the first process to the last (as seen in the figure below). It also gives incentive for cross-functional collaboration.



3.4.1.1.2 Recognize Internal Customers

According to Evan and Dean (2000) it is important to recognize the internal customers within in a company. The internal customers are the people within the company that needs other groups to complete their work to get their own task done. By mapping these internal customers it becomes easier to identify cross-functional aspects of the organization. The purpose is to create a mindset for the employees that they should do the best they can to satisfy their customer; the next person in the process chain.

3.4.1.1.3 Create a Team-Based Organization

The last aspect discussed by Evan and Dean (2000) is to create a team-based organization. Here they suggest letting cross-functional teams to be individually responsible of a single core process or a customer. This creates one of the largest advantages with the entire process structure-idea. By having all the employees involved with a core process together it becomes easier to identify where inefficient practices are being conducted.

3.4.1.2 Previous Research

Prajogo and Brown (2004) did a research to test if implementation of TQM principles leads to increased performance. The research was conducted by surveying 1000 managers in different industries in Australia. 90 % of the respondents belonged to organizations of 500 employees of fewer and almost 60 % of those where from companies with less than 100 employees (Prajogo & Brown, 2004).

By different statistical tests of the survey, Prajogo and Brown (2004) came to the conclusion that there was evidence that TQM practices different high-performing firms from low-performing firms. They also concluded that TQM practices are a useful resource for organizations. However, they also noted that the difference in performance was not that huge. The final conclusion is that for a successful implementation of TQM it would be wise to have an informal approach and not start a heavy campaign when introducing it to the organization (Prajogo & Brown, 2004).

TQM has been used as a tool by many companies but many of these organizations have had difficulties implementing it (Mann & Kehoe, 1993). This was addressed in a research by Mann and Kehoe (1993) where they tried to identify which factors that affect the implementation of TQM. This was done by questioning 200 companies in North America. How well and easy the implementation of TQM would be could be divided into different factors.

3.4.1.2.1 Type of Employees

Mann and Kehoe (1993) start with discussing types of employees. People with high skill level are more likely to accept TQM compared to them with a low skill level. Another importance aspect is level of education; employees with a high level are more likely to accept TQM than those with low level of education. Other factors of relevance are the length of employment where those have worked at a place for a long time is in general proving more difficult to convert to TQM-mindset. The last aspect is the age of the workforce, where younger people in general are more willing to accept TQM.

3.4.1.2.2 Shared Values

The second factor is the organizations shared values (Mann & Kehoe, 1993). The general attitude towards change is of course of relevance, where a positive attitude will help implementing while a negative attitude will hinder it. The business performance is two-parted; a company doing well might not see the need for improvement but they could likewise understand the importance of always improving. New or "young" organizations are also a group that more likely will adapt TQM compared to an aged organization. Lastly salaries and working conditions are of relevance where employees with low salaries and bad working conditions might be against change.

3.4.1.2.3 Organizational Structure

Mann and Kehoe's research (1993) showed that an organization with good interaction between departments is well suited to implement TQM. It is also easier to start using TQM for an organization which only exists at one site. The size of the company also matters of course and the general rule was the smaller the better, which is because the managers are more visible and have fewer employees to involve in the TQM way of thinking.

The conclusion is that if a company wants to implement TQM they must first see if they are suited for it and if not they are most likely to fail with the implementation (Mann & Kehoe, 1993).

4 Empirical Findings

This chapter provides information gathered through personal interviews about the order receiving process at Ekmans. This section also provides finding from the interviews regarding the process and topics related to it.

The order receiving process until production at Ekmans involves three departments: Sales department – plastic bags and gift boxes, Sales department – carton and Preparation department/Customer Support. The two Sales departments are completely independent of one another but both are in contact with the Preparation department (E. Liljegren, personal communication, 10/03/2010).

4.1 The Order Process

4.1.1 Plastic Bags and gift boxes

At the department the sales representatives handles two kinds of orders. There are New order which is a new or old customer who needs a new specific product, and Repeat-order which is a previous client who has come back to buy more of the same product that they bought last time (E. Liljegren, personal communication, 10/03/2010).

The new order process is considerably longer as more steps need to be done before the bag or box can go into production. However, these orders are not as common as the repeat ones (E. Liljegren, personal communication, 10/03/2010). It begins when a field sales representative builds up a relationship with a potential customer who in time evolves to an actual customer. Discussions lead to proposals and later to an offer from Ekmans for the customer to consider (A. Hassel, personal communication, 08/04/2010). When they have decided to buy the product, information is handed over to the indoor sales representatives that put it into the business system Movex (E. Nelson, personal communication, 08/04/2010). They create an article number for the new product and attaches specification about the product such as material, size, packaging, quality and print design (C. Andersson, personal communication, 08/04/2010). Through the process contact needs to be established with the customer in order to get further information about features of the product or changes. All of these are put into a production order that is printed and sent to the head of the preparation department and buyer of plastic material: Åsa Hultsborn. Likewise, a preparation order is printed and sent to Mattias Herbertsson with all information needed for him to prepare the product for production (K. Grund, personal communication, 13/04/2010). Hultsborn buys material if this particular kind is not in stock (Å. Hultsborn, personal communication, 13/04/2010).

When Herbertsson obtains the order from the indoor sales representatives he starts preparing for the products to be able to go into production. Firstly he needs to find out if all information that he has been given in the order is enough to continue the process. If not, he has to find out from the sales representatives or go directly to the customer and ask (M. Herbertsson, personal communication, 13/04/2010). Considering the product Herbertsson chooses the right machine in the factory for the job and orders the cliché from their suppliers. A cliché is a specially made unit used when printing that contains the design, text or image to be printed (M. Herbertsson, personal communication, 08/04/2010). After confirming the choice of printing machine with the printing department he will get the cliché from the suppliers. If it is a large and complex job he will send a fully printed copy of the cliché to the customer for approval but otherwise a PDF-file with due. At this point most of the preparation is done and Herbertsson puts all approved information back onto the preparation order. Still to be approved and decided is the quality and specifications of colours. This is done by the production department and when it is decided Herbertsson can give the preparation order to Rigmor Källström who checks for accuracy and types it into Movex again (M. Herbertsson, personal communication, 13/04/2010). This is the last step for the order before going into production.

The other order, which is far more simple and common, is the repeat-order and it starts at the field or indoor sales representatives. If the customer does not intend to change anything vital such as prices or large quantities the indoor sales representative can process the order without the approval from field sales representatives (C. Andersson, personal communication, 08/04/2010). In most cases an article number does already exist for the product and the indoor sales representatives just need to put in the required information to be sent to the stock department (M. Stertman, personal communication, 08/04/2010). Furthermore, new plastic material is ordered (when needed) by Hultsborn which stretches the process further (S. Bondesson, personal communication, 08/04/2010).

4.1.2 Carton

There are three types of orders: repeat-order, change of repro and new construction and depending on which type of order the process differs. A repeat order is when the customer wants to purchase more cartons of an existing kind. Change of repro is when a carton changes design. Lastly New construction is when Ekmans gets a new customer or product (E. Liljegren, personal communication, 10/03/2010).

The first step in the process is the field sales representative receiving the information about the order from the customer. He passes it along to the responsible indoor sales representative. The information is given face-to-face or written down on a piece of paper (B. Lindgren, personal communication, 14/04/2010). The indoor sales representative then puts the order into Movex (E. Andersson, personal communication, 13/04/2010). Sometimes old customers go directly to the indoor sales representative; this is often the case when they want a repeat order. If the customer wants to change the price, the indoor sales representative has to contact the field seller attached to the customer for authorization and confirmation (E. Andersson, personal communication, 13/04/2010). When this step is done a preparation-order is printed from Movex. This is sent to the head of the Sales department who wants to control the price before sending it to Customer support.

If the preparation-order is a repeat order, it is given (in paper form) to the buyer of carton who inspects if they need to order more carton. It is then handed over the Källström who orders the corrugated cardboard (K. Grund, personal communication, 13/04/2010). The last step is to have the preparation-order written into the computer system and then printed out as a production order (R. Källström, personal communication, 08/04/2010).

The process is a bit different if it is a change of repro. Before a preparation-order is printed the design of the carton is decided. The indoor sales representatives then hands over the rein to the repro-department. They create the new design through communication with the customer and the designer agency (A. Blomberg, personal communication, 13/04/2010). The salespeople are only put back into the process if price changes during this process (J. Amby, personal communication, 14/04/2010). When the change is accepted by the customer it is printed as a preparation-order handed over to buyer of carton, then the corrugated cardboard buyer and lastly it is delivered to Blomberg who orders repro. The preparation-order is then going through the same steps as in a repeat order.

When the order is a new construction the Sales department gives the information about the order to the constructionists. They create a box and send it to the customer for approval (J. Blomdahl, personal communication, 13/04/2010). When this is done they add the information to Movex and order the die-tools. The constructionist's last step is to create the preparation-order which is then sent to every part of the Preparation department by hand before being turned into a production order by Källström (J. Blomdahl, personal communication, 13/04/2010).

4.2 Sales Department – Plastic Bags and Gift Boxes

Bergqvist (personal communication, 08/04/2010) has a divided position that is focused both on being a field sales representative and manager for the employees at the department. The products they promote are sold to customers mostly in the retail market (M. Bergqvist, personal communication, 08/04/2010). Such customers are H&M, Stadium, Scorett and other likewise competitors. Since Ekmans delivers such a variety of quality, colours and designs for the products the sales representative has to be up to date when it comes to what they can produce and what the customers want (M. Bergqvist, personal communication, 08/04/2010). The responsibilities of the department are to contact and find new customers to do business with but also to provide service for existing clients. Field sales representatives need to meet new potential customers and show the company's products at events and exhibitions but also handle the details of a deal when a customer is interested. Information gathering from the customer regarding features of the wanted product and putting these into the process at Ekmans is another part of the job. A contract is handed over to the Preparation department as soon as all the information needed is collected and checked (M. Bergqvist, personal communication, 08/04/2010). The department is divided into two employee positions, field sales representatives and indoor sales representatives. Bergqvist and two other employees make up the field sales representatives and the indoor part is divided amongst four others (M. Bergqvist, personal communication, 08/04/2010). The routine is for the field sales representatives to get a sale, gather the information needed and then put it through to the indoor sales representatives. They put the information into Ekmans business system, Movex and send it through to the Preparation department (S. Bondesson, personal communication, 08/04/2010).

The employees at the Sales department are:

Mikael Bergqvist came to Ekmans in 2008 to fill the role of sales manager for the plastic bags and gift boxes department (M. Bergqvist, personal communication, 08/04/2010). 50 % of his time is spent on serving his two customers H&M and Åhlens which is a large part of Ekmans business. The other half of his time is given to the manager position; working with employee-related questions such as payments, team-building and planning (M. Bergqvist, personal communication, 08/04/2010).

Eibert Nelson has been with Ekmans since 1985 as a field sales representative and is one of the most long-lived at the company. His work is focused around sales with larger clients where customer relations are an essential part of the business (E. Nelson, personal communication, 08/04/2010).

Anders Hassel has the last field sales representative position and has been with the company in four and a half years. Working closely with the indoor sales representative Hassel is involved in deals with new and existing customers (A. Hassel, personal communication, 08/04/2010).

Kamilla Grund, indoor sales representative started that position for two years ago but has been with the administrative department of the company for several years before. Her main responsibility is to receive and collect deals from customers via telephone and e-mail. Grund has a few customers which she handles on her own. She is the only employee at the department that is involved in one contract all the way to the Preparation department (K. Grund, personal communication, 13/04/2010).

Susanne Bondesson is working as an indoor sales representative and has been doing it for the last 20 years. Most of her work is regarding putting information into Movex gathered from the field sales representatives but also purchasing of supporting products. Such items can be gift wrap and tags that Ekmans does not produce but is included in their packaged product deals (S. Bondesson, personal communication, 08/04/2010).

Carina Andersson has been in the organization for 41 years as an indoor sales representative. Main activity is to put information received from the field sales representatives into Movex. Since her long experience within the company she can support most of the other indoor sales representatives in their work if needed (C. Andersson, personal communication, 08/04/2010).

Monika Stertman has been in the Sales department for ten years but worked in the economic department before that. Stertman's position is not as an indoor sales representative but as an order receiver for existing customers and new clients directly by mail or via the field sales representatives (M. Stertman, personal communication, 08/04/2010).

4.2.1 Findings from Interviews

4.2.1.1 Structure and Internal Communication

The work related assignment and responsibilities within the department are clear in most of their character, everyone knows what to do in essentially all situations (M. Bergqvist, personal communication, 08/04/2010). The field sales representatives' job is mainly to create an interest and sell the products to customers but does not need to follow the orders way down to the Preparation department. It has become a specialised profession at the company where focus is put on customer relationships and contact (M. Bergqvist, personal communication, 08/04/2010). Field sales representatives are not supposed to process the orders that come in from their sales to customers. Instead they should be focused on keeping a good connection with the clients and search for new ones (E. Nelson, personal communication, 08/04/2010). The other field sales representative Hassel also refers to this work structure. He never process orders but uses his time at the office to plan new campaigns and prepare deal offers (A. Hassel, personal communication. 08/04/2010).

Communication is satisfying within the department; field sales representatives have an ongoing discussion concerning clients and projects. The cooperation and information flow from field sales representatives to indoor sales representatives is also functioning smoothly (A. Hassel, personal communication, 08/04/2010). However, the indoor sales representatives are having a slightly different opinion,

"Our, the indoor sales representatives, working routines are not always so clear as one could wish"

- *anonymous*

The indoor sales representatives are mostly not sales representatives but order receivers, buyers and assistants to the field sales representatives (M. Bergqvist, personal communication, 08/04/2010). A problem that arises from the information flow within the department is the communication between field sales and indoor representatives. It is common that the information gathered from clients by the field sales representatives and then given to the indoor sales representatives are not complete enough that an order can be written into Movex and transferred to the Preparation department (M. Stertman, personal communication, 08/04/2010). All indoor sales representatives mention this issue as a continuous vexation (M. Stertman, S. Bondesson, C. Andersson & K. Grund, personal communication, 08/04/2010 & 13/04/2010). The field sales representatives can come with fractions of information on a piece of paper which leads to a lot of detective work from the indoor sales representative. Precious time is wasted on trying to get accurate information from field sales representatives and customers. There is no standard for how this information should be delivered or what it should contain or when (M. Stertman, personal communication, 08/04/2010).

The structure of the department with an independent, decision-making part (field sales representatives) and a serving, somewhat dependent part (indoor sales representatives) is a legacy from previous leadership within the organization according to Bergqvist. His vision is that all sellers should be out in the field and writing their own orders. At this moment Grund is the only employee at the department that comes close to this role (M. Bergqvist, personal communication, 08/04/2010). Grund is the customer's only contact through the process and her responsibility reaches all the way to the Preparation department in every order she works with. She does not need the approval from field sales representative when dealing with prices and such but can take her own decisions, in contrast to the remaining indoor sales representatives (K. Grund, personal communication, 08/04/2010).

4.2.1.2 The Order Process

The department could be working a more efficient process with less waste and higher accuracy when it comes to the information flow (M. Bergqvist, personal communication, 08/04/2010). As a part time field sales representative Bergqvist also points out that the customer focus should be an important part through the whole process. Sometimes this focus is not applied throughout the whole organization.

"..especially the preparation department that does not have a lot of customer contact and misses out on the importance of customer focus"

- *Mikael Bergqvist, Manager*

Bergqvist (personal communication, 08/04/2010) sees a possibility to integrate the two departments in order to get a better communication and understanding of customer needs. The indoor sales representatives find the communication between them and the field sales representatives as the biggest obstacle in the process. The constant issue of inconclusive information from the field personnel is frustrating and inefficient (S. Bondesson, personal communication, 08/04/2010). This problem follows the order deeper into the organization and results in complaints towards the indoor sales representatives from the Preparation department (C. Andersson, personal communication, 08/04/2010). Grund (personal communication, 13/04/2010) can see a clear difference when she pushes her own sells through the system compared to when she takes an order from a field sales representative. She means that no information is lost or not communicated since she is having direct contact with the customer and knows what they want and what kind of information she needs to advance in the process (K. Grund, personal communication, 13/04/2010). The issues mentioned above are not acknowledged by the field sales representatives in the same extent. Both Nelson and Hassel (personal communication, 08/04/2010) say that they know that there have been complaints from the indoor sales representative but that they believe that the problem is of small significance.

4.2.1.3 Movex

According to Bergqvist (personal communication, 08/04/2010) one of the reasons why field sales representatives are not involved in the order process all the way is the business system, Movex that Ekmans is operating in. He has been with the company for more than two years but has still not received a proper education in the software (M. Bergqvist, personal communication, 08/04/2010). The program is slow, illogical and it takes a great deal of effort to learn how to use it. There is also various ways to reach the same result within the software, meaning that every person working with it finds their own way to operate it (M. Bergqvist, personal communication, 08/04/2010). This opinion is shared by the two field sales representatives Nelson and Hassel. The inefficient system creates a lot of extra paper work since all necessary information cannot be put into the program accordingly. Confirmations has to be done manually which takes time and resources, it is out of date (A. Hassel, personal communication, 08/04/2010). Nelson is referring to the same issue even though he barely uses Movex in his work. When he needs information or look up an order, he simply asks the indoor sales representative to do it for him (E. Nelson, personal communication, 08/04/2010).

Bondesson states that the employees that has been with the company for a longer time and been working in Movex a considerable amount does not see it as a problem. Meanwhile newcomer's general opinion is that the software is demoded and hard to work with (S. Bondesson, personal communication, 08/04/2010). Even though Bondesson has worked at Ekmans for a long time she sympathizes with these comprehensions. It can be confusing to use the program and extra information must be added manually via papers since it cannot be processed by Movex. Andersson continues on this path and points out that an important problem is just the fact that many employees do not understand the software. It is mostly the field sales representatives that cannot get their heads around it and must therefore continuously seek assistance from the indoor personnel (C. Andersson, personal communication, 08/04/2010). Grund and Stertman agree with their fellow indoor sales representatives of their view on Movex and employees capability to use it (K. Grund & M. Stertman, personal communication, 13/04/2010 & 08/04/2010).

4.2.1.4 Other Information

"I believe part of Ekmans old, and in some cases, bad habits have come from previously strict leadership with no room for individual initiative from employees (...) the resistance to change is in the walls of the company, it has been there since the old management's days"

- *anonymous*

A new generation at the company is now trying to change this pattern even though a lot of old attitude stand in the way. According to Bergqvist (personal communication, 08/04/2010) he is trying to be an open leader who wants his employees to be empowered and take their own decisions. He will therefore rather be a sounding board for his staff to reason with then a strict leader. As old hierarchies are still present in some ways this is a way to come around them (M. Bergqvist, personal communication, 08/04/2010). The department members does not themselves go to meeting that inform them about how the company is coming along or where other departments are heading (C. Andersson, personal communication, 08/04/2010). Only Bergqvist the head of the department goes to such meetings and receives the information (M. Bergqvist, personal communication, 08/04/2010). He does however inform the rest of the team of what is going on but this information could be more extensive (C. Andersson, personal communication, 08/04/2010). Bondesson (personal communication, 08/04/2010) means that more communication among department could be a positive thing for the employees; even so Grund (personal communication, 08/04/2010) does not think it is of greater importance.

A general problem over the last year has been the issue of material shortage from suppliers which slows down the process for Ekmans. Even the quality of the material they get has been lowered which is concerning (E. Nelson, personal communication, 08/04/2010). Ekmans has the largest workload during the autumn in order to deliver before Christmas and this can often lead to too much pressure on the Preparation department since there is no one to unburden the only employee at this position (C. Andersson, personal communication, 08/04/2010). A common understanding amongst the indoor sales representatives is also that since Movex cannot process all required information they must have a lot of it written down on paper or in their minds (C. Andersson, personal communication, 08/04/2010). The product of this is that if anyone of them is constrained from working for some reason, others have a hard time substituting for a longer period (M. Stertman, C. Andersson, S. Bondesson & K. Grund, personal communication, 08/04/2010 & 13/04/2010).

4.3 Sales Department – Carton

The carton department are the second out of the two Sales departments that exists at Ekmans AB. This department's main tasks are to service current customers and attract new customers (B. Lindgren, personal communication, 14/04/2010). They have three types of orders; repeat-orders and change of repro which approximates 95-98 % out of all orders and new construction orders which consists of the remaining 5-2 % (B. Lindgren, personal communication, 14/04/2010). The carton department’s customers are mainly of industrial type such as food retailers (B. Lindgren, personal communication, 14/04/2010).

At the carton department there are six employees (B. Lindgren, personal communication, 14/04/2010): Bo Lindgren work both as the manager and head of the department but he is also a field sales representative. Out in the field with him are the two other field sales people Claerk Näsman and Peter Tegström (B. Lindgren, personal communication, 14/04/2010). These three field sales representatives have their own geographical area in which they serve old customers and try to attract new customers. When a new customer is found, basic negotiations is started. When the price is decided upon the customer is sent to one out of the three indoor sales representatives Camilla Johansson, Eva Andersson or Gith Fagerlund. At that instance they discuss the order in more detail, regarding quality of the carton, what kind of carton, colour and any other desires (B. Lindgren, personal communication, 14/04/2010).

Bo Lindgren is the manager of the department and has been an employee at Ekmans since 1985. Lindgren's working tasks consists of being out and meeting customers a couple of days every week in the western parts of Sweden, taking care of the general administrative tasks in the departments and putting his signature on the other sales representatives’ orders before they go into production (B. Lindgren, personal communication, 14/04/2010).

Claerk Näsman is a field sales representative and has worked at Ekmans since 1975. He has had the role as field sales representative since 1989 (C. Näsman, personal communication, 13/04/2010). He tries to be out and meeting customers at least 2 days a week in eastern

Sweden and Norway which are the areas he is responsible for (C. Näsman, personal communication, 13/04/2010). In his working process he sometimes skip the “natural” step through the indoor sales people in order to speed up the process if the deadline is approaching too fast (C. Näsman, personal communication, 13/04/2010).

Peter Tegström is the last field sales representative together with Claerk. When he is not out and selling he is mainly taking care of already existing customers (P. Tegström, personal communication, 13/04/2010). His geographical working areas are Skåne and Denmark (P. Tegström, personal communication, 13/04/2010).

Camilla Johansson has been working at Ekmans since 1981, she started out as a summer worker back in 1981 and from that job title she has gone through several other ones and as lately as 3 months ago she started to work as an indoor sales representative (C. Johansson, personal communication, 13/04/2010). Her main working tasks are receiving orders from already existing customers and ordering carton from Ekmans suppliers whenever it is needed. Camilla is the only one in this department that one could call somewhat of a hybrid. While to other indoor sales representatives are not allowed to negotiate prices with the customers, Camilla is and can therefore take the order all the way through the systems if she wants to.

Eva Andersson has been an employee at Ekmans since 1994 and has had the role as indoor sales person since 2006 (E. Andersson, personal communication, 13/04/2010). Her main duties is receiving and registering orders from customers and she has a lot of customer contact in her daily work in order to be able to fulfil her work responsibilities (E. Andersson, personal communication, 13/04/2010).

Gith Fagerlund has been at Ekmans since 1997 and has been an indoor sales representative since 2008. Her main working duties are taking care of orders which she receives from the field sales representative and makes sure they go through each and every step in the internal process before finding its way into production (G. Fagerlund, personal communication, 08/04/2010).

4.3.1 Findings from Interviews

4.3.1.1 Structure and Internal communication

The employees at the Sales department for carton feels that their working assignments and responsibilities are clear (B. Lindgren, P. Tegström, C. Näsman, G. Fagerlund, E. Andersson, C. Johansson, personal communication, 08/04/2010, 13/04/2010 & 14/04/2010). It is only on rare occasions that one of the employees has to turn to the others regarding what they are allowed to do and not to do. Ekmans ISO-certificate forges the foundation for their work-related assignments and responsibilities (B. Lindgren, personal communication, 14/04/2010). While after that foundation everyone has their own routines which they have created themselves. Since each customer is different there is no way to treat all the customers in a standardized way (B. Lindgren, personal communication, 14/04/2010). Because the sales representatives at this department has their own way to do things it can also be a problem if someone gets sick, many of the routines and information is either confusing for the others people to comprehend or it can all be in the head of the ill employee.

The overall communication within the department is satisfying. All of the six employees consider that since the department itself is so small it is rather easy to communicate with each other and most of them have offices next to each other or at least very close (B. Lindgren, P. Tegström, C. Näsman, G. Fagerlund, E. Andersson, C. Johansson, personal communication, 08/04/2010, 13/04/2010 & 14/04/2010). At Ekmans there are no meetings with the other departments apart from the Monday sessions where each of the seven managers meets (B. Lindgren, personal communication, 14/04/2010).

"I can't see how more information about the other departments would make my work easier"

- *anonymous*

The opinions in the Sales department for carton are divided whether it would be a good idea to get a better understanding of what the other Sales-, Preparation and the Production department do in their daily work.

"More information about the other departments would definitely be a good idea, since it would increase the understanding for each other"

- *anonymous*

4.3.1.2 The Order Process

Lindgren (personal communication, 13/04/2010) feels that there is a possibility for improvement in the order process. The most commonly recognized problem is the miscommunication between the field and indoor sales representatives. All three indoor sales representatives consider that the information they receive from the field salespeople are in many cases insufficient (G. Fagerlund, E. Andersson, C. Johansson, personal communication, 08/04/2010 & 13/04/2010). On many occasions they need to ask the field sales representatives for information they need to complete their orders. Moreover, in many cases the field sales representatives have this information at hand but due to approaching deadlines and stress they do not include all the information (B. Lindgren, C. Näsman, personal communication, 13/04/2010 & 14/04/2010). This mismatch in the order information process then follows the order through the organization and the indoor sales representatives receive the same critique from the Preparation department. Lindgren (personal communication, 14/04/2010) believes that a possible improvement for the order process would be the give the indoor sales representatives more power regarding setting prices and therefore avoid this miscommunication that arises. Even though Lindgren (personal communication, 14/04/2010) says that there is no way to treat all their different customers in one standardized way he believes that information the field sales representatives give to the indoor sales representatives could be standardized or almost standardized in order to facilitate the order process.

The other main problem in the order process, which has already been touched upon, is the notes that are being passed around alongside with the order in Movex. After every step in the process the responsible person has to put their signature of the note in order to make sure everything, so far, is correct (B. Lindgren, P. Tegström, C. Näsman, G. Fagerlund, E. Andersson, C. Johansson, personal communication, 08/04/2010, 13/04/2010 & 14/04/2010). Lindgren (personal communication, 14/04/2010) believes that it is highly possible to remove their current system with the paper-notes and instead use a computer based system which would in his opinion speed up the order process.

4.3.1.3 Movex

"The day I don't have to open Movex is a good day"

- *anonymous*

Movex is thought of by the employees to be confusing and illogical to work in. Five out of the six employees at carton are pretty much very negative about Movex in one way or another while the last one consider it to be an “okay” system to work in. The general opinion is that a proper education and introduction to the system is missing, instead one have to sit by him- or her selves to learn the system (B. Lindgren, P. Tegström, C. Näsman, G. Fagerlund, E. Andersson, C. Johansson, personal communication, 08/04/2010, 13/04/2010 & 14/04/2010). This has lead to that each person use the system on his or her own way, for example the three field sales representatives can do the same task in three different ways which creates confusion for the indoor sales representatives. In turn this leads to that the indoor sales representatives have to ask the field sales representatives about the information they have received in order to make sure everything is correct. In the end what you have is a lot of extra work due to the various ways the system is operated today (E. Andersson, G. Fagerlund, personal communication, 08/04/2010 & 13/04/2010). Another interesting fact is that the two field sales representatives consider themselves to have very little knowledge about Movex and struggles to do some of the most basic stuff and has to ask the indoor sales representatives for help (P. Tegström, C. Näsman, C. Johansson, personal communication, 13/04/2010). Another problem with the system that came up during the interviews was the inability to be able to put in all the information about the specific order you want into Movex (E. Andersson, G. Fagerlund, C. Johansson, personal communication, 08/04/2010 & 13/04/2010). Instead a lot of the information has to be written down on separate notes which then had to be passed around in the department. As a side effect of this is that the employees felt that they had to have a lot of information in their head.

4.3.1.4 Other Information

A problem that has arisen during the last year is the increasing delivery time from their carton suppliers (B. Lindgren, personal communication, 14/04/2010). All the three managers interviewed (carton, plastic and preparation) considers Ekmans to be a company that always tries meet their customers demand even if they cannot follow their usual lead times. But with the increased delivery time for carton this is something that is much harder to do today (M. Bergqvist, Å. Hultsborn, B. Lindgren, personal communication, 08/04/2010, 13/04/2010 & 14/04/2010). Ekmans is also a company with many old habits and many of the employees has been working at the company for over 20 years (B. Lindgren, personal communication, 14/04/2010). Another discovery that was made was that the change proposal that was made 5 years ago was not followed through at all. Many of the employees was not even aware of the proposals while others barely remembered them and could not talk about any significant changes (B. Lindgren, P. Tegström, C. Näsman, G. Fagerlund, E. Andersson, C. Johansson, personal communication, 13/04/2010).

4.4 Preparation Department/Customer Support

The Preparation department (also called Customer Support) are in charge of several tasks and they are the last instance before the carton or bags are going into mass production (Å. Hultsborn, personal communication, 13/04/2010). The most obvious is they are responsible for preparing an order for mass production, this include ordering the different materials such as corrugated cardboard, polytene, colours and die (Å. Hultsborn, personal communication, 13/04/2010). Furthermore, when a company get a new type of order the Preparation department are responsible for creating the model. This involves a lot of contact with both customers and the designer agency responsible for creating the design of the carton or plastic bag (J. Blomdahl, personal communication, 13/04/2010).

Seven people are a part of the department (Å. Hultsborn, personal communication, 13/04/2010).

Åsa Hultsborn is the head of the department and has been working at Ekmans since 1977. Hultsborn is in charge of ordering polytene for the plastic bag department and doing production orders for H&M (Å. Hultsborn, personal communication, 13/04/2010).

Rigmor Källström is preparation assistant and has been working at Ekmans since 1997. Her work duties involve printing the production orders for both bags and carton and she is the last instance before production starts. She also orders corrugated cardboard (R. Källström, personal communication, 08/04/2010).

Mattias Herbertsson has worked for the company since 2008 and he is responsible for repro for plastic bags. His duties also involve ordering materials needed for the printing process (M. Herbertsson, personal communication, 08/04/2010).

Jonas Blomdahl is one of the carton box constructionist and has worked at the company for 10 years (J. Blomdahl, personal communication, 13/04/2010).

The second constructionist is Torbjörn Nordin and he has been at Ekmans since 1987. The constructionist creates the prototype for the carton box and ordering the die-tool which will be used (T. Nordin, personal communication, 13/04/2010).

Anders Blomberg is in charge of purchasing repro and print development. His current position at the company is newly created but he has been at the company since 1974 (A. Blomberg, personal communication, 13/04/2010).

The last man at customer support is Johan Amby who’s duties involves purchasing the repro service for carton and he has been working at Ekmans since 2000 (J. Amby, personal communication, 14/04/2010). His work duty begins when he receives the instruction from the customer and then sends it to the repro agency and then together with Blomberg they decide which colours to use for the printing.

4.4.1 Findings from Interviews

4.4.1.1 Structure and internal communication

The department is divided between carton and plastic bags and there is no real connection between the two areas (M. Herbertsson, personal communication, 08/04/2010). Every person at the department are working very independent of one another especially Herbertsson who is alone at the plastic bag side of the department (Å. Hultsborn, personal communication, 13/04/2010). It also became apparent that except for the preparation assistant no other person has a lot of communication with the head of department about issues that arises. Instead they turn most of the time to the CEO (who also is the production manager) or the different Sales departments (J. Amby, A. Blomberg, J. Blomdahl, M. Herbertsson & T. Nordin, personal communication, 08/04/2010, 13/04/2010 & 14/04/2010). It was also mentioned that Hultsborn do not have a lot of knowledge about the technological aspects of the Preparation department which 5/7 people work with (J. Amby, A. Blomberg, J. Blomdahl, M. Herbertsson & T. Nordin, personal communication, 08/04/2010, 13/04/2010 & 14/04/2010).

Herbertsson is not communicating much with the other people in the Preparation department instead his internal communication is mostly with the Sales department for plastic bags when issues occurs (M. Herbertsson, personal communication, 08/04/2010). The people at the carton side have different routines; one constructionist prefers to mostly contact the customer instead of going through the responsible sales person in the construction process (T. Nordin, personal communication, 13/04/2010) while the second one prefers to talk to the Sales department instead (J. Blomdahl, personal communication, 13/04/2010).

4.4.1.2 The Order Process

Herbertsson (personal communication, 08/04/2010) stated that the information he receives regarding the order varies a lot between the different sales people. He stated that there are no standard for the amount of information the sales people are suppose to give him and the sellers are taking advantage of this (Herbertsson, personal communication, 08/04/2010). Because of this, he has to take contact with the customers who are time consuming for him and an annoyance for the customer (Herbertsson, personal communication, 08/04/2010).

"The sales people (at carton) are kind of lazy and don't fill in full orders"

- *anonymous*

Nordin (personal communication, 13/04/2010) mentioned that sales people at carton were doing things their own way. The insufficient information on the orders often lead to a lot of communication between constructionist and indoor sales representatives and he felt that he used up a lot of their time because of this (J. Blomdahl, personal communication, 13/04/2010). Hultsborn (personal communication, 13/04/2010) also stated the sellers from carton are doing a poor job of giving sufficient information and there are an apparent lack of information between sellers and people at the Preparation department. This problem apparently exists "because of old habits" (Å. Hultsborn, personal communication, 13/04/2010). Regarding the preparation-order there are routines and instructions on how to write them but they are rarely followed by anyone (Hultsborn, personal communication, 13/04/2010).

4.4.1.3 Movex

The general opinion about Movex at the department is that the program was okay except in one case except in one case where it was stated it was slow and illogical (M. Herbertsson, personal communication, 08/04/2010). Hultsborn (personal communication, 13/04/2010) said there was a general resistance towards the program at the company and that a lot of people simply refuse to learn about it.

4.4.1.4 Other Information

There are no meetings together with the Sales departments and the head of the Preparation department does not see a direct need for this (Å. Hultsborn, personal communication, 13/04/2010). There is lack of written routines on how to do things and this makes it difficult for newly employed to understand their work duties (Å. Hultsborn, personal communication, 13/04/2010). She also stated that there have been attempts to take care of this issue in the past but not much happened. The board of directors failing to take action was also something touched upon by almost everyone else in the department. None of them had heard about the evaluation done five years ago. The evalution was done internally and its purpose was to identify the same problems as in this research (E. Liljegren, personal communication, 10/03/2010).

"A lot of "fancy words" *are created (by the management) but nothing really changes"*

- *anonymous*

There existed opinions that few changes actually occurred. This was a stark contrast to Blomberg (personal communication, 13/04/2010) who appreciated the implementation of lean-thinking and thinks that the managers had change their leading style. However, when stating this he discusses the implementation of lean thinking in the production process.

Another recurring theme was that the customers often changed their minds a great deal, which shortened the deadline for preparation and created a lot of stress (R. Källström, personal communication, 08/04/2010). These changes occur often and cause problems for the constructionist. Furthermore, when a customer wants to say that something has changed they go through the field sales representative who passes the information to the constructionists (T. Nordin, personal communication, 13/04/2010). Hultsborn (personal communication, 13/04/2010) said that customer interaction differs a lot between one another, in some cases the customer is in contact with the field sales representatives, sometimes they skip this step and goes to the indoor sellers and in some cases they simply goes to the Preparation department directly. There is also a problem about how the Preparation department should prioritize orders from the different sellers since there are no rules or guidelines about this (Å. Hultsborn, personal communication, 13/04/2010). Herbertsson (personal communication, 08/04/2010) said there is a lack of understanding between the departments about the different jobs and processes, he for example did not know the process, which the sellers do, and the time it should take.

5 Analysis

This chapter begins with a suggestion of a restructuring of the organization to increase the efficiency of the order receiving process. The section then continues by to identifying the problems Ekmans' order receiving process is suffering from, the next part presents the suggested solutions to get rid of them. Lastly, the chapter concludes with a discussion regarding structure, culture and the difficulties of changing an organization.

5.1 Restructuring

Ekmans's organizational structure is a pure functional and formal structure (see Appendix. 4). The departments are divided by duties and the two Sales departments are sitting together while the Preparation Department are in another part of the building (E. Liljegren, personal communication, 10/03/2010). As further elaborated on below in the Problem Identification there is an information-gap between the Sales departments and the Preparation department and the organizational structure is one of the reason behind it. The present structure (see Appendix. 5) is like a funnel where the two Sales departments receive orders and pushed them through to the Preparation department. This structure is the cause of communication problems and alienation from customers. Therefore, a change of the organizational structure might be in place.

One could argue that the two Sales departments should be combined but since they do not collaborate in any way this will not solve any issues. However, within the Preparation department there is a strict split when it comes to who is working with carton and who is working with plastic bags. The two camps do not cooperate under any part of the process. Head of the department is Hultsborn whose only physical contribution to the preparation of products is ordering of plastic from suppliers. Her position as a manager is mostly about dealing with job-related questions. A restructuring using the concept of cross-functional teams is suggested. A cross-functional team is a group of people from different parts in the company with different types of expertise that work toward a common goal (Parker, 2003). The implementation of cross-functional teams will merge all employees involved with carton (sales representatives and prep. people) together and the same for plastic. This will involve the people from the Preparation department at an earlier stage and improve the communication between the employees. This will create a straight line all the way to production (see Appendix. 6) where communication would be simplified and members of the department would work more closely. The restructuring will make it possible for a team to be completely responsible for one order receiving process. Furthermore, it will remove the territory-mindedness which exists. It will force an improvement of the communication between the employees and make it possible for the preparation people to get aware of projects earlier. Moreover, it will be easier to create common goals. The employees who previously worked at the Preparation department will directly be aware of the customer and the project. To reach the full potential of this restructuring and move away from the formal and functional structure, the authors believe a physical restructuring in the building should be done but having team-meetings and changing the perception of the structure will also improve the efficiency of the process and the communication and could be a first small step.

5.2 Problem Identification

5.2.1 The Business System

Movex is the source of many of the issues which burden the company. Every employee who got interviewed complained about it in some way or another.

The people who had worked at the company for quite some time were used to the program and could handle it but they still thought that it was very inefficient and sometimes illogical. The more newly employed people on the other hand were in general not even the slightest satisfied with it.

The field sales representatives are the people that experience the most problem with it. They do not know how to use the program and instead demands the indoor salespeople to take care of situation when they are not able to. This creates a lot of extra workload for the latter who often get swamped because of it. The field sales representatives do not know how to use the program for two reasons; they never got any education about how to use Movex and because of old habits. It became evident during the interviews that since as long Ekmans has been using Movex the field salespeople have always passed the duties involving the program to their indoor sales representative. The indoor sales representative has more or less worked as a secretary for the field sales representative. This is the way how it "always had been done" and therefore no one was complaining about it at first. The indoor sales representatives were obviously not satisfied in how things were done now. They thought it was annoying and burdening. This last piece of information and opinion almost had to be "pulled" out from them during the interviews. Most of the field sales representative on the other hand (especially the older generation) liked how things were being done now. Their opinions were not surprising considering they are being able to pass along boring administrative duties to someone else.

There is no doubt that filling the order in Movex is not more time consuming then writing the information on a piece of paper and handing it to the indoor sales representative, but they refused to learn it because in some cases the field sales representative believed it was beneath him. Again, this opinion was something more belonging to the older generation. Many of the employees at Ekmans seem to be stuck in a very old way of seeing things. All the indoor sales representatives are women and all the field salespeople are men and in some cases the relationship between the two is one of a secretary and her sales representative.

Movex can be used in a lot of different ways to do the same thing. Since there are no stated routines on how to fill in an order in Movex everybody has created their own ways on how to do things. This makes it difficult for an indoor sales representative to cover for a colleague if she is absent and also prevent one another to assist each other if someone gets more on her plate. This issue was also an example of something the interviewees seemed to be aware of but still accepted it because "it had always been like that".

The lack of common routines was an effect of not getting a proper education about the program. Everybody was self-educated and there are no cheat sheets, no instructions on how to fill in an order. This does not create problems in the everyday business but it prevents opportunities for when extraordinary circumstances occurs.

5.2.2 Inefficient Paper Use

The big issue here is the large amounts of paper work that is being done at Ekmans in several parts of the process for different reasons. As mentioned in the description of the processes at the plastic bags and gift boxes as in the carton department the information from the business system Movex is printed out by the indoor sales representative before handed over to the Preparation department. The reason for printing is that information in the order has to be authorized by the accountable field sales representative. Since Ekmans does not have any digital system for this a printed copy has to be made and passed on to the field sales representatives. This process takes time for the indoor sales representatives who have a lot of other tasks to take care of. Simultaneously the timing with the field sales representatives can be less fortunate since they might not be at the office at that time to sign the document which will be delayed further. The problem is present through the whole process but out of old habits there are only the newest employees that see this as out dated. Many of the more long lived people in the organization have been working in this same way for a very long time and are comfortable with the routine. Nevertheless, effort, time and resources are put into this type of inefficient system.

The preparation order printed by the indoor sales representatives is sent to the preparation department for further processing. At all stops on the way, information and remarks are put down onto the paper which in the end is handed over the preparation assistant to be put back into Movex. The direct effect of this is that at the time that one part of the preparation is done, the responsible needs to hand the actual paper over the next in line after putting down his or her information. Papers are easily lost or damaged and different people have various ways of working through their pile.

5.2.3 Incomplete Information

One huge time-waster is that indoor sales representatives and people at the Preparation department had to go back to the person before them in the process and demand more information. This is a problem constantly occurring because complete information is never given from the start. Most of the time the process is just one step; the guy at Preparation or the indoor sales representative goes to the responsible field sales representative and asks for the missing information. But sometimes the preparation guy goes to the indoor sales representative that turns to the field salesperson. This is a big issue because it slows everything done and the later in the process the incomplete information is noticed, the more time is wasted. It is also a concern for the indoor sales representatives because they are having a hard time leaving an order and go on to the next project. The preparation-order from a project they should have been done with keeps coming back to them over and over again and they get too much on their minds.

The problem occurs because the field sales representatives does not follow any protocol on which information they need to pass along but instead give what they believe is enough or in some cases even just what they bother to gather. The problem has existed for many years and also been highlighted before. There have been attempts to create routines or protocols regarding this situation to get rid of the problem but these have been ignored by the field salespeople. For the Preparation department the issue is extra severe at the carton side. The carton side suffered more from this than the other Sales department. The main reason behind this was once again “old habits”. The field sales representatives are being allowed to do things their way and the other employees accept it. This lack of information is something that most likely annoys customers who needs to be contacted several times and the Preparation department needs to gather more information about the different projects, information they should not be needed to gather at all.

The customers are sometimes the cause of incomplete information and when this occurs the Preparation department turns either to the field sales representative responsible for the customer or the customer directly for more information. This is an issue that occurs once again because there is no instruction on which information the customer needs to provide at certain times. There is here a lack of protocol about who the people at the Preparation department should turn to and this sometimes caused them to overstep their boundaries and start doing tasks which the field sales representative is responsible for. Ekmans is suffering from a very territory-mindedness from the people at the different departments and behaviour like aforementioned is therefore of course not very appreciated.

5.2.4 Ineffective Management

During the interviews with the employees at Ekmans a clear understanding became true; many of those changes that management tried to impelment and plan for had not reached the workers. The way the management handled issues was suffering from many of the causes which causes change implementation to fail:

- A common reason why change fails is because concerned employees are not involved in the decision-making process. When asking whether the investigation done five years ago had had any affect on the situation at the company most employees says they never heard about such a thing. Not that the investigation had even been done or what had been found or the end result.
- The example mentioned above also indicated a tendency for the management not going through with their change projects.
- The management fails to build employee commitment to a change process. An example of this comes from the Sales department. Bergqvist (personal communication, 08/04/2010) had a basic idea that all indoor sales representatives should be field sales representatives eventually; he believed that this was what the indoor sales representative wanted as well. However this vision had not been introduced to the indoor sales representatives and they were less interested in moving their position forward. Despite a vision and a concept Bergqvist had so far only managed to “create” one protégé: Grund.

A diverse understanding of the management at the company showed to be linked to the different departments. The personnel at the plastic bag and gift boxes Sales department with Mikael Bergqvist as head manager felt that change had been made for the better within the department. However at the carton and preparation departments the general understanding was different. Ekmans’ failed attempt to change can also be traced back to slow processes. Decisions processes was said to be slow and no extensive changes had been made for a longer time. Feeling of bureaucracy, big words and no real actions was mentioned from some employees. In the Frame of Reference it is discussed that change often fails because the intended benefits takes too long time before they can be noted. Moreover, the miscommunication between the two levels within the department can and should be better in order for them all to cooperate successfully. The different departments do not have meetings where they coordinate their efforts which do not help in the already imperfect process.

Overall the management does a poor job of involving the employees, they fail to create an understanding of why changes sometimes need to be made and communicate with the involved parties. Add all these factors together and it creates a thick barrier which needs to be overcome when Ekmans tries to improve the order receiving process.

5.2.5 Resistance to Change

A pattern at Ekmans was that many of the employees who have been with the company for a longer period of time was negative or against change while newer employees were more positive about any suggestions to change. The reason behind this phenomenon can be found through applying the cognitive approach presented in the Frame of Reference. It discusses schemas (a person's way of seeing and interpreting the world around them), organizational identify (the attributes of the company) and the limited amount of constructs (the constructs are used to analyze one's surrounding). The older generation at Ekmans has created their schema, constructs and their view of the organizational identity a long time ago. Their view of the organizational identity is very different from what the managers thrive for and this causes a resistance to change. The older generation's view of the organizational identity is about selling high-quality products and being service-minded. It is in general a positive organizational identity. The management wants to create a "leaner" organization focusing on efficiency and lowering costs (M. Månsson, personal communication, 29/04/2010). This is not in line with the current organizational identity and causes a resistance to change through failure to comprehend and opposition. They fail to comprehend and understand why the management wants to change because it is not within their personal constructs and they oppose efficiency and lower costs because they are often seen as opposites to a service-mind and high quality. The newer generation on the other hand has just started to create their schema and their view of the organizational identity is more up-to-date and they are therefore less resistant to change. This causes the newer generation to be more aware and understanding of the importance for a company to change in order to get rid of inefficiencies and to adapt to new circumstances that can arise.

Much of the resistance to change that we found seemed to also be partly from old habits. Many of the working tasks in the company have been the same for many years and people seemed to have a hard time to see the inefficiencies. If one have done their job the same way during 10 years time without a change, why would one start to think of possible changes today?

The company has existed for quite some time and they have faced, as referred in the Frame of Reference too, several new realities as the world around the company has changed. Also internally has these new realities been noticed and the Production department has modified its routines immensely. However, as discussed in the Frame of Reference it is easy to overlook new realities which actually concerns one self, this became obvious during the interviews. A lot of the interviewees discussed how the company has evolved, but they did not notice any changes for themselves. The company has suffered from the value tension which has emerged due to the new realities. They are resistant to change their behaviour and routines because they are lacking adaptive capacity. Ekmans has poorly tried to implement changes in the past with few actual modifications. Since the employees have not practiced in changing their behaviours they have instead become resistant to it. Moreover, the company suffered from issues which have proven to cause a resistance to change:

- The change process is lead by the management and the employees are not involved. There is no incentive to be a part of a change process if one is not included in the discussion on how to improve first.
- Several of the older generation are satisfied with the current situation and do not want things to change. As aforementioned some employees said straight out they

do not want more responsibilities and they claimed to be satisfied but they still agreed there was room for improvement. This contradiction greatly indicates some employee's resistance to change.

- Inactive management-style. Two out of three managers clearly showed an attitude resistant to modifying anything. In one situation the problems the company was suffering from was blamed on the customers and not any internal processes. With a mindset like that the person does not seek improvement possibilities. Instead they put the blame on something which cannot be improved.
- As discussed in the Frame of Reference one reason why people are resistant to change is because it raises the stake for everyone. At Ekmans this became obvious when discussing change with employees and the answer received was that it was often seen as something exhausting which meant extra work and sometimes even thought of as something totally unnecessary. Things like "it would be impossible to change this and that" and "we already have our customers and routines that work, why change them?" could be heard during some of the interviews.

5.3 Solutions

To solve Ekmans's problems several concepts and theories were selected. The most prominent concept is TQM. The basic idea behind the concept is to maximize quality in everything the company do. There are several parts of the process today where this is not the case at Ekmans; Movex is used in too many different ways, inefficient paper use, the communication is not good enough, and the list goes on. What TQM will help the company to do is to become more customer-focused, making their processes more efficient, empower employees and create a climate where teamwork is appreciated. However, TQM alone will most likely not do the job and solely relying on it would be foolhardy. Therefore, the solutions are created in the light of TQM together with other concepts relating to issues of change presented in the Frame of Reference. This section begins with discussing general success factors on how to implement change to the organization; it then presents the implementation of TQM and concludes with the solutions to the previously identified problems.

5.3.1 Success Factors

The first step is comparing the fit between Ekmans and the success factors behind; how to implement change. This will indicate which areas the solutions should put the most emphasis on fixing.

5.3.1.1 Type of Employees

Young, well-educated and relatively newly employed people with a high skill-level are those most likely to embrace the thoughts of change. At Ekmans there are two quite distinct camps. A majority of the employees have been working there for quite some time and are also old. Most of them also made it clear they are pleased with the current situation and do not want things to change. This group is a threat against the implementation of change and it is important to be aware of this group and take actions to make sure they do not become a hinder. A great indication that the change actually will be successful is the fact that most of the board of directors belongs to the second group. Furthermore, there are employees who are open-minded about change and want it to happen in every department. So even though the majority belongs to a group where implementing could be proved difficult there are a lot of key-employees who belong to the second group and will most likely counterbalance the first.

5.3.1.2 Shared Values

A reappearing observation in this thesis is the different attitudes towards change in Ekmans's organization. There is as mentioned a few newly employed people at the firm who sees the company from a more objective view and have incentive to make changes. However, most of the people currently employed at Ekmans have been working there for up to 20 years. In their situation the organization is functioning fine, not perfect, but good enough. There is a clear resistance towards change presented previously in the Analysis. Focus must be put on turning the organization and its people to become more positive to change in general. Creating a desire within everyone in the company to make things better continuously must be of great importance in order to succeed. Without this common vision, improvements referring to TQM or any other change will be very hard to communicate and implement. The organization must continue to be young and inspiring even though the employees might not be so to the same extent. Ekmans must narrow down the identity gap between the current organizational identity and the ideal identity.

5.3.1.3 Organizational Structure

When trying to change the organizational structure it is recommended that the departments have a good communication between each other. At Ekmans the communication among the departments are of various qualities. In some areas the communication is better and in some areas it is worse. The size of the company also matters for the success rate for the implementation of any major change, a general rule is the smaller the company the better. Since Ekmans is a medium-sized company and the departments that this thesis is focused on have approximately 25-30 employees the size is very suitable for change, for example the implementation of TQM. Lastly the managers have to be visible and open minded towards the employees. This is something that we have found to be true in Ekmans. In general most of the people we interviewed said that they knew who to turn to when they had a problem and the managers were in general open to suggestions. What Ekmans mainly have to work with, regarding their organizational structure, is the communication between the departments. If the communication gets better so does the odds for a successful change. As it is now, the indoor sales representatives experiences that they do not receive enough information from the field sales representatives, which leads to that the next department in the process chain feels that they do not get enough information from the indoor sales representatives. This mismatch in communication will most likely be a big obstacle when trying to change to organizational structure at Ekmans.

The implementation of TQM will help Ekmans to remove some of the identified problems in the order receiving process such as inefficient paper use, incomplete information and the problems with Movex. However, in order for the implementation to be efficient they must remove the factors which will hinder a successful implementation namely the resistance to change. Here follows the concrete solutions to the identified problems. The first solutions make it possible for implementing TQM. The remaining solutions are then dealt with through the implementation of TQM mentioned below.

5.3.2 Implementation of TQM

5.3.2.1 Focus on Processes

The two kinds of processes, support and core are both present in the overall order receiving process at Ekmans. The Sales departments perform the support process of finding customers and gathering information. With the information, the Preparation department can do their part as a core process of preparing the products for manufacturing. Along this whole process Ekmans have hidden faults that can be changed to the better with the use of TQM. Old habits and deeply planted ways of action have made the process less efficient and should be upgraded. The first step to improve the company's faults and put the customer in focus is to see the flow from sales personnel all the way to production as a single entity. As found out in the interviews with the employees resources are lacking and time is wasted on the parts of the process that does not add value to the customer directly. Wasteful paper use, a badly functional use of an illogical business system, and incomplete communication between employees and departments are some examples. Management must strive to give all parts of the process a clear customer focused incentive. People in the Sales department obviously have a great deal of customer focus since this is what they do. Even so, this practice should be present in all departments included in the process. Integrating departments with each other or creating a forum for views and ideas of the matter could be a good way for the customer focus to spread in the organization.

As part of the problem identification in this thesis, resistance to change and ineffective management have both come forward as consistent issues. The process is suffering because of these two just as the rest of the organization. The combination makes the necessary development of the process difficult to implement. An organization in a competitive environment must always work with their processes and do continuous improvements in order to be successful. New standards, empowerment and teamwork will help Ekmans to reach this goal.

5.3.2.2 Recognizing the Internal Customer

One of the major problems at Ekmans is the incomplete information to the person next in line in the process. This causes a great deal of rework time for the employees which constantly needs to double check with the person before him or her in the process chain. A solution to this is for Ekmans to recognize their internal customers, namely the employees. It is important for Ekmans to create a mindset in every employee that they should strive for making the work for the next person in the process chain easier. If every employee strives to the best they can to satisfy their customer aka the next person in process chain, the customer at the end of the process will also end up more satisfied. The issue with insufficient information will be removed and orders will be received faster than otherwise with fewer differences. To make this possible Ekmans need to inform their employees about this new mindset and then stress the importance of a standardized system. This is where every employee are expected to collect all the necessary information from the customer, and actually give all this standardized information right away to the next person in the process chain instead of in bits and pieces.

This problem also arises from the old and sometimes bad habits which exist within the company. This organizational culture problem has to be dealt with in order for Ekmans to get all their employees to work in one standardized way. It is mostly the employees who have worked in the company for a longer period of time that has to be approached, since they are the ones who in general have a more negative attitude towards change.

5.3.3 Resistance to Change

A consistent problem at Ekmans is the resistance to change. In order for Ekmans to be able to change anything at all within the organization they need to change the culture of the company. Changing the culture is a difficult task and as discussed in the Frame of Reference, certain authors believes there are three different views on this subject; actions taken by top managers can change culture, managers can only minimally change the culture and the last and most negative: it is not controllable. Since the current management at Ekmans have so far failed to modify the culture this could be seen as an indication that cultural change is not controllable. However, the researchers of this thesis do not agree with this view and argues it is more about finding the right tools.

Ekmans can modify its culture through shaping values, making the culture visible and celebrating internal progress. This is handled by stating goals and desired behaviours and acknowledge when this is done. This can be done through implementing a confirmation system, acknowledging when someone had actually done something good they can celebrate internal progress. Right now at the company it is not really rewarding to bring up suggestions to the management. This causes the obvious issue: if there is no real incentive for those employees that are positive to change, what incentive is there then for those who are negative about change? Ekmans needs to understand the importance of this problem and acknowledge the employees that actually improve something at the company. By doing so they can show all of their employees that change are seen as something positive in their company and hopefully the ones that are negative about change in general will notice this. A pat on the shoulder can be more than enough sometimes as a confirmation that the employee has done something good and rewarding for the company.

Moreover, many of the employees felt that they were not included in the process of developing new routines or ideas and when those routines and ideas had been developed they did not receive enough information about them. This creates unfamiliarity about change; it is seen as something external and unknown. People become even more resistant to change. In order for Ekmans to solve this they need to have continuous information handed out to the employees. It is important that the employees feel that they are a part of the change rather than seeing it as something they just have to deal with. The process for implementation change mentioned in the previous section will help remove the resistance to it. Moreover, regular meetings should be scheduled were everyone is allowed to give their input about the possible upcoming changes.

As shown in the Frame of Reference, it is difficult to change an organization's culture. The management's role is therefore of utter importance. Change of culture can only be reached by a management which continually fight for the change to occur (this issue is dealt with through the solution to the Ineffective management). An important part of the pro-change work at Ekmans will be for the managers to get the employees to realize that the incentive and attitude towards a more open leadership is different from the old management team. Development and change is now a preferred option at the company which everyone should be involved in. Communicating this downwards in the organization will be crucial if the spirit is to spread. Ekmans should begin to show and promote their internal change by starting at the top of the organization, using leaders as pioneers for the positive attitude towards change. If middle managers do not stand for a creative and evolving approach when it comes to ideas from employees, these ideas might not even be thought of or mentioned to anyone by fear of being rejected instantly. Putting people with the wrong incentive at these important positions in the firm could be a big mistake in the long run. Using more inspired and creative leaders will improve both performances of the departments and of the whole company. It will also make change implementation easier on the organization.

As mentioned in the discussion about the problem, many of the more experienced and older employees seemed to be less interested to improving the organization for the better or changing anything what so ever. A long and in some ways monotone career at the same company will make any person less motivated to make an extra effort to change their proven way of doing their work. In order for Ekmans to make this attitude turn to the better i.e. positive view on change, could be to give these people something to strive for. New employees at a company always have something to prove to themselves or to someone else. A visible path via promotions towards a successful career is what motivates these people. Ekmans must find a way to motivate long time employees in a similar fashion. More responsibility is one way of giving meaning to a previous rather dull job without increasing the workload excessively. Small projects could be run by employees with the experience of a lifetime at the company with just a very small risk of failure. A close relationship and co-operation with project experienced personnel in the leading group would assure this further. Implementing rewards systems for these tasks would give meaning and inducement for people involved.

Furthermore, the identity gap between the current organizational identity and the ideal identity must be modified to remove some of the resistance to change. As touched upon earlier, this is accomplished by having the management marketing the new identity, "selling" the concept to the employees.

An inherent trait is difficult to change but by involving the employees, encouraging initiatives and inform why things are being done, it should be possible to remove this hinder.

5.3.4 Ineffective Management

The management at Ekmans has during the years created many ideas on how to change the organization for the better. However, some of the issues addressed are still a problem for the company and they are continuously having problem implementing the changes. In the thesis, problems concerning the process of order receiving and preparation have been stated. Many of these were known beforehand by the management and different approaches have been used to try to overcome them. As they are still present an obvious change of strategy must be implemented. Previous attempts have been lacking a proper follow through by management in order to really assure that changes have been applied in the organization. This needs to come to an end.

When the management at Ekmans intend to make a change they should follow a strict formula which make it possible to avoid the reasons why change-attempts fail.

First of the management should have a meeting deciding the purpose of the change and how it should be done. The next step is involving the employees and arranging a meeting telling them about the reasons for the change and their proposed plan to accomplish this. The employees will here get a chance to air their opinion about the suggestion. Is it reasonable? Should it be modified in some way? By involving the employees they will get an increased understanding of why it has to be done and do not have to feel alienated from the process. They can also offer important information and concerns. Understanding why a change need to be done is very important in order to get a positive response towards a new strategy. Moreover, by involving the employees it will be easier to make them open-minded about the change, it will not feel forced upon them but rather an opportunity to improve. The employees input will make the change-implementation more realistic.

After the meeting a project formula for implementing the change should be complete. This formula should clearly state purpose of the change, background, how it should be done and also a deadline should be created put when the aspired change is to be reached. It is important to have a deadline to create a visible target to strive towards.

The next step is appointing a "business champion": a person in the organization responsible for developing and implementing the process. In order for him or her to be able to do this, one must be given the authority to take necessary decisions concerning the project.

Long and complex decision processes makes organization change or any change what so ever tougher to implement. This causes the purpose and inspiration to the reforms to get lost and the result becomes inadequate. Time during the work week should also be reserved for the "champion" to use for the implementation of the change, making the assignment a part of everyday work. By doing so, it is possible to avoid making the champion feel overwhelmed. Change efforts as an extra load onto employees does not encourage them to participate and even less support it. The bottom line is that both time and resources must be set aside so that changes can be fully implemented through the whole organization. Internal marketing via the champion and head of departments should be used throughout the company to promote possible changes and inspire to individual ideas. Being a part of the process will assist the likelihood for successful results.

Throughout the process evaluations should be conducted to observe how the implementing is going. The management together with the business champion and involved employees should set out milestones to reach at certain dates and always keep a steady eye on where the project is moving. If sub targets have not been reached before their expiration, actions must be taken. At this date there will be another evaluation to see why they failed to reach the goal at the scheduled date.

Working with cross-functional teams during these situations can help with general understanding and variation in inputs. Spreading information to various parts of the company is also a direct effect of the diversified team structure. As the responsible project leader gathers a team, there must be an open communication within the members for coming up with different solutions and angels to master the concerning issue.

5.3.5 Incomplete Information

The problem with incomplete information is created because of the lack of standardized routines. Ekmans needs to develop these to make sure the correct information is given the first time to stop this time-wasting. There is also the issue that the field representatives are not bothered with gathering all the necessary information. This is solved by creating an understanding between the employees. They should arrange meetings where the different employees (especially the field representatives) are shown what the other co-workers need to know before going on with a project. Moreover, they must learn about the trouble the other employees need to go through when they do not receive all the information. The use of cross-functional teams will be a key part to make sure this actually happens. By having people responsible for the preparation of an item working more closely with the sales representatives they will have an easier time communicating what they need to know and when.

An important aspect to increase the usefulness of cross-functional teams are empowerment and this a subject which Ekmans really needs to improve in. There were a lot of complaints about the order receiving process being slow and inefficient because the indoor sales representatives could not make some of the more trivial decisions. Instead they had to go back to the field sales representatives for consultation. The waste of time was obvious for example Grund at the Sales department for plastic bags could see a clear difference when she does her own sales and pushes them through the system compared to when she has to take an order from a field sales representative and double check with him about for example prizes. When she takes full responsibility of the sale herself she means that no information is lost and no double checking is needed which otherwise consume some of the orders precious lead time. The same goes for Johansson in the Sales department for carton. She also has the authority to negotiate the prices at some occasions. Bergqvist, the manager of the

Sales department for plastic bags, also recognizes the problem with the indoor sales representative not having enough decision-making power and believes that Ekmans could benefit a lot by implementing more decision-making power to the indoor sales representatives.

The issue is tackled in two ways:

First, the border between field and indoor sales representative is to be removed. Camilla Grund is a perfect prototype how this will lead to improvements; she is a sales representative who is able to take care of a sale from beginning to end. She has the necessary knowledge about Movex and the empowerment to make decisions.

But not all indoor sales representatives want this role. In their case it is more about giving them more information and light empowerment. Field sales representative should, when delivering information about a customer, also give the indoor sales representative a price-range of what is acceptable. So when the customer contacts the indoor sales representative about a change of price she can be able to give an answer directly, but if the change is too drastic the field sales representative should be contacted. The basic idea is to empower the indoor sales representatives. Let them make general decisions when it comes to smaller projects and give them the sufficient information from the beginning through standardized routines.

5.3.6 Inefficient Paper Use

The concern about the inefficient paper use is solved with modernization. All the activities conducted in paper form, from passing information along to signings of documents, can be done with a computer. Instead of sending a piece of paper between the involved people it should be done through e-mail or through an intranet instead. Electronic identification can be used when a part of the process needs to be signed. This will remove a lot of time-waste since people do not need to run to one another with the information. It will also make it easier to get an overview of the current orders that needs to be taken care of when it is in a viral form instead of the form of a bunch of paper on one’s desk.

The solution will also take care of another inefficient old routine. When a preparation order is about to get written, an indoor sales representative must go to the purchaser of material and get a signing that the material is in stock, even if she already knows the answer herself. Also, in the current situation if one does not know if they have a material in stock they have to physically go to the warehouse to check it out. By using a computerized system it will be possibly have the current stock of the material visible on the intranet. Furthermore, they can sign up the material needed for the order directly instead of going to the responsible purchaser. Moreover, it will also be easier for the purchasers to keep track on future orders.

5.3.7 The Business System

Ekmans business system Movex is today a source for much complaint. A solution for this would be to simply buy or develop a new and better business system. That is not only very costly and a complicated procedure, but the rest of the corporate group uses Movex too. Having one the underlying companies such as Ekmans using another business system than the rest of the corporate group is not an option. The option that Ekmans then have is to improve the method in which they use the business system today. First of all none of the employees has ever received an education in Movex. Since Movex is such complicated software where you can do the same thing in so many different ways this is exactly what the employees are doing today. By giving all the current employees an education where every employee will learn how to use the software the same way as their colleagues do this mismatch in the information sent around in Movex will disappear. It is also important to give newly hired employees the exact same education so they learn how to use the business system the right way from the start.

A potential arising problem along with this education in Movex where everyone is required to use the business system the same way is the already touched upon problem: resistance to change. Many of the employees have used the business system for over 20 years and it will be very hard for them to start doing things in a new way. That is why it is important for Ekmans to have routines written down that says exactly how one should use Movex. Everyone has to be informed that this change is for their own benefit. In the beginning it might be very complicated and annoying for most employees to get used to the new routines but in the long run it will benefit all of them and this is something they have to aware of. It is the management's responsibility that this long run benefit is communicated clearly enough, else they will probably meet wide spread resistance.

A last step to improve their current working method in Movex is to educate to field sales representatives so they know how to write their own orders instead of just handing it over to the indoor sales representative. As it is now the indoor sales representative are working much as an secretary to the field sales representative, doing work for them which the field sales representative could easily have done themselves if they just had more experience in Movex. This solution would not only save a lot of time both in the process and for the indoor sales representatives. It would also open up the opportunity for the field sales representatives to assist the indoor sales representatives in times when they have a too heavy workload.

5.4 Structure, Culture and Change

This concluding part of the analysis discusses the relation between communication issues and organizational structure, the impact of culture for an organization and lastly; the different aspects of change. The discussion combines the empirical material to theory and presents the researchers’ findings about these topics.

5.4.1 Structure

A recurring theme during the interviews was communication, or rather the lack of it. Miscommunication can lead to many problems for an organization and the researchers believe by identifying the problems and countering them a company can become more efficient. The empirical data showed that poor communication can stem from a lack of collaboration between individuals, especially between different departments. This, in turn, origins from a territory-mindedness. By removing the source the issue is solved and one way to accomplish this is by restructuring. The functional structure of an organization makes sense in its obviousness; it is rational, it works and is easy to understand. However, easy is not the same as best suited. The empirical material shows the functional structure can be the cause of communication problems and inefficiency. Companies should (and many have done it) search for alternative ways of designing an organization to improve it. For production companies focusing on becoming faster and more efficient the functional structure, according to the empirical data, has run its course and it is suggested to (if they have not already) look to replace it with more modern concepts such as e.g. cross-functional teams.

5.4.2 Culture

The culture within the company has a strong heritage and is deeply rooted in the employee's minds. A vicious circle mentioned in the Frame of Reference, is somewhat formed where bad attitudes for the company in the long run are accepted. People that have been working at Ekmans for a long time have a specific view of what the company stands for and how the work is done. The most prominent thing reflecting this is the understanding that Ekmans stand and should stand for quality. During the last decades of the twentieth-century quality was very important in the industry and Ekmans took pride in delivering top of the line products. However during the last decade and today, price has gone past quality as the most interesting feature for the customers. Cheap and functional bags are demanded (M. Månsson, personal communication, 29/04/2010). Even so, Ekmans is stuck in their way of thinking of themselves as a company that delivers high quality in their products at a relatively higher price than their rivals. In order to compete with competitors they have therefore been compelled to lower their margins but have tried to sustain the quality of the products. The fear of lowering the quality in order to further reduce prices and stay competitive have not been applied by management even though this is what the customers want. The probable reason for this is the culture and identity of the brand that the employees and managers have. As mentioned in the Frame of Reference the organizational identity can be very strong. At Ekmans this identity has not given them an advantage when it comes to keeping up with competition. The resistance to change their way of work have resulted in lower profitability and fewer customers.

Using Ekmans as a case study one can draw conclusions and see connections for a more general understanding in the area of culture and business culture. The study has clearly shown that culture within an organization can be very powerful. At Ekmans the culture has been established during many years of practise and it will take a lot of time before the negative parts can be completely removed. Even though an understanding of where the company need to be in order to be successful, many of the cultural aspects needed cannot be implemented as easy as one would hope.

An important question becomes how to form a healthy culture within an organization and even more important how to reform an already existing one. Previous researchers have come to a divided conclusion. There are some that argues for the possibility of effects on culture via managerial actions while some sees the culture as something static and out of reach for managers. To see the culture of an organization as the latter might be to underestimate the concept of culture. When taking decisions that involves people most of these decisions also affect the perception of culture in some way. In a situation where a manager forces his employees to work more hours and stay overtime this will nurture a negative attitude towards managers which often is a great part of the culture at a firm. Through the managers point of view he or she might believe that the extra work contributes to a better work ethic and thus improving the culture within the organization.

The point is that when a decision is made the effect, however small it might be, will still be felt and included in the culture. The interesting thing to notice though is that most decisions follow a similar pattern as previous ones. This will enforce the already existing culture in the organization. Insecurity is only felt by stakeholders when the decisions goes against the pre-existing standard and it is first then that people perceive a change in culture. The authors of this thesis have come to the understanding that culture can be changed with actions taken by managers. Suggestions of how this could be done have therefore been stated in the Solution part above. To what extent the culture can be changed is though not said. A few small changes to the organization or management style will only result in minor improvements. Even so, the work of changing organizational culture is a long process that can take a lot of time. Using large refrigeration could result in sudden short-term changes but to find a solid solution for the long-run, small means must be used to reform the foundation of culture.

Relating back to Scheine's definition of the term culture that was stated in the Frame of reference the authors can see a clear similarity to the culture at Ekmans. The employees together with the managers have during the years developed their own way of working as a group. A general understanding of how the daily routine should be done have come forward and the group have adopted these characteristics since they work well enough. This is then taught to new employees as they become part of the group, how to go about solving problems and how to think of the business. As of this the authors of this thesis can conclude that Scheine's definition of culture is certainly true in the case of Ekmans. Reaching this view has also made it easier to site the cultural characteristics and analyse them.

5.4.3 Change

A lot of the analysis has been discussing how to successfully implement change. Therefore, the last part of the analysis focuses more on the reasons behind resistance to change that can exist within an organization.

In the Frame of Reference, the role of leaders and the ability to change the culture of an organization is discussed. The management at Ekmans has during the years tried to implement changes to their organization that would also have an impact on the culture. However as pressure of change have been relaxed, the old habits have come back and in the end not much good has come out of the original thought. Changes concerning culture must be in line with the present identity of the organization. Too rapid and radical reforms will go past without sticking if they cannot be understood by the employees. It is of great importance that the group can see the reasons for change and agree with why they need to be implemented.

As previous research has shown, the leaders play a vital part when changing an organization. A company needs people who take responsibility for the implementation of change or risk failing. As discussed in the Problem Identification, some of the leaders at Ekmans definitely fall into this category; the management are aware of the issues the order receiving process is suffering from, the problems have been there for years. When the authors presented their findings to the management at Ekmans one leader commented:

"I didn't get a revelation from this (...) this was nothing new"

However, if the manager has been aware of the problems, why are they not removed? An inactive leadership is very dangerous for an organization that is trying to improve. A leader who is unaware of the problems can be enlightened, but how do you handle inactiveness? The empirical material shows that one reason why change so often fails is because the implementation never truly begins. The awareness is there but nothing happens and the underlying reason behind this is inactive leadership. After all, the responsibility of taking the initial step of changing the organization is at the hands of the management.

Theory has shown that change often fails because the organizational culture is often neglected. The empirical material made it clear that culture is an important aspect to take into consideration when trying to alter the organization. Ekmans as a company are an organization with a deeply rooted culture and old, unchanged work habits and this was a major reason why the company struggled so much with implementing changes. For a mindset to get deeply rooted into one's mind one has to be at an organization for quite some time and this leads into the next cause of resistance: age.

Theories differ between people's feelings towards change; some scientists claim people are positive about change while others state they are inherently resistant to it. The empirical material gathered at Ekmans gives credence to the latter; a substantial amount of the interviewees had negative attitude towards change. However, the "why" is indubitably more interesting than the "what". The Problem Identification has already stated several reasons why the people at Ekmans are resistant to change. However, it does not include one aspect which was also not mentioned in any previous research which the authors had gathered: the age of the workforce. The majority of the employees who openly resisted change were at the end of their working life. If a person is close to retirement they have few reasons to be a part of a change process; change might lead to one being let go, it will demand more of one self and finally the major reason: he or she will not stay long enough to reap the benefits. This issue was not included in the Problem Identification because the researchers believe that part of the analysis should focus on improving the order receiving process. Nevertheless, it is important to the discussion about why change so often fails. If an organization wishes to modify a process or restructure it is an aspect which needs to be taken into consideration. Age and a deeply rooted organizational culture are correlated and is a combination which has the potential to effectively cause changes to fail for companies.

It seems as a difficult task for a management to create positive incentive for employees of this demographic to change and therefore the key to solve this issue might lie in creating demands and ultimatums; change or suffer the consequences. Many people perform better under press and if one has nothing to gain then give him or her something to lose.

6 Conclusion

The conclusion debates and generalise the findings from the case study at Ekmans.

The thesis was a research but also a consulting assignment for Ekmans and therefore many of the problems and their solutions are rather specific to the company. Nevertheless, some of the issues are problems that most likely are to be found in many organizations and the core of the more specific problems should be considered useful both for academic research and for other companies through implementing them to fit the environment of interest. The goal of the thesis is not only to help Ekmans to make their order process more efficient but also to contribute to the general understanding of organizational change and the resistance against such. As an offspring of this the authors have used Ekmans as a case study and a platform from which they can research and test already existing theories within the area. The difficulties facing the organization are many and by studying previous research in the subject the picture of the company's situation became clearer.

One specific problem the researchers believe can be found at many companies is the issue of the business system and its complications. Even though a company uses another type of software they might suffer from the same issues. The solution to the problem; standardization of the working routines and an education in the software is probably something that most companies can make use of in similar situations. The two other concrete faults that was found at Ekmans were, inefficient paper use and incomplete information between employees contributes to the research and awareness of the need of continuous quality improvements when it comes to processes and management. The specific problem might not be the same for other companies but their issues might lead to same symptoms and the solutions that implies clearer routines is easily applicable to similar situations.

The two core problems, resistance to change and ineffective management and their solutions are very basic in nature. There exists a lot of research discussing the underlying reasons (culture, structure and difficulties with change) behind them. Basically the company just needs to be aware of these factors and the problems that come along with them in order to be able to thwart them.

From the empirical findings it was found that the organizational culture is a very strong entity and can be both a great tool and a big hindrance for implementing change. This is because routines and values are difficult to modify and have an impact on if the values are not in line with the old ones. The more deeply rooted they are the harder it becomes to change them. It was discovered that managers do affect the culture and it is important that they do so in order to successfully implement change. Moreover, empirical data shows that the functional structure can be a bit outdated for a company searching to become as efficient as possible. It might be wise restructuring the organization, following newer concepts. The empirical material shows that inactive leaders are one reason why change fails. Decisiveness is a key word here in order for the management to improve. Lastly, the empirical data showed that age plays a big role regarding the attitude towards change. People near their retirement are a group very resistant to change which can affect improvement attempts for the worse. The resistance occurs because they will not stay long enough to reap the benefit of the change.

The conclusion of the thesis is that if a company want to survive and flourish in today's business world they must keep accepting new realities and adapt to them. The solution is to grasp the impact an organization's culture has and realize the difficulties with implementing change and find ways to counter them.

7 Discussion

The final chapter discusses the process of writing the thesis and the strength and weaknesses of it. Furthermore, it scrutinizes the academic relevance of the thesis and thoughts on how to continue researching about the area of Change.

When the researchers started writing this thesis there was just a vague notion on how it would end up. The task from Ekmans was to begin with rather confusing and there was only an idea of what result they expected. Due to this, a lot of different theories and concepts were collected to be able to cover every aspect of the problem. Later when the problem got identified and more focused some parts of the Frame of Reference was removed because it became evident it was irrelevant. This phase of the thesis is something that possibly could have been done more effectively. Though, in this case it felt that it would have been very hard to ask the right questions at the interviews without having some of the theory to stand on. By doing it this way it was possible to grasp the problems rather fast and with the help of the already studied theories make better use of the interviews. A best case scenario for this phase would probably have been to do the interviews first to identify the problems, then search for relevant theory and then do new interviews were it could have been possible to "guide" the interviewees more towards the interesting answers. But this would also demand much more time and would have been very difficult to carry out during the restricted time of one semester.

At the three departments that were involved in the scope of this thesis, every employee in each department was interviewed for at least 30 minutes. This gives the empirical material for the thesis a strong and trustworthy foundation since employees with different roles and different positions in the hierarchal pyramid were included. It is most likely that all of the problems that exist within these three departments were found. Furthermore, this suggests that the solutions discovered will be likely to work since it is unlikely that new problems arise which could hinder to suggested solutions. The large amount of trustworthy material also increased the strength and credibility of the thoughts and ideas regarding structure, culture and change presented last in the analysis.

Furthermore, the authors have managed to go through the process of making the thesis quite painless. There have been minor setbacks but these only involved unnecessary information gathering and except for a loss of leisure time it has not caused any disturbance. A large part of the material collected before the interviews was relevant to the purpose of the thesis and the communication and cooperation with the company has been very good. Moreover, the interviewees cooperated and gave very open and interesting answers. All the material and information needed from the company were given out without any problem which strengthens the credibility and trustworthiness of the research.

As discussed in the Methodology-chapter it is important to scrutinize the data and question its trustworthiness and authenticity to evaluate the academic relevance of the research. The authenticity level of the research is very high since the research is taken place out in the real world. Trustworthiness can be divided into four categories and the researchers believe the thesis passes the bar in all aspects. Because of the quite high number of in-depth interviews the credibility and dependability of the research is difficult to argue against. Ekmans as a company shares similarity with many other organization and several of the suggested solutions are general in nature which improves the transferability and conformability. Overall, even though the assignment was quite specific the analysis presents ideas of interest for both the academic world and other companies beyond Ekmans.

It is important to state that the authors had none previous experience on working with a consulting assignment and how to do interviews in an effective way. This could have affected the end result concerning the more practical part of the analysis. A more experienced consulting team could probably have seen the problems from more angels and possibly find even better solutions. However, the authors do believe that the fact of having no experience beforehand of similar assignment could have been something positive as well, since the authors could take on this consulting task with open eyes and no pre-assumptions on what to expect.

Since the order receiving process is so complex and technical in nature it is very difficult to grasp. Even though the authors spent several months working with Ekmans, the complete order receiving process is still not fully understood. This could potentially affect the problem solutions since some details might have been missed or neglected. Nevertheless, the management at Ekmans found the research valuable for them and they appreciated the work the authors had done for them.

7.1 Further Research

The thesis began as a search for concrete issues in an order receiving process but as it progressed it became more and more heavily focused on how to implement change and remove the inherent resistance towards it. Therefore, further research that would be interesting is to look deeper into different organization's cultural problems and further researching about the difficulties with change: Is the connection a recurring theme? Furthermore, it would be interesting to test the researchers' own ideas and concepts regarding structure, culture and change presented at the last part of the Analysis.

As for further research, it would also be interesting to study a company with similar problems but through a longer period. This would enable to researchers to see how the company uses the suggested solutions and to what extent they are followed. If the result shows that the company are not willing to change or a facing heavy resistance to the change further research would be interesting on how to counter these problems.

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Appendices

1. List of Interviewees & Their Position

Sales Department – Plastic Bags & Gift boxes

Mikael Bergqvist – Manager & Field sales representative
Eibert Nilsson – Field sales representative
Anders Hassel – Field sales representative
Kamilla Grund – Indoor sales representative
Susanne Bondesson – Indoor sales representative
Carina Andersson – Indoor sales representative
Monika Stertman – Indoor sales representative

Sales Department – Carton

Bo Lindgren – Manager & Field sales representative
Claerk Näsman – Field sales representative
Peter Tegström – Field sales representative
Camilla Johansson – Indoor sales representative
Eva Andersson – Indoor sales representative
Gith Fagerlund – Indoor sales representative

Preparation Department/Customer Support

Åsa Hultsborn – Manager & Material Ordering
Rigmor Källström – Preparation assistant
Mattias Herbertsson – Repro (plastic bags)
Johan Amby – Repro (carton)
Jonas Blomdahl – Constructionist
Torbjörn Nordin – Constructionist
Anders Blomberg – Print development

Other

Eric Liljegren – Supply Chain Manager
Michael Månsson – Financial Manager

2. Questionnaire no.1

First interview (translated from the Swedish original manuscript)

General Questions.

1. Tell us about your position at the company and your work task.
2. For how long have you worked at the company?
3. Do you feel that your job tasks and responsibilities are clear and precise?
4. Are there routines on how to do your work? How do you get information about them?
5. Do you follow them? If No: Why not?
6. How important decisions can you make? Do you feel you can be more independent? Are you pleased with the current situation regarding your power to make decisions?
7. Do you know how to go to if a problem occurs? How quickly can they assist you? Is the help enough?
8. Is there easy access to working materials such as papers, copy machines etc?
9. Is there anything in the previous question that could be more efficient?
10. How much time do you think it is possible to save?

The organization

1. What do you think about the organizational structure?
2. If you would change if, how and what would you do?
3. What do managers/employees feel about change? Why?
4. What do you think about the organizational culture?
5. How often does people from different departments come together and discuss the current situation?
6. Are there scheduled dates when meeting of this kind shall occur?
7. Are employees thinking about what is best for its department or what is best for the entire company?
8. Are you all thriving towards the same goal? Is there a clear result the company has created which you should thrive to reach?
9. What is the employee’s perception about other people’s success? Does envy exist between co-workers?
10. What is your opinion about the leadership?
11. How does the management react to suggestions? Is it possible to change?
12. Are you encouraged to take initiatives?

(For managers questions 11 & 12 was about how they react to suggestion and if they are encouraging employees to take initiatives)

The process

1. Can you describe the process from when an order is received until it goes into production?
2. What do you think about the routines? Are you following them?
3. Which parts of the routines are good, which are bad?
4. Is there a need for change?
5. Which process can be improved and how?
6. Do you think it would be a good idea to integrate the different departments?
7. What did you think about the change-propositions from last time?

8. Are these suggestions followed today? If No: Why not? If Yes: Has there been improvements?
   (For managers: What do you do to make sure these are being followed?)
9. What is your opinion about the other departments at the company? Do you think they can improve in any way?
10. Is there any bottle neck, a part in the process which slows everything down?
11. Where is the most time wasted?
12. Which part of the process is the most time consuming?
13. What do you think the other departments think about your department?

3. Questionnaire no.2

Modified version used for the rest of the interviews (translated from the Swedish original manuscript.

General Questions.

1. Tell us about your position at the company and your work task.
2. For how long have you worked at the company?
3. Do you feel that your job tasks and responsibilities are clear and precise?
4. Are there routines on how to do your work? How do you get information about them?
5. How important decisions can you make? Do you feel you can be more independent? Are you pleased with the current situation regarding your power to make decisions?
6. Do you know how to go to if a problem occurs? How quickly can they assist you? Is the help enough?
7. What do you think about Movex?

The organization

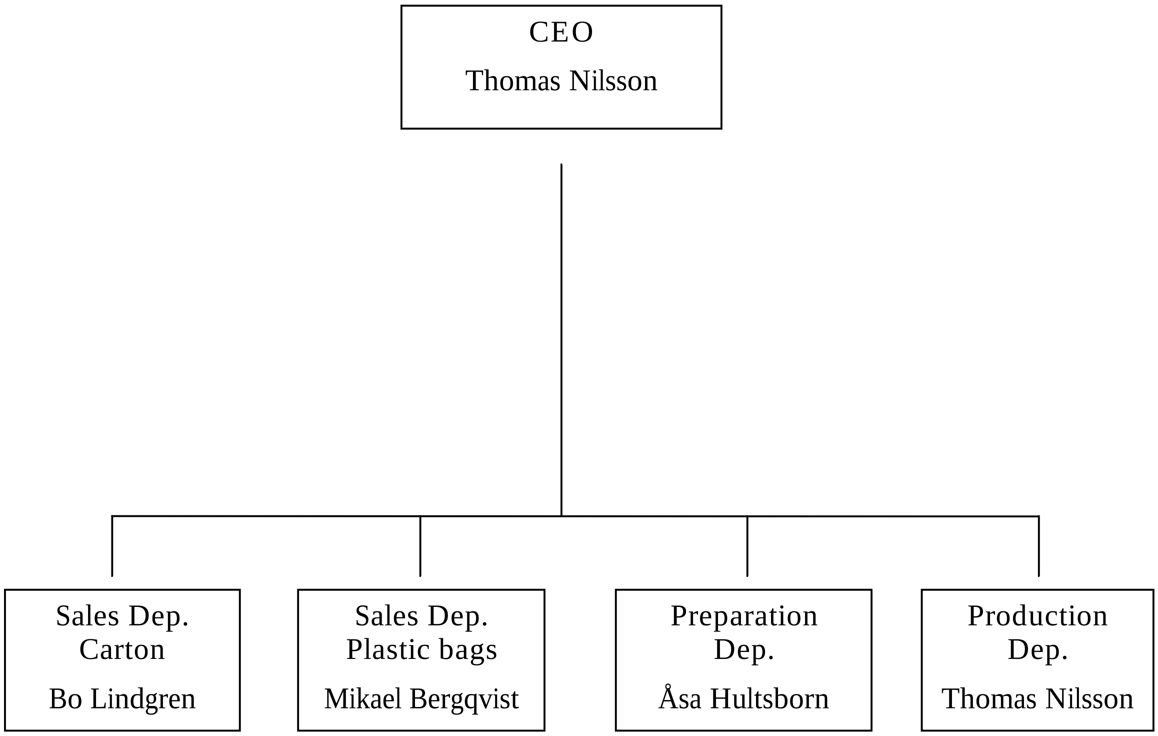
1. What do managers/employees feel about change? Why?
2. How often does people from different departments come together and discuss the current situation?
3. What is your opinion about the leadership?
4. How does the management react to suggestions? Is it possible to change?

The process

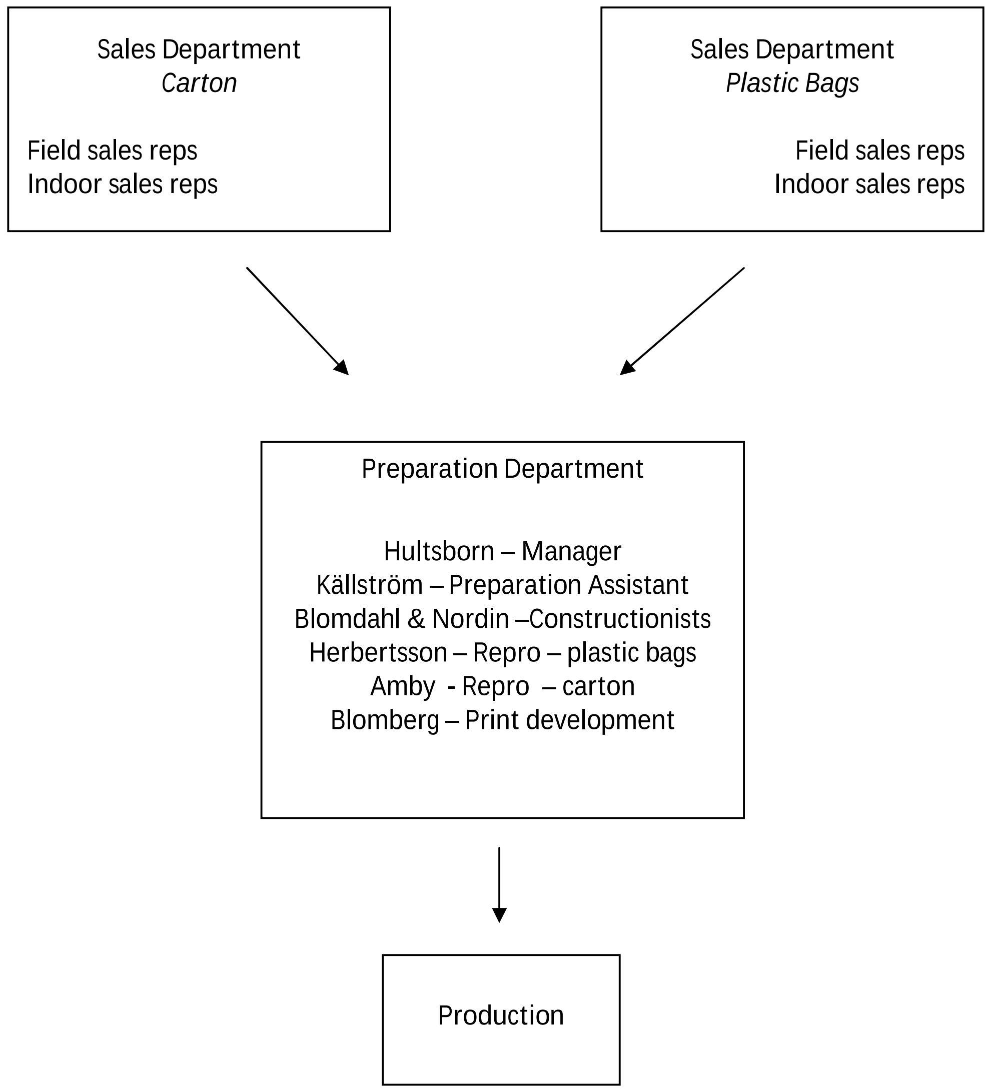
1. Can you describe the process from when an order is received until it goes into production?
2. What do you think about the routines? Are you following them?
3. Is there a need for change?
4. Do you think it would be a good idea to integrate the different departments?
5. What did you think about the change-propositions from last time?
6. Is there any bottle neck, a part in the process which slows everything down?
7. Where is the most time wasted?
8. Which part of the process is the most time consuming?

4. Organizational Structure

(only includes the departments of interest)



5. Order Receiving Process



6. Suggested Restructuring