Perceived Employee Motivation in Social Businesses
A Case Study of a Finnish Social Business

Master’s thesis within Business Administration

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Abstract

In the past few years we have seen the near collapse of the world financial system, and we still have yet to find solutions for world poverty or the food crisis. People have started looking for new solutions in order to solve these problems and are considering new employment options besides the traditional for-profit business sector. Employees are increasingly looking for work in organizations that have a more sustainable approach to business. One organization type that fits these criteria is a social business.

Most of the research in social entrepreneurship and social businesses, however, has concentrated on the social entrepreneur and the entrepreneurial process so far. Only few studies have explored the employee side. Similarly, research on perceived employee motivation has mainly concentrated on the traditional for-profit businesses and on non-profit organizations. Although employee motivation is considered as crucial to the success of any business, perceived employee motivation in established social businesses has scarcely been researched yet.

The purpose of this thesis is to understand why people choose to work in a social business, and what motivates them to work there. This research was conducted as a single case study following Stake (1995). It was carried out in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area Reuse Centre Ltd in Finland. In order to achieve our goal, we have found it helpful to combine relevant motivation theories such as intrinsic motivation, task significance, prosocial motivation, value congruence, and meaningfulness, with current social business theories.

As a result of our research, we have developed a model that elaborates how employees make their decision on employment and what influences their perceived motivation. Our findings suggest that both, the distinct business model and the mission of a social business have a great impact on people’s choice of employment. Moreover, the company values, which are partly derived from the mission of a social business, also influence prospective employees’ choice of employment. In addition, the employees’ educational background impacts their choice as their values reflect their education. They are also looking for such work, whose content fits their education.

In our study we have tried to point out that perceived employee motivation in a social business is also strongly influenced by value congruence. Moreover, the perceived meaningfulness that derives from the social business’ mission has an impact on the perceived employee motivation. The employees feel that their work is positively affecting people, society, and the environment, which results in task significance and prosocial motivation. Finally, the flexibility of the work, the ability to influence the work content, and the work atmosphere, are also shown to exercise a great influence on perceived employee motivation.
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______________________________
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Henri Valvanne
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I Introduction

The introduction chapter of this master thesis is divided into seven subsections. In a first step, the background of the topic and its relevance to be investigated will be presented. The purpose of the thesis is then specified through the problem statement leading to the research questions. Finally, definitions, delimitations, and the structure of the thesis are presented.

1.1 Background

“We need to recognize the real human being and his or her multifaceted desires. In order to do that, we need a new type of business that pursues goals other than making personal profit – a business that is totally dedicated to solving social and environmental problems” (Yunus, 2007, p. 21).

The last decade brought numerous technological and industrial developments, which have led to several breakthroughs, but they also left us to face an uncertain future (Skoll, 2006). We are going through difficult times as the financial crisis, along with the food and environmental crisis, over-population, and terrible diseases are still holding us in their grasp. In addition, the boundaries between the three sectors - the governmental, the nonprofit, and the business sector - are clouding. This is a result of people’s search to find “more innovative, cost-effective, and sustainable ways” to address social problems and provide socially essential goods, like basic education, health care and employment (Dees & Anderson, 2003, p. 16). People are seeing businesses as a main reason for environmental, social and economic problems. Moreover, companies are widely seen to be growing at the cost of the larger community. As a result, “the capitalistic system is under siege” (Porter & Kramer, 2011, p. 64).

It was thought for many years that the only purpose of a business was to increase profits and shareholder value (Banerjee, 2008). The previously mentioned crises and the change in the business landscape led on the one side to people experimenting with business practices and creating for-profit organizations serving explicitly a social purpose (Dees & Anderson, 2003) and on the other side to people considering employment options besides the traditional for-profit business sector. People are increasingly striving to work in organizations that have a more sustainable, social and environmental approach to business. This approach is social business.

The roots of social business lie in social entrepreneurship, whose origins were in the 1980s, when Bill Drayton, the founder of Ashoka, which is the global association of the world’s leading social entrepreneurs (Ashoka, 2012), introduced the idea of social entrepreneurship to the wider public (Dees, 2007). Since then the interest has increased in the public sector and also among scholars. Short, Moss and Lumpkin (2009) found 152 articles published in scholarly journals about social entrepreneurship from 1991 to 2009 with a 750% increase in publication during that time span.

Social business is an emerging form of organization. Muhammad Yunus first introduced the term ‘social business’ in his book published in 2007, ‘Creating a World Without Poverty’ (Wilson & Post, 2011). Social business has been defined as a self-sustaining business
designed and founded to solve a social problem (Dees, 2001; Austin, 2006; Yunus, 2007; Bornstein, 2007). Social businesses aim to solve some of the most pressing social problems through conducting self-sustaining business practices.

In addition, social businesses offer people a new option of employment. They give people the chance to help solve social problems and save the environment, while being paid to do so. Moreover, for-profit social businesses are also able to increase the ‘labor pool’ by attracting employees with skills that are extremely valued in business. This is due to their ability of giving higher financial rewards and other perceived opportunities than an ordinary non-profit or government job (Dees & Anderson, 2003). As an emerging new organization type, social businesses offer interesting research opportunities. One of them is perceived employee motivation in social businesses, which this thesis focuses on and tries to give new academic insights by investigating the case of ‘The Helsinki Metropolitan Area Reuse Centre Ltd’ (later referred as the Reuse Centre).

In contrast to social businesses, motivation has been a widely discussed topic among scholars for many years and it has not lost its importance. Moreover, motivation still holds a significant position in the eyes of scholars. As Miner (2003, p. 29) states: “If one wishes to create a highly valid theory, which is also constructed with the purpose of enhanced usefulness in practice in mind, it would be best to look to motivation theories (...) for an appropriate model.” Understanding what motivates people to work and what motivates people to select employment in a certain company gives managers an insight on how to influence their employees’ behavior efficiently. Higher motivated individuals work in a higher performance level as motivation influences employee engagement, satisfaction, commitment, and intention to quit (Nohria et al., 2008).

For easier understanding we use the term ‘motivation’ when talking about ‘perceived motivation’. This is due to the fact that the related literature mainly uses the expression motivation. Nevertheless, we are aware of the different meanings of the two terms. While motivation is triggered from the company side by giving incentives - monetary or non-monetary - in order to motivate employees, perceived motivation is the subjective impression of the individual. This work focuses on the latter, on perceived motivation.

1.2 Problem statement

Investigating studies made on social business, we can see that the vast majority of the studies concentrate on the social entrepreneur and the entrepreneurial process (Dees, 1998; Mair & Marti, 2006; Certo & Miller, 2008) and only a few studies have explored the employee side. Especially in Finland, there has been no research done so far focusing on employees. One of the reasons behind this is the newness of the whole idea of social business. Employees, or people, have been recognized as one of the most important differentiating factors and sources of competitive advantage for companies (Pfeffer, 1994). Since human resources - that is the pool of employees under the company’s control - are crucial to organizational success, it is important to investigate also the employee side (Luthans & Youssef, 2004).
Similarly, research on perceived employee motivation has concentrated on the traditional for-profit businesses, along with studies on non-profit organizations (see e.g. Borzaga & Tortia, 2006; Benz, 2005). However, perceived employee motivation in established social businesses has been scarcely researched. In order to get a better understanding of perceived employee motivation, the factors, which influence employee motivation in social businesses, need to be researched.

This research is relevant as it gives theoretical implications to understand the importance of social business as a way to solve social and environmental problems. The value that social businesses are promoting strengthens the development of societies. Furthermore, academics and managers will get knowledge on what employees are looking for when they choose to work in a social business and what motivates them to work for a social business. The focus on social business will additionally obtain insights on how the social mission is perceived and seen by the employees, and how company values are perceived and shared by the employees. This knowledge can be further used in order to attract new employees.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to understand why people choose to work in a social business, and what motivates them to work there. To fulfill our purpose, we combine relevant motivation theories such as intrinsic motivation, task significance, prosocial motivation, value congruence, and meaningfulness with current social business theories (Dees, 1998; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Yunus, 2007; Yunus et al., 2010).

Taken as a whole, the thesis will develop an understanding of the new phenomenon of social business from the point of view of the employees. Moreover, we will build a holistic model on perceived employee motivation within social businesses, which will be presented in chapter five.

1.4 Research questions

Our goal in terms of research questions is to find out:

- Why do people choose to work in a social business?
- What do employees in a social business perceive as the factors of their motivation?

1.5 Delimitations

This thesis is concentrated on perceived employee motivation in established social businesses in the non-for-profit sector. Therefore it will not deliver any research on social businesses with an emphasis on social entrepreneurship, or in the for-profit and non-profit sector. The top management was also excluded, along with the employees working through the work integration program, as well as part-time personnel, thus making the research applicable only to fixed, full-time employees.

The case was conducted in a social business that is established in Helsinki, Finland, resulting in geographical delimitations. In addition, due to the translation of the semi-structured
interviews, which were held in Finnish, some minimal details might be lost or not cited exactly as stated by the interviewees.

This thesis is based on a single case, thus limiting the scope of the study. Partly due to the time constraints as all of the steps involved in this research process were completed within a four-month period (February to May, 2012). This places a limit on the overall magnitude of the study.

1.6 Definitions

As follows, we present some of the definitions of different concepts that are used throughout the thesis. This is done to clarify some of the basic differences between similar terms.

Social business

“A no-loss, no-dividend, self-sustaining company that sells goods or services and repays investments to its owners, but whose primary purpose is to serve society and improve the lot of the poor” (Yunus et al., 2010, p. 311).

Social enterprise

In general, social enterprise refers to an organization that uses business solutions to accomplish social goals. In a social enterprise, the social objective is the primary driver. Examples include social-purpose enterprises and nonprofit business ventures. Social business is often seen as a subcategory of social enterprises.

According to the Finnish law of social enterprises, it is a company that produces goods and services for the market and tries to make a profit and can operate in any sector or line of business, but its purpose is to create jobs in particular for the disabled and long-term unemployed. At least 30 per cent of the staff of a social enterprise has to be disabled or long-term unemployed.

Perceived motivation vs. motivation

We define perceived motivation as the differentiation of how employees experience the different factors leading to an increase in motivation subjectively, while motivation centers on the incentives given by the organization.

Value congruence

When the values of the organization and the individual employee match.

Task significance

The extent to which a job provides opportunities by having a positive impact on other people.

Prosocial motivation

The desire to have a positive impact on other people, groups, and organizations.
1.7  **Structure of the thesis**

The thesis is divided into six chapters. Figure 1-1. below graphically illustrates the structure of the thesis. Additionally, the figure also displays the main contents of each chapter.

Figure 1-1. Thesis structure

- **Chapter 2** Frame of reference
  - In chapter two we go through the relevant literature in social entrepreneurship, social business, and motivation theory. This literature gives a background to our research problem and derives our frame of reference.

- **Chapter 3** Research methodology
  - The methodology is presented in the third chapter. The process of data collection is illustrated and the motivation as well as pros and cons for the chosen method are discussed.

- **Chapter 4** Analysis
  - In the fourth chapter the case investigated is described and then the empirical findings with the use of proof statements are presented.

- **Chapter 5** Proposed Model
  - Chapter five summarizes the empirical findings of chapter four and discusses them against the theoretical background shown in chapter two. Finally, our own model of perceived employee motivation in a social business is described and presented.

- **Chapter 6** Conclusion
  - In this chapter a conclusion is presented. The findings are related to the purpose of the study leading to the answers of the research questions. Finally, limitations and future research areas are stated.
2 Frame of reference

In this section we go through the relevant literature in social entrepreneurship, social business, and motivation in order to give a solid background for our research problem and derive our frame of reference.

2.1 The origin of social business within social entrepreneurship

Due to the growth of critical social problems plaguing our society, many experts and practitioners have started to see that the traditional approaches of government and the non-profit sector will not only be adequate to solve these problems (Wilson & Post, 2011). Although we are concentrating on established social businesses in our research, we will also examine social entrepreneurship in order to understand the origins and the concept of social business.

According to Mair and Marti (2006), social entrepreneurship as a practice that combines the creation of economical and social value has a long tradition and a global presence. Lepoutre et al. (2011) state that examples of these ‘hybrid ventures’ are upcoming all around the world. Bill Drayton, for example, founded Ashoka in 1980 in order to offer seed funding for entrepreneurs with a social vision (Ashoka, 2012).

Nevertheless, researchers have only recently been attracted by entrepreneurship as a process to foster social progress (Alvord et al., 2004; Dees & Elias, 1998). Shane and Venkataraman (2000) underline that the term ‘social business’ has taken on different meanings (Dees, 1998). When talking about these ‘hybrid organizations’ social value is not only a by-product of entrepreneurial action (Venkataraman, 1997), but also an “intended primary outcome” (Wilson & Post, 2011, p. 2).

In 1976 Professor Muhammad Yunus established the Grameen Bank to eliminate poverty and empower women in Bangladesh. It was also Yunus who proposed the social business as a new model in his book ‘Creating a World Without Poverty’ in 2007. According to Yunus et al. (2010, p. 311) a social business is “a no-loss, no-dividend, self-sustaining company that sells goods or services and repays investments to its owners, but whose primary purpose is to serve society and improve the lot of the poor.” Yunus (2007) has further introduced two types of social business:

- Type I: Focuses on businesses dealing with social objectives only.
- Type II: Can take up any profitable business as long as the poor and the disadvantaged, who can gain through receiving direct dividends or by some indirect benefits, own it.

Investors seeking for social benefits, rather than financial reward own the first type. The second type however, works in a different way. The social benefits come from the fact that it is owned by the poor or disadvantaged, and therefore the profits will benefit them. Type I is not supposed to pay out dividends, whereas Type II is designed to also be profit-maximizing (Yunus, 2007).
2.2 Social businesses with a social purpose

Dees and Anderson (2003) state that social businesses represent a mixture of the traditional values related to both for-profit and non-profit activity within the same companies. Also Austin et al. (2006, p.2) define social entrepreneurship as “innovative, social value creating activity that can occur within or across the nonprofit, business, or government sectors.”

In literature there is a big number of different definitions, but most of them have in common that social business is seen as inherently and explicitly social in its mission and purpose (Thompson et al., 2000; Dees, 2001; Alter, 2006; Austin et al., 2006; Austin, 2006; Haugh, 2006; Mair & Marti, 2006; Nicholls, 2006; Peredo & McLean, 2006; Mair & Schoen, 2007; Meyskens et al., 2008, Yunus et al., 2010). According to Haugh (2006) and Rauch (2007) in contrast to a common non-profit however, social businesses fundamentally repurpose business processes and approaches in order to solve social problems efficiently and in a sustainable way.

Social business can be seen as a subset of social enterprise. In general social enterprise refers to an organization that uses business solutions to accomplish social goals. In a social enterprise, the social objective is the primary driver. Social enterprises cover everything from not-for-profit organizations, charities and foundations, to cooperative and mutual societies (Harding, 2004). Figure 2-2. shows how social businesses can be positioned in relation to social enterprises and other organization types.

![Figure 2-1. Blurring organizational landscape](http://www.fourthsector.net)
According to the Finnish law of social enterprise, a social enterprise is a company that produces goods and services for the market, that tries to make a profit and can operate in any sector or line of business, but whose purpose is to create jobs in particular for the disabled and long-term unemployed. At least 30 per cent of the staff of a social enterprise has to be disabled or long-term unemployed (Saikkonen, 2004).

Social businesses can be defined also by viewing how they combine social and financial profit maximization and how the invested capital is repaid. In figure 2-2, we exhibit where social businesses are located in relation to for-profit and non-profit organizations in terms of repayment of invested capital, and social versus financial profit maximization.

![Figure 2-2. Social business vs. Profit maximizing business and not-for-profit organizations (Yunus et al., 2010)](image)

In this thesis we define social business as a self-sustaining business, designed and founded to solve a social problem(s) that reinvests most of its profits to pursue the company’s mission.

2.2.1 Social business model

Wilson and Post (2011) have made one of the first comprehensive attempts to understand the concept of social business. These authors found that: (1) the social mission is the driving design principle for the social business, (2) multiple rationales support the deliberate choice to address social missions through a market-based approach, and that (3) social businesses are deliberately for-profit but deliberately not profit-maximizing. We further elaborate on these three features of social businesses.
Firstly, as already mentioned, the social business is defined by its design to solve social problems (Thompson et al., 2000; Dees, 2001; Alter, 2006; Austin et al., 2006; Austin, 2006; Haugh, 2006; Mair & Marti, 2006; Nicholls, 2006; Peredo & McLean, 2006; Mair & Schoen, 2007; Meyskens et al., 2008; Wilson & Post, 2011). They clearly specify the social profit objective and pursue it through business methods, thus adopting a mission to create and sustain social value (Dees, 1998; Yunus et al., 2010).

Secondly, social businesses are characterized by a market-based approach to pursue their social change agenda. Wilson and Post (2011) found out three different reasons for choosing a market-based approach. Firstly, a market-based approach is seen as a more sustainable way of solving social problems. Rather than relying on philanthropy, social businesses generate profit in order to be self-sustaining. Secondly, for many social businesses the goal is to promote self-sufficiency and self-reliance among their target group. The idea is to give people the means to be self-reliant and thus generate a sustaining and long-term change. Thirdly, the use of a market-based approach is seen as a way to challenge the traditional ways of conducting business, to change the practices and approaches into a more sustainable and fair way. Social businesses are seen even to be pro-competition, as they believe it might help solve the social problems (Wilson & Post, 2011).

Figure 2.3 elaborates on how a social business can stretch the boundaries of financial and social benefits by combining an aim to solve social problems with a market-based approach.

![Figure 2.3. Social business thinking](Wilson & Post, 2011)
2.2.2 Social businesses in Finland

The field of social businesses in Finland is an emerging one. It has yet to be recognized as its own separate sector, as it lacks political and legal definition (Lilja & Mankki, 2010). However, the field of social enterprises has a longer tradition in Finland. The Act on Social Enterprises was established on the 1st of January 2004 and renewed in 2007. It was prepared by interaction between the practical actors and disability organizations. The legislation supported the placement of the disadvantaged, the disabled and long-term unemployed (Saikkonen, 2004).

The main difference between a traditional business and a social enterprise is that at least 30 per cent of the staff of social enterprise has to be disabled or long-term unemployed. Also a social enterprise receives wage-related subsidies, when employing a disabled or long-term unemployed as a compensation for potentially reduced work ability of the employee (Saikkonen, 2004).

In 2009 a project called ‘Yhteinen yritys’ (trans. ‘common company’) was started in order to generate information on establishing social enterprises and work-integration social enterprises, together with information about issues concerning operational conditions, and developing these kinds of enterprises. Developing the model for social business in Finland was part of the project. The project was ordered by the Ministry of Employment and The Economy, and was funded through The European Social Fund. It was run as a cooperative consisting of The National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), Syfo Ltd., Diaconia Polytechnic (Diak), and the Finnish Enterprise Agencies (Pöyhönen et al., 2010).

According to one of the reports made of the project (Pöyhönen et al., 2010), Finland is in need of social businesses, as the challenges in the coming years cannot be solved through traditional business models. Producing basic services with diminishing resources, employment of disadvantaged people, and surviving the shortage of labor are all critical issues to be considered in keeping the welfare state running. Moreover, another report indicated that there is clear market potential for social businesses in Finland (Lilja and Mankki, 2010).

2.2.2.1 Awareness about social business in Finland

As part of the development of the social business field in Finland The Association for Finnish Work introduced the mark of social business. This was accompanied by the criteria and definition of a social business. This mark has been seen as an important part of developing the social business field in Finland. Currently the awareness among different actors of the definition of social business is still rather low and the launch of the mark is seen as one of the first steps to increase the awareness and understanding of social businesses in Finland. According to an estimate there are potentially thousands of companies in Finland that could fit the criteria for a social business (Grönberg & Kostilainen, 2012). The first marks were given on the 28th of February 2012. Among the first receivers was The Helsinki Metropolitan Area Reuse Centre (Association for Finnish Work, 2012).
2.3 Perceived Motivation

“To be motivated means to be moved to do something” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 54). Others have defined motivation as: The psychological process that gives behavior purpose and direction (Kreitner, 1995); a predisposition to behave in a purposive manner to achieve specific, unmet needs (Buford, Bedeian, & Lindner, 1995); an internal drive to satisfy an unsatisfied need (Higgins, 1994); and the will to achieve (Bedeian, 1993). We define perceived motivation as the differentiation of how employees experience the different factors leading to an increase in motivation. This is highly subjective. In contrast motivation centers on the incentives given by the organization. In our work, we will only concentrate on the research of perceived motivation. This is important to state because so far research has not made a clear distinction between employee motivation and perceived employee motivation.

Wiley (1997) researched perceived employee motivation factors in for-profit organizations from 1946 to 1992. In 1992 workers rated the top five factors motivating them as follows: (1) good wages; (2) full appreciation for work done; (3) job security; (4) promotion and growth in the organization; and (5) interesting work. Wiley’s (1997) research revealed differences in perceived motivation due to environmental changes. From the post Second World War era to the rise of the computer industry, political, social, and economical changes have had a great impact on motivation factors (Wiley, 1997). Entering the 21st century we can see further changes in employee motivation factors as the environment is yet again in turmoil with the financial crisis still pushing on.

Table 2-1. Motivation factors 1946-1992 (Wiley, 1997, p. 268)

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<tr>
<td>Full appreciation of work done</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling of being in on things</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sympathetic help with personal problems</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job security</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good wages</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting work</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion and growth in the organization</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal or company loyalty to employees</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good working conditions</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
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</table>

People working in a non-profit organization have been said to enjoy satisfaction from the work they do and the work context itself thus having more intrinsic motivation. Non-profits often have a social purpose thus giving the employees a sense of higher purpose. As
Benz (2005, p. 156) notes: “Employees in non-profit firms are motivated by a desire to produce a quality service, to promote the ideas or the vision of the non-profit’s mission, or to assist in the production of a public good they see as desirable for society at large.” Research suggests that these employees are also more satisfied with their jobs compared to the for-profit sector (Benz, 2005). In addition, non-profit employees have workplaces with more autonomy, task variety and greater influence on the job than for-profit employees, thus nurturing intrinsic motivation (Benz, 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Borzaga and Tortia (2006) researched differences in motivation among non-profits and for-profits. Their research revealed that non-profits are able to obtain the highest degree of worker satisfaction among the factors included in their study, in addition non-profit organizations involve the workforce better (Borzaga & Tortia, 2006). The research also revealed differences in motivation in choosing the workplace, as people working for non-profits choose their jobs because of a high interest in the sector the organization was working in. In general they are “more concerned with intrinsic reasons for choosing the organization and attach greater value to the interaction with users” (Borzaga & Tortia, 2006, p. 236).

Other authors have developed a classification on the perceived motivation factors, which fostered a development in the understanding of motivation. These streams of research are presented below and are used as a frame of reference in our research.

### 2.4 Intrinsic motivation

Research has classified motivation into two distinct types, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. According to Ryan and Deci (2000, p. 55) intrinsic motivation, refers to “doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable”, with extrinsic motivation referring “to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome.”

Being intrinsically motivated means to take action because the task itself brings pleasure, it is about enjoying what you do without caring what you get out of it. These actions satisfy some basic psychological needs, such as autonomy and competence, but do not depend on instrumental rewards. It is characterized by interest, curiosity, and a desire to learn. In contrast, extrinsic motivation refers to doing an activity for its instrumental value (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Intrinsic motivation is linked to higher levels of creativity, especially when employees take the perspective of others and are thus prosocially motivated (Grant et al., 2011).

Leete (2000) states that for non-profit organizations the usage of intrinsically motivated employees could be the best suitable solution in order to reach the organizational targets. This is due to their intrinsic relation to the service or product being offered. Also Benz (2005) agrees when arguing that people working in non-profit organizations are intrinsically motivated by a desire to promote and assist in the creation of a public good, which is seen as required for the whole society. Furthermore, Handy and Katz (1998) came to the conclusion that non-profit organizations attract employees for whom the love of their job is the dominant aspect rather than monetary incentives.
2.5  Prosocial motivation

Prosocial motivation is the desire to have a positive impact on other people, groups, and organizations. The International Social Survey Programme data on work orientations show that more than 25% of workers consider the fact of helping other people through their job and the usefulness for society because of their duties as very significant job values. Clark (2009) states that this group of employees is equal to the number of employees valuing high income.

Studying prosocial motivation Grant and Berg (2011) found out that prosocial motivation can provide understanding of how employees experience and follow the desire to keep and uphold the welfare of coworkers, customers, and communities, to understand employees’ ambition to create positive outcomes for other people. Prosocial motivation increases persistence, performance, and productivity, especially when it is accompanied by intrinsic motivation. It can also enhance the creativity of intrinsically motivated employees and strengthen social bonds and the feeling of doing meaningful work. As a result, employees are encouraged to spend more time and energy in their assigned tasks. However, prosocial motivation differs from intrinsic motivation in three characteristics: Being more outcome-focused than process-focused, requiring greater conscious self-regulating and self-control, and being more future-focused rather than present-focused (Grant, 2008a).

Schepers et al. (2005) came to the conclusion that employees in non-profit organizations are motivated by different factors, more prosocial ones than employees in the for-profit sector. Those factors are i.e. preferences for working with and for people, social contacts, altruism, and personal growth. In short, as already mentioned in the previous section, by intrinsic rewards.

2.6  Task significance

Task significance is the extent to which a job provides opportunities to have an impact on other people (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Grant (2007) proposed that task significance gives employees the knowledge about how their work affects other people, thus strengthening perceived impact of their work. He further identified task significance as one of the key factors in employee motivation.

Grant (2008b) further states that there is a movement towards ‘socializing’ job design and social information administering theories by highlighting the relational mechanisms through which task significance links people’s jobs and actions to other individuals. This leads to employees seeing their jobs as intensely connected to other people through increased perceptions of ‘social impact and social worth’.

As an outcome, task significance was found to play an important role to increase job performance and motivation of employees if they gain a deeper understanding of how their work benefits others and not just themselves (Grant, 2008b).

Also Renn and Vandenberg (1995) found out that an increase in perceived meaningfulness of work is connected with greater task significance. This is due to the desire people have to
feel that they play a significant role in the organization. This important role within the organization may promote a feeling of purpose and meaning.

The field of task significance in non-profit organizations is not really clearly distinguished from the for-profit sector. However, if one follows Schepers et al. (2005) and argues that employees in non-profit organizations are more motivated by prosocial factors, Grants (2008b) findings can be linked to the non-profit sector. He found out that task significance is “more likely to increase performance for employees with strong prosocial values, which can be expressed and fulfilled by task significance” (Grant, 2008b, p. 119).

2.7 The meaning of work

“The organization man seeks a redefinition of his place on earth – a faith that will satisfy him that what he must endure has a deeper meaning than appears on the surface” (Whyte, 1956, p. 6).

The research on the meaning of work shows a broad spectrum across many disciplines. The main questions to be answered are e.g.: where do employees find meaningfulness in their work, and how work meanings have changed over time (Rosso et al., 2010).

Organizational studies outcomes have been highly influenced by the meaning of work. Examples are the work motivation, individual performance (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), job satisfaction (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997), engagement (May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004), and personal fulfillment (Kahn, 2007).

According to Pratt and Ashforth (2003) meaning can be formed by a person’s own believes (individually), socially – influenced by norms or shared opinions, or both. Meaning is further described as the “output of having made sense of something, or what it signifies.” Opinions about meaning are finally determined by each person, though they are also influenced by the environment or social context (Wrzesniewski et al., 2003).

Nevertheless, just the fact that work has a specific meaning does not automatically make it meaningful. Meaningfulness can be described as the sum of significance something has for an individual (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003). This shows that the amount of felt or perceived significance can differ significantly from one individual to another (Rosso et al., 2010). In literature the term ‘meaningfulness’ has a positive valence. Therefore we use the term and ‘meaningful work’ as a positive related aspect concerning the experience of work for individuals. There, following literature no distinction is made between for-profit and non-profit.

2.8 Value Congruence

Values can be defined as “general beliefs about the importance of normatively desirable behaviors or end states” (Edwards & Cable, 2009, p. 655). People follow their values when taking decisions and actions. Organizational values on the other hand explain how members should act and how resources of the organization should be distributed (Edwards & Cable, 2009). According to Kristof (1996) value congruence can be described as the matching of the values of the organization and the individual.
The importance of congruence between the values of employees and organizations has been widely researched (Kristof, 1996; Ostroff, Shin, & Kinicki, 2005; Edwards & Cable, 2009). The indication is that when employees hold values that match the values of their employing organization, they are satisfied with their jobs, identify with the organization, are committed, and are keen to stay in the organization (Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown, Zimmermerman, & Johnson, 2005; Ostroff, Shin, & Kinicki, 2005).

Value congruence has been connected with the theory of motivation, especially through its effect on commitment (Meyer, Becker, & Vandenberghe, 2004). It is said to increase employees’ intrinsic motivation. Finally, it was found out that value congruence is linked with a higher level of organizational performance leading to sustainable competitive advantage (Ren, 2010).

Recent research stated that the perceived person-organization fit – the value congruence – is significantly higher in non-for profit organizations than in for-profit organizations. Employees in non-for profit organizations perceive a good fit with the values of the company they work for (De Cooman et al., 2011). In this thesis we further focus on the ‘subjective fit’, which is the fit between the own values of the employee and his or her perception of the organization’s values (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).


3 Research methodology

The presented master thesis relies on interpretative qualitative research, using the case study method according to Stake (1995). This means that the case researched provides the reader with “new interpretation, new knowledge, but also new illusions” (Stake, 1995, p. 99). In this part, the methodology will be further described.

3.1 Abductive approach

A common approach to conducting a case study is abductive research, which is closely related to the interpretative approach followed by Stake (1995). The abductive approach is used in qualitative research in order to interpret a single case from a “hypothetic overarch- ing pattern, which, if it were true, explains the case in question” (Alvesson & Sködberg, 2009, p. 4). To strengthen the interpretation, new cases should be involved. This leads to an on-going theory (the anticipated overarchin g pattern) adjustment and refinement. As an advantage against other approaches, the abductive approach - as well as the interpretative - also includes understanding.

The starting point is an empirical basis but the goal is not to refuse theoretical preconcep- tions. Instead, empirical facts are combined with studies of previous theory in the literature during the analysis, which is seen as a source of inspiration of the finding of patterns leading to understanding. Our aim is to expand motivational theories to the field of social business, based on empirical results, and as such the abductive approach was chosen.

3.2 Case study as a research method

The case study method is a method of qualitative research by using a variety of data sources. This variety simplifies the investigation of a phenomenon within its context. The followed approach leads to a broader view on the phenomenon that allows for several components “to be revealed and understood” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 544).

In the literature there are two key concepts guiding case study method: The concept by Robert Stake (1995) and the one by Robert Yin (1994). Both methods guarantee that the focused subject is well investigated and that the core of the phenomenon is discovered. Nevertheless, these two concepts differ in the features they emphasize. While Yin (1994) is more focused on the techniques and methods that form a case study, Stake (1995) points out that the methods of inquiry are not the fundamental part of investigation, instead the purpose of study is the case itself: “By whatever methods, we choose to study the case” (Stake, 2005, p. 443).

According to Crabtree and Miller (1999) this approach leads to a close ‘collaboration’ be- tween the researcher and the participant because participants are allowed to tell their sto- ries. This is connected with another advantage: People can describe their sights of reality, which results in a better understanding for the researcher of the participants’ doings (Lather, 1992; Robottom & Hart, 1993).
In order to answer the research questions, the authors chose the case study method according to Stake (1995) as the suitable one because it allows a better focus on the chosen case in form of a certain social business and the selected employees instead of taking the methods in the center of the investigation. Moreover, Stake follows an interpretative approach where the nature of reality is seen in a post-structural constructivist way where the goal is understanding more than generalizing. This way is characterized by offering readers with “good raw material for their own generalization” (Stake, 1995, p. 102). Therefore Stake’s approach will be further described.

According to Stake (1995) cases can be simple or complex and the time spent on the cases also differs. Nevertheless, while focusing on the case, one is involved in case study. In addition, it is important to see that certain qualities are within the boundaries of the case, while others are outside. Also some of the outside ones are significant as context, like the social, economic, and ethical features. This shows the difficulties in specifying the start and the end of a case, but ‘boundedness and activity patterns' can be helpful concepts in order to specify the case. “Balance and variety are important; opportunity to learn is of primary importance” (Stake, 1995, p. 6).

### 3.3 Unit of analysis

Stake (2005) identified three types of case study:

1. **Intrinsic case study**: The goal is a better understanding of this particular case and not theory building. An intrinsic interest for the specific case is given.
2. **Instrumental case study**: The goal is to offer insight into an issue or to come up with a generalization. The case alleviates a better understanding of a phenomenon and plays a supportive role. In order to follow the external interest, there is still a deeper inquiry of the case, its contexts and ordinary activities.
3. **Multiple or collective case study**: Instead of studying one case, a number of cases are used in order to explore a phenomenon. Therefore instrumental case study is stretched to more cases out of the belief that understanding them “will lead to a better understanding and perhaps better theorizing” (Stake, 2005, p. 446).

We used the instrumental case study within the thesis, which also differs from the two others in the way the case is selected. While the intrinsic case study starts with an already identified case, the instrumental and the collective case study need (a) case(s) to be selected. In contrast to the collective case study, the instrumental case study focuses on just one case, which plays a supportive role in order to ease the understanding of something else.

In this thesis the interviewed employees of The Helsinki Metropolitan Area Reuse Centre Ltd. are the unit of analysis, which gives us an opportunity to study the already given phenomena closer. Most of them have been employed through the work integration program. The number of these employees varies from 180 to even 200 employees per year. The number of fixed full-time employees is 40, with an additional four fixed employees working part-time. All in all, seven interviews were carried out among the full-time workforce.
3.4 Case criteria

The company was chosen among businesses that have received the mark for social businesses introduced by The Association for Finnish Work. In Finland, the mark of official social business is given to companies that are trying to solve social and ecological problems through their businesses. The Association for Finnish Work has several criteria they use to determine whether the company deserves the status of social business. The primary criteria are (Association for Finnish Work, 2012):

- Primary purpose and goal of the business is to produce social good.
- Most of the profits stay within the business to produce the social good, or to be donated in accordance with their mission for the social good.
- Openness and transparency of the business.

The association also looks for aspects such as commitment of the employees, increasing employee satisfaction and welfare, customer focus, developing local communities, minimizing the health and environmental effects, and assessment of impact in terms of society (Association for Finnish Work, 2012).

In addition to these criteria we assessed the companies in terms of the mission, organization type, age, and size of the company. First, we reviewed the companies’ mission statements linked to social and environmental purpose. Second, we looked at the organization type focusing on limited companies. Third, as our research focus was on established social businesses, we excluded start-up companies. Finally, we were looking at the size of the company, excluding micro and small companies in order to have a wider pool of employees from which to choose the persons to be interviewed. After reducing the list of possible companies and talking to representatives of the remaining companies we chose The Helsinki Metropolitan Area Reuse Centre as our company to be researched.

3.5 Data collection

In order to answer the research questions, primary and secondary data were collected. The next section describes which sources of each data collection approach were used.

3.5.1 Primary data

To gain primary data, we have decided to conduct focused semi-structured interviews in the Reuse Centre. We conducted interviews with employees of each of the four departments (HR, Finance, Communication and Development) and the Education unit of the company. Most of the employees had previously worked in the shop operations. This gave us the opportunity to get a whole picture of the company from the employees’ point of view. In the semi-structured interviews, the starting point can be a pre-determined topic of conversation and discussion stimulus. The aim is to collect responses and interpretations in a largely open form within the interview (Hopf in Flick et al., 2005).

The questions and thus the content of the conversation were set in advance, but without strict order and as an open conversation. This follows the range criteria mentioned by Mer-
ton et al. (1956), which says that the range of the bleed problem in the interview may not be too tight. That is, the respondents must have a maximum chance to respond to the ‘stimulus situation’. This involves both, theoretically anticipated and unanticipated reactions.

Appendix I introduces the focused interview guide (p. 53). This method further allowed an informative schedule, but still focused on the relevant questions. Our interview guide was formed in order to reach a proper understanding on perceived employee motivation in social businesses. It was divided into different themes as follows: 1) social business in general, and 2) perceived motivation, consisting of questions on prosocial motivation, meaningfulness, value congruence, and task significance. This was done in order to meet the criteria of ‘specificity’, meaning that the issues raised and the questions in the interview should be dealt with in a specified form, and ‘depth’, which should be also adequately represented. Respondents should be supported in the presentation of affective, cognitive and value-related significance, which have certain situations for them (Merton et al., 1956).

The willingness of the individuals to discuss the appropriate was of great importance for the quality of the primary data collection. All of the interviewees gave their consent to support the work and were available within short time when required for the interviews. In addition, it is also important to mention that they belong to the same hierarchical level and all of them work in the headquarters, which leads to better comparability.

The first contact was made via e-mail, indicating their willingness to support our research. Furthermore, the topic was introduced and the research focus was shortly explained. As none of the interviewees asked for the interview guide beforehand all of our questions were new to them.

In total we interviewed seven employees. The interviews took 40 min to 55 min. One interview took place at the company site, which made it possible to visit the firms’ headquarters in Helsinki. Another advantage of the face-to-face interview was to make sure that misunderstandings were avoided besides it also gave us the opportunity to ask follow-up questions (Sekaran, 2002). The other six interviews were conducted via Skype and telephone in order to avoid the distance problem between the interviewees (located in Finland) and the interviewer (in Sweden), which may be according to Sekaran (2002) named as a problem imposed by face-to-face interviews. Easier access, speed and lower costs may be mentioned as advantages of this approach (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2000). The lack of personal non-verbal communication however may be mentioned as a disadvantage of telephone interviews (Sekaran, 2002). Nevertheless, concerning the availability of the interviewees, we argue that this was the only practical way of conducting the interviews.

In Table 3-1. we are going to present the interviewed employees, their position, how long they have been working in the company, and their education. We also give the time, the place and the type of interview method.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Current position</th>
<th>Person interviewed</th>
<th>Time worked in the company</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Time, place &amp; type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Controller (Financial) at Support</td>
<td>Marianne Hiltunen</td>
<td>● From 8/2011</td>
<td>Master of Business Administration</td>
<td>● March 27, 2012</td>
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<td>45 minutes</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>On-site, Helsinki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Voluntary work coordinator at project VETY</td>
<td>Hanna Lilja</td>
<td>● From 1997</td>
<td>M.Sc. in Agriculture and Forestry</td>
<td>● April 23, 2012</td>
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<td>40 min</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Communication coordinator at Support</td>
<td>Laura Ylönen</td>
<td>● From 9/2011</td>
<td>Bachelor of Business Administration</td>
<td>● April 23, 2012</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Phone</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Environment specialist at Training Service Tuuma</td>
<td>Ville Heinilä</td>
<td>● From 8/2008</td>
<td>Bachelor of Natural Resources</td>
<td>● April 23, 2012</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Skype</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Head of employment at HR</td>
<td>Jukka Risu</td>
<td>● From 7/2007</td>
<td>Land Survey Technician</td>
<td>● May 3, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Through the work integration program</td>
<td></td>
<td>55 min</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Environment specialist at Development</td>
<td>Annukka Luomi</td>
<td>● From fall 2007</td>
<td>M.Sc. in Agriculture and Forestry</td>
<td>● May 3, 2012</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Project manager at Hyvään Kirteeseen-project</td>
<td>Eeva Oinonen</td>
<td>● From 2/2012</td>
<td>M.Sc. in Social Psychology</td>
<td>● May 3, 2012</td>
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<td>45 min</td>
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<td>Skype</td>
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</table>
3.5.2 Secondary data

Secondary data for this thesis was achieved through academic articles, books, reports, documents and online sources. Through this material we got a better understanding of the company, its business model, stakeholder relationships, and the business environment. Furthermore, through this data the interviews were supplemented and supported.

3.6 Theoretical sampling

Theoretical sampling was used to compile the research sample. According to Coyne (1997, p. 629) in theoretical sampling the “initial decisions are based on general subject or problem area, not on a preconceived theoretical framework.” The researchers purposefully select a sample as the research progress to fit the emerging categories and theory. Marshall (1996, p. 523) indicates that “theoretical sampling necessitates building interpretative theories from the emerging data and selecting a new sample to examine and elaborate on this theory.” In our research, after the initial four interviews, three new ones, with different employees, were set in relation to the findings and to new categories of perceived motivation that emerged from the interviews. This is in line with the abductive approach explained previously.

The interviewed employees were chosen in terms of their position in the company by excluding managers, owners, and unpaid/voluntary workforce. Our focus was on employees that are employed full-time and that are not included in the long-term unemployed or otherwise disadvantaged workforce, since these might have different motivations to work in the company. For example they might have no other choice of employment.

3.6.1 Theoretical saturation

Associated with theoretical sampling is the notion of theoretical saturation. The point of theoretical saturation is when the researcher sees similar instances repeatedly and no new categories are identified (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Rogers, 2003). It should be noted that this is rarely fully achieved. Most researchers stop at the point when they feel that “they have a ‘good enough’ categorization to have been able to articulate a meaningful and useful theory” (Rogers, 2003, p. 90).

In this research study interviews were continued as long as new relevant information was revealed. Once the interviewees repeated information, and we had the feeling of having obtained enough information in order to categorize and analyze it, we decided to conclude our interviews.

3.7 Procedure of data analysis

According to Stake (1995) there are two strategic ways existing in order to grasp new meanings about cases: (1) through direct interpretation (of the individual example) and (2) through aggregation of examples. The direct interpretation means that the researcher gets ‘new meanings’ about the case through directly interpreting the individual example while the second means the aggregation of examples until it is possible to talk about them as a
group (Stake, 1995, p. 74). Both methods were used within our case study. Nevertheless, the qualitative researcher analyzes and synthesizes in indirect interpretation where he or she tries to pull the focused example apart and to put it back together more meaningfully.

We further endeavored to make sense of certain reflections of the case by studying it as closely and deeply as possible. Therefore documents, such as brochures, annual reports, and magazine articles as well as the company’s webpage were used to get a deeper knowledge about the focused organization. This part is greatly subjective, but allowed a bigger focus on identifying causalities instead of talking about objective facts of the company during the interviews.

Part of this work was first preceded with the help of hermeneutics as a basis for developing a qualitative content analysis. Objectives of scientific hermeneutics are to build an art of displaying and interpreting texts and develop the meaningful reality in general.

Following Stake (1995) the interviews were taped in order to systematically analyze the fixed communication (Mayring, 1995), and transcribed in extenso. The interview transcripts were reviewed and statements were categorized and divided into units in a word file. Denzin (2001, p. 71) also suggests, “bracketing or reducing” the phenomenon to its essential elements in order to cut it loose from the natural world in order to uncover its “essential structures and features.” Then, we discussed the case against the background of the problem theoretically reviewed in chapter two. Next, we grouped and summarized the previously disassembled units in the following emerging categories, which are partly guided by the specific research questions posted in the section 1.4:.

- Decision of employment
- Awareness about social business
- Intrinsic motivation
  - Value Congruence
  - Meaningfulness
  - Task Significance
  - Prosocial Motivation
  - Working environment

These categories seemed evident to expand and adapt the theoretical framework by means of the results from the analysis. The category ‘value congruence’ came up during the first interview as being an important part and was therefore added afterwards to the frame of reference as well as its own section within the interview guide. Whenever a new finding came up, all of the transcripts were reviewed again in order to get the newly added information also out of them and interpret it against the theoretical background. In terms of its crucial parts, pieces, and structures the phenomenon was put back together (Denzin, 2001). In a final step, implications were developed and conclusions were drawn, and therefore the phenomenon was contextualized and carried back in the “natural social world” (Denzin, 2001, p. 71). All the findings within the categories lead to the whole picture of perceived employee motivation in a social business, which is presented as a model in chapter five.
3.8 Ethical considerations

According to Blumberg et al. (2005) there are two main ethical considerations when conducting case study research:

- First, privacy issues, which can be a very critical factor in case study research. This is because of the big amount of information gathered and revealed within a case study. Therefore we took the issue of confidentiality in conducting this case study into account. We got the permission to name and quote the specific case. In addition, after transcribing the interviews in extenso, the recorded interviews were deleted after presenting and analyzing the relevant data. In order to guarantee confidentiality to all the interviewees, we refrained from correlating the statements to the employees. Therefore I:1 (Interviewee 1) to I:7 were used instead when giving direct quotes.

- Second, there is a need that researchers have to be honest when doing the evaluation and interpretation of the information. Furthermore, other researchers should come to the same conclusion and interpretation of the information when using the same material that we used. We have taken great pains to be objective in our analysis; however, it always depends on the respective researcher in which way he or she will interpret the different statements.

3.1 Reliability and validity

3.1.1 Reliability

The case investigated in our thesis reflects reality and shows how employee motivation is perceived in a social business. The usage of semi-structured interviews could result in empirical findings without the objective of being exactly repeatable (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

Since the field of social business is a very new one, whose importance and people’s awareness of it will continue to change within the next few years, we did not anticipate for other researchers to come to the same conclusions in future research. However, we tried to clearly describe the methods used as well as the data collection process in order to make it reasonable and also possible for other researchers to (re)analyze the conclusions (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

3.1.2 Validity

In order to increase validity and also to shield against researcher’s prejudice, we used multiple sources in the data collection process such as documents, annual reports, and interview tapes. This usage of different sources of data collection techniques is also known as triangulation (Saunders et al., 2007).

We further established a chain of evidence in the data collection phase (Hirschman, 1986). Meaning that we used well-translated interview transcripts, which provided satisfactory citations and allowed for validations of the findings from the different interviews.
4 Analysis

This chapter deals with the analysis of the case investigated. First, the case will be introduced by describing the focused company. The next section groups the findings in the defined categories. Finally, the findings are summarized leading to a discussion.

4.1 The Helsinki Metropolitan Area Reuse Centre Ltd.

The Helsinki Metropolitan Area Reuse Centre operates in five locations in the metropolitan area in southern Finland: One each in Vantaa and Espoo, and three in Helsinki. In 2011 they employed 252 people with a turnover of 3,9 MEUR (Helsinki Metropolitan Area Reuse Centre, 2012a). Their services and products include accepting usable items, selling or donating them, ecological handicraft materials, handicraft workshops for groups and companies, Plan B line of clothes made from reused materials, consisting of tailor clothes, décor, furniture, jewelry, environmental advice for youths and educators, environmental training and consulting for companies and associations, and environmental education and development projects (Helsinki Metropolitan Area Reuse Centre, 2012a). The social business is organized in three different departments: Shop operations, common supportive functions, and educational operations, as shown in figure 3-1.

Figure 3-1. Organization chart (Modified, Helsinki Metropolitan Area Reuse Centre, 2012c)
The Helsinki Metropolitan Area Reuse Centre combines both, the environmental and social aspects in its business. The company’s mission is to improve the state of the environment by decreasing the amount of waste people produce, and by increasing their environmental awareness. They provide a benefit to the community by increasing environmental awareness especially among people, companies, and organizations in the Helsinki metropolitan area. To reach this goal, the Reuse Centre provides and markets advice as well as training services. The company offers environmental advice to 30 000 children, youngsters and educators each year. In addition, they employ long-term unemployed and other disadvantaged people, with around 350-400 employed yearly. These people are employed for different time spans, ranging from six to a maximum of eighteen months. Moreover, the Reuse Centre has a project that aims at helping the long-term unemployed get full time work after their employment period in the Centre (Helsinki Metropolitan Area Reuse Centre, 2012a).

All profits from the Centre stay within the organization to serve their mission. The Centre assesses their impact on the environment for example by calculating how much their operations reduce carbon dioxide from getting into the air. According to figures from 2011, the Centre prevented 5 800 000 kilograms of carbon dioxide from being released into the environment (Helsinki Metropolitan Area Reuse Centre, 2012a). As a result, they have received the social business mark from The Association for Finnish Work and are also using the WWF’s Green Office system (Helsinki Metropolitan Area Reuse Centre, 2012b). The main company characteristics are compiled in Table 4.1.

Table 4-1. Company characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Helsinki Metropolitan Area Reuse Centre</th>
<th>Mission/ Purpose</th>
<th>Social Business Credentials</th>
<th>Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>KIERRÄTYSKESKUS</strong></td>
<td>To improve the state of the environment by decreasing the amount of waste people produce, and by increasing their environmental awareness.</td>
<td>Official Social Enterprise Mark given by The Association for Finnish Work.</td>
<td>• Accepting usable items, selling or donating them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Established 1990</td>
<td>Most of their employees have previously experienced long-term unemployed or otherwise been in a disadvantaged position in the labor market.</td>
<td>• Profits stay within the business</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Turnover 3,9 MEUR (2011)</td>
<td>They provide environmental advice to 30 000 children, youngsters and educators each year.</td>
<td>• Social and environmental mission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 252 employees (2011)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Transparency &amp; openness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 44 fixed employees, of which 4 are part-time employees</td>
<td></td>
<td>• WWF Green Office</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Plan B line of clothes made from reused materials</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Environmental training and consulting for companies and associations</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Environmental education and development projects</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
4.2 Empirical Findings

The findings will now be illustrated, starting with the reasons for choosing to work in a social business, followed by the main categories of data analysis, and finally leading to the overarching goal of getting a better understanding of perceived motivation.

4.2.1 Employment decision

One of the main goals of this thesis was to find out the reasons why people choose to work in a social business. Our research revealed that the educational background of the employees, the organization type, its mission, and values, affected the employees’ choice. An employee (I:2) combined these aspects well by stating:

“When I started looking for a job I was hoping to get a job, or to find an interesting job, which matched my education background (...), but which would also match my personal values, that are sustainable development, environment, and social aspects. I did not want to work in a company that just makes money and produces just whatever, in a purely commercial company.”

Most of the employees were highly educated and had an educational background in either environmental or social sciences (see Table 3-1.). This affected their choice of workplace as they applied for jobs that matched their educational background and field of interest. One employee (I:1) stated that the reason for applying to the Reuse Centre “was purely because I needed a job from my own field.” This was supported by another employee (I:3): “Thinking about my education background (...), these kind of environmental aspects were one of the reasons for applying, to work with these issues.”

An often-cited reason was a combination of educational background and the field of work, as well as the type of organization:

“I could combine my both degrees in the work. I have worked before for very commercial companies, they are quite different; I wanted to work for a different kind of company. I wanted to try how this kind of work is” (I:4).

“Because of the interesting organization, an organization which operations fit to my own values” (I:5).

“The fact that the company works for the environment was the most important factor” (I:3).

The social business’ values affected the choice of company to work for and were even more valued than other factors. One employee (I:2) stated that “values were more important than pay and other factors”, while another person (I:3) added “when I was looking for a job, the salary was not as important as these other things.”

4.2.2 Awareness about social business

Another goal of our research was to find out the level of knowledge the employees had about the concept of social business. When asked about the differences between a normal for-profit company and a social business, the employees mainly brought up the limited profit sharing. According to an employee (I:2) “the biggest difference is that we don’t try to achieve
Another person (I:1) explained that a percentage of profits "has to be used in the development, where, compared to normal companies, the profits can be given out as dividends." Moreover, a different employee (I:3) pointed out that a social business "can have services that aren't just for making pure financial profit." The employee (I:3) further explained this through their work at the Reuse Centre, as the Reuse Centre sets "the prices in a way that we are not striving for the most profits, so that everyone has the possibility to buy the items and they end up being used, and not in the trash."

The social as well as the environmental purposes were also mentioned. One employee (I:4) explained social business as an organization that is trying "to find solutions to social and ecological problems" with most of the profits being used "to promote social goals and not given out as dividends"; while another (I:5) explained social business as having social responsibility "as the basic purpose of the business", not just as a part of the business.

The employees often looked at the concept of social business through their own company. Following the company’s official mission to improve the state of the environment, the employees emphasized the environmental aspect. The interviewees saw the mission of the company as "providing the possibilities to increase the amount of pro-environment acts in practice, and reduce our impact on the environment" (I:3), and "to promote environmental awareness in a sensible way" (I:1). The ideas of sustainability and responsibility were further broadened, not to only involve the environment, but also people:

"We are trying to show the example on both sides and that it is possible to do this way. I don’t believe that the environment work we do, could be done in that way that we just try to get employees as many and as cheap as possible, without thinking how they can continue their lives. Making things in all aspects sustainable, considering the whole" (I:3).

"This kind of humane approach, understanding and appreciating the different life situations of people, and recognizing the challenges in these issues. It comes from the values and the value base, that the values of the company are not just some meaningless verbiage, but that the whole approach of social responsibility is totally embraced in our operations. Our whole business is about social responsibility. The humane approach is seen in our daily operations" (I:5).

In general, the employees were not completely aware of all of the aspects of a social business. This may be due to the newness of the concept in Finland. On the other hand, the employees felt that they were working in a non-dividend, self-sustaining company, that has a social and an environmental purpose, thus fitting the definition of a social business (Yunus, 2010). When asked about the differences between the Reuse Centre and other companies, one of the employees (I:4) explained, that "here everyone has a common goal and it is not just to make money, but to make a common good, educating people on how to save natural resources. The money is used to something else than to just make more money."

Although the concept of social business was not fully internalized by the interviewees, the concept of the social enterprise was. All of the employees knew that the company had the official status of a social enterprise that employs the long-term unemployed and other disadvantaged people. This social side of the business was highlighted in many comments. As
an example one employee (I:3) mentioned that “one of our ways of working towards our goals is to hire disadvantaged people who are in a tough situation in the labor market.”

These findings correlate with the current reports of the field of social business in Finland, which suggest that the meaning and definition of a social business is still in development (Pöyhönen et al., 2010). As one employee (I:1) pointed out about social businesses in Finland:

“I understood that it is in the very early stage of development and people are clarifying what it means. But there are some criteria made for it, because you can apply for the mark for social business. It is so new thing in Finland that it is still finding its meaning.”

Our research indicates that the concept of social businesses in Finland is more linked to the mark given to social businesses and the criteria listed by the Association for Finnish Work, than to the actual concept and general idea. This means that it will still take some time to fully establish the idea of social business in Finland. Regarding the employees’ awareness about social business, it can be concluded, that although they may not be familiar with the definition of a social business, they are conscious of the components that in reality make the Reuse Centre a social business.

4.2.3 Value congruence

One of the main concerns that emerged throughout the research was the importance of values. Values play a significant role in people’s decision of where to work. The employees felt that the company values reflected their own values. This impacted the perceived motivation and the work satisfaction.

4.2.3.1 Employee and company values

The employees had similar individual values. They placed both the environmental and social aspects high in their value rankings. Among the most mentioned values were: Sustainable development, environmental responsibility, social aspects, humane approach, friends and family, having a social purpose, soft values, empathy, compassion, and caring. Compared to the company values we can clearly see the similarities.

The official company values are: Environmental responsibility, sense of community, authenticity, empathy, and rationality. The employees further listed values that they felt the company represented: Understanding and respecting individuals, idea richness, and being easily approachable.

One of the employees explained the values in his/her own words:

“Well of course sustainable development. But also equality, our personnel is very mixed here, we have immigrants, people who have trouble getting employed, handicapped, people coming from very different backgrounds and life situations. What else, openness, we try to be transparent, so that people see what we do and what is the meaning of the company. Sensibility also, we try to influence people to buy things sensibly, not to consume for no reason, avoiding the unnecessary use of natural resources” (I:2).
In addition some of the employees saw the company as a continually developing organization:

“Perhaps one thing that the Reuse Centre does, that doesn’t show in the official values, is that it is involved in lots of things. It is quite strongly a development organization, and also a developing one” (I:1).

“Maybe, what is missing from the official values, is this kind of attitude of constantly going forward. I feel that the company wants to develop, and to do new things, or to do things in a new way” (I:7).

The educational background of the employees impacted their values, as people from an environmental background listed environmental issues first, whereas employees from a more social background listed social and soft values first. Although, the ranking of the values varied, people from all backgrounds recognized the environmental and social values the company represented. All of the employees felt that the company’s values reflected their own values, thus making the values congruent. As an employee (I:6) said: “The official company values are what I think about and they suit my own thoughts on values.”

4.2.3.2 Matching values

Especially the value congruence was important in terms of perceived motivation. One employee elaborated on the issue of motivation by explaining that it is important to work “in a company which values I can stand behind. Like when you do something it feels right.”

The value congruence also manifested in their work: "I can be fully engaged in all of the things, for example in my training sessions. I have a clear conscience and don’t have to pretend to be someone else. There is no work-me, there is just me” (I:1). The employee further explained how the work itself becomes easier as “I can work as I see best, and then I am also working according to the company values.” One of the employees also stressed the importance of values in difficult times:

"As the values are in line with my own values it influences positively my own feelings to keep working. Especially in times when there is stress and time pressure” (I:6).

Moreover, the interviews proved that the value congruence affected their work satisfaction. The employees felt that:

“It’s wonderful to work for such a good cause with people who believe in it and the company works to share these values” (I:2).

“It helps to relate to the company, and to just being here as an employee” (I:1).

“I can be the way I am, it is kind of the motto of our company” (I:3).

“They (company values; note from the authors) support my work, I don’t have to struggle against anything as I am ready to back the work we do here. There is no contradiction” (I:7).
“It is very satisfactory to work in the Reuse Centre, because these environmental values are also close my heart, even though I am not working directly with these issues. Working in this kind of organization supports my own values, and do not contradict with my own values, quite the contrary actually” (I:5).

Putting it simply, as one employee said, the matching values “define the level of pleasantness” (I:3).

The employees clearly defined the values as an important factor when considering working for a for-profit company. Many interviewees would hesitate to work in a private for-profit company. They regarded the values and the mission of the company as the main conditions for taking up a job in such a company:

“I have to be able to share the values in some level with the company. (...) I have to be able to live with the fact that I am involved in making it. I cannot work just for money” (I:1).

“If I worked for a commercial company, at least their products had to match my values” (I:2).

“Recently I have been interested in social enterprises, as it is very hard for me to picture myself working in a private for-profit company. If I worked in a private company I would have to strongly believe the core mission of the company. These kinds of companies can be very hard to find” (I:5).

The employees’ whole working experience was seen through values. They considered their motivation and work satisfaction being higher when they could share the company values. This is in line with De Cooman et al.’s (2011) findings, which states that the perceived person-organization fit in non-for profit organizations is higher than in for-profit organizations. Consequently, they chose their jobs partly in terms of values realizing that the value congruence makes it easier to work in the company. There was no need to separate their personalities in terms of work and private life. In short, it made their work easier.

### 4.2.4 Meaningfulness

The category of meaningfulness is very closely related to the following one of task significance. In our analysis we decided to present the category of meaningfulness first. During our investigations we found that the focused employees showed an awareness of choosing one company, whose mission is to do something that has a good impact on society:

“The basic mission of the purpose is important, that what I do is in some way meaningful. That I see that the work has a wider positive impact than just selling products on the market. That it has a more comprehensive impact on the society” (I:5).

The question about what is meaningful depends solely on the individual’s perception. For one of the employees:

“The most important thing is that I feel that the work I do has a meaning, meaning in such way that it has a larger meaning. Like I feel that the work we do here has a big impact on society at large from various viewpoints, but also such that the content of the work is significant and meaningful, not just rolling papers” (I:2).
The main aspects that came up during the interviews in reference to the meaningfulness of the employees’ work were to provide people with tools to enable them to take care of the environmental issues themselves, and to help disadvantaged people through employment possibilities in the labor market. These two aspects show again the environmental and social impact of the company, which are also perceived by the employees. One employee (I:3) also took the stakeholders into consideration, when saying that “I believe that it (the environmental and social engagement of the company; note from the authors) is important to the customers, and why not towards other stakeholders.”

In general this meaningfulness of work, the feeling of working for a higher purpose (such as environmental and social improvements) was found to be one very important factor of perceived employee motivation. As the employees stated on perceived motivation:

“In every work there are difficult moments, so in such situations it makes it easier to move forward and deal with it, when you really feel that you are doing something important. Have to say that if I did not feel that I am doing something meaningful, I would skip the whole task. In difficult moments it helps to find motivation” (I:1).

“Doing something that is satisfactory, working on issues that make sense, so that you do not have the feeling of doing something worthless” (I:7).

“I see as one of our strengths that we don’t go somewhere to just show some slides, and then the customers are left alone. Instead we try to give them the tools to make a change in how they affect the environment” (I:1).

It is important to state that one of the findings was the importance of customer feedback, which is strongly linked to perceived meaningfulness. This feedback is one of the main perceived motivational factors in this category:

“This kind of positive feedback feels good, and I get the feeling that something is happening” (I:1).

“There is lack of funding for environmental education in the society in general. We get good feedback from this from the schools and daycares” (I:3).

“We get mostly positive feedback, which makes me feel good” (I:3).

The employees’ comments reflected the company’s mission. They saw the work they do as having a higher meaning through the basic purpose of the company. The interviewees felt that doing something that they considered meaningful affected their motivation. In addition, the employees even linked the aspects of meaningfulness to their own work, which leads to the category of task significance.

### 4.2.5 Task significance

All of the interviewees think that their work has an impact on other people, the environment and the organization as a whole. As one employee (I:2) said: “My tasks are very relevant and important to run this company; without what I do the company would not run that good.” Or like others mentioned:
“My work sometimes also has an influence on the whole organization” (I:3).

"The content of the work has a large impact" (I:1).

"I like it that I am able to move these issues forward and be part of the development” (I:4).

"It is important to me that I feel that I am doing work that is significant, and that I am doing it well” (I:5).

One employee also added how the work affects other people, also those not in his/her social network:

“I hope that people's awareness on these environmental issues increases and their will to have an impact on them. They can contact me anytime. Not that I am going to charge fees when they call me; I would say that this also has an impact on some level” (I:1).

This shows that the employees also link their jobs and actions to other individuals. The boundaries of their job do not end on the company site. Employees are in fact pro-active with their values and try to have a social impact, not just during their working hours.

We believe that this strong perceived impact of the employees’ work is closely related to the previous category of meaningfulness, meaning that greater perceived meaningfulness leads to higher task significance. This is similar to the findings of Renn and Vandenberg (1995).

4.2.6 Prosocial Motivation

With reference to the last category on the road to attaining a holistic picture of what is perceived by employees as their source of motivation to work for a social business (the Reuse Centre), we asked some questions about prosocial motivation. This category is also close related to all of the previous ones, but especially to meaningfulness and task significance. The reason for this is that experienced prosocial motivation can strengthen the feeling of doing something meaningful.

The employees have the perception that they are doing something useful for society. They further have the feeling that their actions have a positive impact on other people. To put it in the words of the employees:

“This kind of work has an interesting side effect, it motivates to work more, when you are working in promoting issues that you self believe in” (I:1).

"Hard to picture myself in a place where everything is measured and valued by only in how much I sell; The salary was not as important as these (…) social aspects on the other side” (I:3).

"It is nice that I am able to say that I work for something good, and not just selling products through advertising. Now there is a bigger cause behind the work” (I:4).

The findings showed on the one hand awareness about their impact on society, but also towards their coworkers. Especially, with respect to the part-time employees employed through the long-term unemployed program.
"Like at the moment one of our ways of working towards our goals is to hire disadvantaged people who are in worse situation in the labor market. It is also sensible for us to make the work nice for these people" (I:3).

"The company will find ways to make these people better off, and in better condition to work than they were before they came here" (I:1).

"No matter what kind of work employment they have here, that they feel good. That is important" (I:3).

"That we really appreciate all our employees, no matter what their background is, and what kind of employment contract they have. So that everyone has something pleasant to do" (I:3).

"I see the social aspect as a big part of the company values and it is an important factor for me" (I:6).

The interviewees highly value the equality and the mix of personnel. They are aware of the different backgrounds and life situations of their coworkers. Through the interviews we got the feeling that all employees, no matter if they have more of an environmental or a social background, are very committed to this employment program and believe that all workers in the company work for a common reason.

"We are having a good atmosphere here and that we are all working for a common and good cause" (I:3).

"You can really see that everyone here works for a common cause" (I:4).

"Thinking about the concrete work, what makes it satisfactory, is that I work with people who are engaged in their work. You can feel this kind of common enthusiasm to develop things. That is very important" (I:5).

One of the employees (I:3) combined these different aspects of prosocial motivation and having a positive effect on people inside and outside the company:

"I look it from the viewpoint that people here are feeling good. For example in the shops that the customers are satisfied, that the employees feel they provided them with the good they needed and served them well. And in the education and training side that they feel that they impact the schools, daycares, and companies, that they feel that they are raising the environmental awareness. Myself the customer side matters also, but more that we are having a good atmosphere here and that we are all working for a common and good cause. In general, that we are a non-profit organization working on environmental and social issues. I believe that is important to all of us here."

Concluding, there is a high level of prosocial motivation among the employees, which can be explained through 'cause congruence'. "To see that everyone works for a common cause increases my motivation and satisfaction" (I:4). Through these shared values and cause, there is an additional strong tolerance towards all coworkers even though they come from very different backgrounds.
4.2.7 Additional motivation factors

In this category we present some outcomes, which either do not fit exactly into one of the previous categories or which were not really associated by the interviewees with one of the categories. Nevertheless, we believe that those findings are important to show, as they are relevant to answering the research questions.

4.2.7.1 Working environment

All of the interviewed employees appreciate the good and friendly work environment. The company is said to "take care of the employees" and that the "atmosphere in the Reuse Centre is liked." This shows the general satisfaction with the company.

4.2.7.1.1 Flexibility of work

It was mentioned by two employees that the company offers very flexible working conditions. This is also very highly valued by the employees and seen as a reason for working in the Reuse Centre.

"A lot is about how the company regards its employees in terms of perks, distant working possibilities, these kind of issues. Also the possibility to work for example 80% of the normal work time" (I:1).

"And also the flexibility (...) that is not just about the amount of working hours and the financial returns. It is also that you can choose how to work in terms of your situation in life" (I:3).

"This work enables for me to have a normal standard of living and use of free time" (I:1).

One employee (I:3) further stated that it is "kind of forbidden" to do overtime, and especially if the employee does not want to. This shows that the company tries to keep the work within the limits of normal working hours. "It is your own fault if you do overtime."

4.2.7.1.2 Challenging work

The interviewees answered concordantly that their work is challenging and their job descriptions are very mixed. This was mentioned in a positive way so that the work "stays interesting." Furthermore, the employees have the perception that they can influence what they do and connected with the previously mentioned flexibility, when they do it.

"For me it is important that I am able to influence what kind of work I do and with what kind of working hours" (I:3).

The employee further explained that:

"It is important that I have the possibility to influence my work, and its content. Like moving from one position to another. I don't want to work at the same job till the end of times, I need to have variety" (I:3).

The findings show that the general content of their work is perceived as very challenging and interesting and can also be influenced by them. These aspects emphasize the perceived motivation gained through the work within the company.
4.3 Perceived employee motivation in the Reuse Centre

In the following section we will explain how the different perceived motivation factors are related and how they affect the employees’ perceived motivation at the Reuse Centre.

The company values are used to review the Reuse Centre’s operations, and also to show how these values exist throughout the company and what this means to the employees. The starting point is the Reuse Centre’s distinct social business model. A social business is inherently built on the idea of having a social, or an environmental purpose. It is built on this foundation and it defines all aspects of the organization. This purpose is clarified through the social business’ mission. The mission acts as a basis for the company values and creates a sense of meaningfulness among the employees.

In the studied case the mission statement of the Reuse Centre was to “improve the state of the environment by decreasing the amount of waste people produce, and by increasing their environmental awareness.” This gives a clear direction to develop the company values.

The environmental mission of the company is directly linked to its values which are: Environmental responsibility, rationality, and sense of community, authenticity, and empathy. The employees are made more engaged, satisfied, and motivated through sharing these values. They can act and make decisions according to their own values as they also represent the company values. Employees live the values through the company’s daily operations.

Environmental responsibility is seen in all aspects of the company’s services, whether it is offering recycling services, or training youth and children on saving natural resources through their actions. Every employee works with these issues regardless of his or her position. This cements the value of environmental responsibility in day-to-day operations and gives the employees the feeling that they are all working for a common cause.

Rationality is linked to environmental responsibility. The company promotes environmental awareness in a rational and sustainable way. They do not try to find quick fixes but instead, aim to have a long-term impact. This is exhibited through their training and education services that provide the tools for people to take responsibility for their actions. Rationality is also seen in the company’s approach in their recycling service. The idea is not to recycle junk; it is to recycle items that can be cleverly used again. As the employees see that the work they do is done in a sensible way, their own work becomes easier as they do not have to rationalize their actions in their work. They understand why the company works the way it does.

The sense of community is felt inside and outside the company. The employees feel it through the common cause, but also through the working environment that is built on shared values. This results in a workplace where the employees have a sense of belonging. The sense of community is not limited to the company site, but reaches well beyond also the outside of the company. The Reuse Centre tries to work closely with local communities, cities, and people, bringing them together to solve environmental problems. Their aim is to build a sense of community on a grander scale by raising the environmental awareness among different stakeholders.
Authenticity is seen in the fact that every employee is encouraged to be himself or herself. The employees feel that they do not have to separate their ‘private me’ and their ‘work me’. The company aims to operate in a transparent and open way by having an open line of communication inside and outside the company.

Also empathy is strongly exhibited in the operations. Their work with the long-term unemployed, immigrants, disabled, or otherwise disadvantaged people is a clear act of empathy. In addition, the company’s attitude towards their employees is characterized by empathy. The company takes care of their employees and does not consider them as only a resource to be exploited. This is also linked to the whole idea of sustainability that the company promotes, as their goal is to make their employees better off than before they joined the company. Their aim is to make the work as satisfactory as possible for every employee regardless of their background or current position. This is also one aspect of being a social business.

4.3.1.1 Implications for the perceived motivation

As the values are grounded in the day-to-day operations it makes the employees feel that their work is meaningful and significant. They see the values working in practice, and also that the mission of the company is actually pursued. Additionally the employees have the perception that their own work has a real impact. This all links back to the mission of the company and the way it operates. Being a social business means that the company does not have to compromise its values and pursuit of the mission to serve its shareholders, instead the company and its employees can concentrate on working towards a better future.

For an employee working in such a social business this means that their motivation is increased as they share the values of the social business, they feel a sense of meaningfulness, they see the significance of their work, and they feel that they are helping other people, the organization, the environment, and society as a whole.

4.3.1.2 Critics

The general opinion of the Reuse Centre by its employees was positive, but also a few negative aspects came up. It is necessary to mention them in order to show parts for improvements.

Even though the constant development of the Reuse Centre was highlighted as a good thing, its rapidness was negatively mentioned. We further came to the conclusion that this fast development is also linked with the critically mentioned lack of information to the public and the customers. Some employees still think that the company is seen as a pure recycling organization without recognizing the educational branch of it.

The answers of the interviewees differ when it comes to transparency. While one said that: “It would bring added value for the customers, and to our products, when people see where the money really goes”, another stated that the company tries to be very transparent “so that people see what we do and what is the meaning of the company.”
Summing up, the rapid pace of growth, the lack of information, the missing brand awareness outside the company, and the communication towards the stakeholders leaves room to improve. Even though the recycling branch of the Reuse Centre is very well known, the educational part is perceived by some of the employees as not promoted enough. One reason for this could be the name of the company, which still only includes the recycling aspect. To put it in one employee’s words: “I would like to see a change in our branding.”
5 Proposed model for perceived employee motivation in a social business

In this section we present and describe our model on perceived employee motivation in a social business. The model is derived from the empirical findings, which were discussed against the theoretical background.

In Figure 5-1. (p. 38) we present the proposed model for perceived employee motivation in a social business. It comprises two components, namely the ‘employment decision’, and the ‘perceived employee motivation’. This model is derived from our findings and of previous studies on perceived employee motivation. The model elaborates how different motivational factors influence each other and how the social business, its mission, purpose, and values influence the perceived employee motivation and employment decision.

5.1.1 Employment decision

Our model exhibits how the employment decision to work for a social business is made. First of all, the employees look for a job that fits their educational background and matches their previous work experience. The employees ideally perceive the job as interesting and challenging. Furthermore, they value flexible working conditions and a positive work atmosphere.

More importantly, the company needs to reflect the individual’s values. The value congruence was found to be a critical factor in making the employment decision. As social businesses often reflect social and environmental values through their core mission, people with similar values are more attracted to work for these businesses. In addition, the employees positively viewed the business model of a social business, as a self-sustainable, non-dividend company, founded to solve social and environmental problems. They were hesitant to work for a private for-profit company; in contrast the interviewees wanted to work for a social business where they saw that the profits were used for the benefit of people, society, and/or the environment.

It can be concluded that the perceived person-organization fit, characterized by the value congruence, is a critical factor in deciding on employment. This is in line with previous research, which highlights the importance of the perceived fit in the employment decision process. According to Kristof-Brown et al. (2005, p. 326) “managers should pay attention to how clearly they are communicating work unit and organizational values. This should aid in the attraction, hiring, and retention of individuals who share those values and are inspired by an organization that reinforces them.”
Figure 5-1. Proposed model for perceived employee motivation in a social business
5.1.2 Perceived employee motivation in a social business

After the decision for working in a social business is made the following factors significantly influence the perceived employee motivation.

5.1.2.1 Value congruence

For the employees in the social business the perceived value congruence was found to influence their perceived motivation. The employees felt that the correlation of the social business’ and their own values increased their work motivation, satisfaction, and made decision-making easier.

This is in line with previous research, which has found that value congruence increases intrinsic motivation and work satisfaction while empowering employees in decision-making (Ren, 2010; Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005; Ostroff, Shin, & Kinicki, 2005). Similar to non-profit organizations (De Cooman et al., 2011), employees in the social business perceive a good fit with the company’s values and their own.

5.1.2.2 Meaningfulness

Meaningful work is not just about the meaning of the paid work we perform; it is about the way we live our lives. It is the alignment of purpose, values, and the relationships and activities we pursue in life. It is about living our lives and performing our work with integrity. It is about integrated wholeness” (Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009, p. 197).

According to our model the meaningfulness comes through the social business’ values, mission, and business model. The company values are partly derived from the core mission of a social business. These values are then further developed in the organization. Thus the core mission of a social business influences the company values. It also has implications on the perceived meaningfulness of the work. The goal to solve social and/or environmental problems increases the meaningfulness of the work as the employees feel that they are contributing to something that they consider as being important.

The nature of the work in a social business is to do something good for people, the planet, and society, which gives employees a higher purpose to their work. This strongly influences the meaningfulness of their work. The importance of meaningfulness has been highlighted by previous research as it influences the work motivation, individual performance (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), job satisfaction (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997), engagement (May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004), and personal fulfillment (Kahn, 2007). Our research findings further support this previous research.

As Richards (1995, p. 94) points out in regards to finding meaning at work: “[only then] will our work become more joyful [and] our organizations will flourish with commitment, passion, imagination, spirit, and soul.”

5.1.2.3 Task significance

The notion of task significance is also linked to meaningfulness. These two factors are the most closely linked and can strengthen each other. In a social business the purpose of the
company is often to help people, in one way or another. This has implications on the perceived task significance, as employees already derive from the core mission of the social business that their work is influencing people in a positive way. They see that their work has an impact on people. It can be characterized by helping disadvantaged individuals, or groups.

The importance of understanding how others benefit from one’s work is important as it can increase motivation and performance (Grant, 2008a). Employees in a social business see this as the purpose of the company. Both, the prosocial values and the social business’ purpose demonstrate that helping people is the essential nature of the work.

5.1.2.4 Prosocial motivation

The feeling of doing something good for society is further linked to prosocial motivation. Prosocial motivation is defined as the desire to have a positive impact on other people, groups, and organizations. This desire is fulfilled in a social business, as its purpose is to positively influence people and/or the environment.

Designing jobs to carry high significance can enhance prosocial motivation, and by showing the employees how their work is benefiting people (Grant & Berg, 2011). In a social business this is naturally achieved, as the employees understand the overall idea behind the social business concept, which is to solve social and/or environmental problems. Their work is directly linked to the purpose of the company and they are further able to see the results of their work. In addition customer feedback is important in perceiving how the employees’ work is having a positive impact.

These findings in the social business are close connected to Schepers et al.’s (2005) findings in the non-profit sector, where employees are also more motivated by prosocial factors. Moreover, prosocial motivation has been shown to increase persistence, performance, and productivity, especially when it is accompanied by intrinsic motivation. It can also strengthen social bonds and the feeling of doing meaningful work (Grant, 2008b).

5.1.2.5 Working environment

The content of the work influences the perceived motivation, as the employees need to feel that the work is challenging and interesting enough. Further, it is important that they can have an impact on the content of their work.

The employees also see the flexible working conditions positively influencing their motivation. Social businesses try to provide working conditions, which enable a good balance between one’s private life and the job.

Another critical aspect of perceived motivation in a social business is the work atmosphere. The employees feel that they are all working for a common cause, resulting in cause congruence. This leads to an increase in work motivation. The mission and values of the social business commit the employees in working together for a better future. This commitment and the sense of belonging strengthen the perceived motivation.
5.1.3 Implications for practitioners and scholars

Our model offers new insights on perceived employee motivation in a social business. With the help of the model managers in social businesses can better understand what kind of motivational factors influence their employees. This will help in designing workplaces that increase the employee motivation and satisfaction. Although our proposed model needs further testing, it gives a starting point for both, practitioners and scholars, for the understanding of perceived employee motivation in a social business.
6 Conclusion

This part aims to answer the research questions raised in chapter one in the context of the theoretical principles. Furthermore, the applicability of the findings will be discussed and further research activities will be suggested.

6.1 Summary of the findings

The master thesis has set itself the objective to investigate perceived employee motivation in a social business. The research was conducted in the Reuse Centre in the context of motivation theories. Below we will answer the research questions raised in chapter one:

RQ1: Why do people choose to work in a social business?

Through the interviews we got an insight for the reasons why people choose to work in a social business. First of all, the personal values play a significant role. The educational background of the employee can be named as an important aspect in order to add new values and shape the existing values of the individual. We believe that the values dramatically changed within the last years due to the crises discussed in the introduction chapter. The change in values has moved towards an increase in awareness of the social and environmental aspects and away from the purely for-profit mindset. As a result, universities, educational programs, entrepreneurs and the awareness of society at large have the will to be part of something that is doing good and have changed their mindsets accordingly. Social businesses significantly match the values of individual people with this intrinsic motivation of linking their values to the overall welfare of society.

It should be noted that the educational background has also another implication. It highly influences the choice of employment as people search for jobs that fit their education. They look for jobs, whose work content and job characteristics fit their education, but also, as mentioned, that fits their values. This is in line with previous research on the person-organization fit, which stresses the importance of values in the employment decision and recruitment process (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

The type of organization, its mission and values that a social business represents positively affects the employees’ choice of work. Even though the wage is perceived as lower than in a for-profit business, the impact the work has on other people and the environment outweighs the financial aspect. The perception of earning a lower wage is similar to the findings of Handy and Katz (1998) in non-profit organizations. They found that managers, especially in non-profits, earn less than their counterparts in for-profits. This leads to the positive result of attracting managers, who are highly committed to the cause of the non-profit organization.

Nevertheless, when talking about social business, it is beside the point if employees earn less than employees or managers in for-profit organizations. The value congruence and the content of work are the main reasons for people to choose to work in a social business and therefore the positive aspect mentioned by Handy and Katz (1998) is not one hundred percent valid in the field of social business.
RQ2: What do employees in a social business perceive as the factors of their motivation?

Value congruence has been linked with higher work satisfaction, identifying with the organization, commitment, and to the will to continue working for an organization (Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005; Ostroff, Shin, & Kinicki, 2005). Our research further supports these findings as the most important factor of motivation for the employees was found to be the value congruence.

When employees are able to share the values of the company, their work motivation increases and they are more satisfied with their work. For the employees the work becomes easier as they do not have to think on which basis they have to make their decisions. They work according to their own values and in doing so they also represent the company values. This creates a strong sense of belonging.

Another source of motivation derives from the feeling of doing something good. The employees feel that their work is having a positive impact on the environment, people, and society. This is due to the core purpose of a social business, which is to solve social and environmental problems, and the social business model that helps the disadvantaged. The employees also see that their work has a real impact on the goals that the company pursues. They see that they are actually making a difference. This results in a sense of meaningfulness.

Previous research indicates that meaningfulness impacts positively work motivation, individual performance (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), job satisfaction (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997), engagement (May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004), and personal fulfillment (Kahn, 2007). According to this study these notions hold true also for the employees in a social business.

In a social business the feeling of meaningfulness emerges from the core mission of the company. The purpose of a social business to solve social and environmental problems increases the level of meaningfulness. Employees see themselves as essential parts of the company and perceive their duties as necessary in order to reach the higher purpose the company stands for.

The shared values and the company’s mission provide the basis for a work atmosphere where the employees feel that they are all working for a common cause. This strong commitment leads to a high identification with the organization and its goals. Being part of something good results in high-perceived task significance, which leads to a higher level of perceived employee motivation. As Grant (2008b) has pointed out, task significance increases job performance and motivation of employees when they gain a deeper understanding of how their work benefits others and not just themselves.

In addition prosocial motivation was found to play an important role in the perceived motivation. Prosocial motivation has been studied to increase persistence, performance, and productivity, especially when it is accompanied by intrinsic motivation (Grant 2008a).
research indicates that employees in a social business are both intrinsically and prosocially motivated.

For the employees in a social business the social aspect of the business is highly regarded. They see that the company is working towards helping people and not exploiting them. Employees feel that their work is having a positive influence on people around them through their work, resulting in higher perceived prosocial motivation. This feeling is further strengthened through the positive feedback the employees get. People are recognizing that there is a lack of certain services and products, and that it is important to take care of environmental and social issues, and this is exactly where social businesses place their business activities.

Finally, the feeling of having a higher purpose, the shared values, the meaningful work, and the positive impact on people, all come together as having a common cause to work for. The employees feel that they are all working together for a good cause; this could be regarded as cause congruence.
6.2 Concluding thoughts

The field of social business is a new and emerging one. Through different actions like the newly introduced Finnish mark for social businesses, people are increasingly getting an idea of the characteristics of this business model. However, peoples’ awareness about the idea can still be developed.

Furthermore, universities, educational programs and the media are paying more and more attention to it. Business schools, for example, integrated the idea in their curriculum. This leads to a complementation and shaping of the people’s existing values. Those shaped values are represented in a social business, which increases the intrinsic motivation to work for such a higher purpose rather than just for money. Nevertheless, it is not excluded from the idea that in a social business one earns less than in a for-profit organization. This is still a widespread misinterpretation of the business model.

The feeling of ‘doing something good’ positively influences many motivational factors which lead to a high level of perceived employee motivation. This is strengthened through the mainly positive feedback from customers, friends or other stakeholders.

Summing up, the prominence of social businesses will further grow and it will take time to fully develop its potential. But we strongly believe that it will take on an important and influential place in the business landscape. As the father of social business, Muhammad Yunus (2007, p. 184-185) puts it:

“The existence of social businesses will offer an alternative career and life path to students and others who are hungry for a life rich in meaning beyond profit. Non-financial motivations will finally be recognized as the important drivers of human behavior that they are; the desire to do good for our fellow humans will be acknowledged as a legitimate and powerful factor in the world, rather than relegated to “charity” as it is today.”

6.3 Limitations

This research has several important limitations. Firstly, the research focused on one company, thus having a limitation in terms of generalizing the results to cover a broader spectrum of companies and industries.

Secondly, the chosen case was conducted in Finland, which influences the employees’ value base through cultural and historical factors. Also the high level of education among Finnish employees influences their values. This results in cultural limitations.

Thirdly, the research approach leaves room for subjective interpretation. The results are in part subjective conclusions of the researchers and can be influenced by their personal views. Finally, although the sample size of seven interviews was appropriate for the studied case, the results may not be completely generalized to cover all situations.
6.4 Future research

This study has concentrated on one company and industry. Thus the proposed model of perceived employee motivation in social businesses requires further research. A more comprehensive study among employees in different social businesses working in different sectors and industries is needed in order to generalize the model to cover a broader spectrum.

Also, the study was done in one country and a multi-country study would bring more insights in the differences and similarities on the perceived motivation between countries, as culture, value base, and educational level differs from one country to another.

Moreover, this research focused on the employee level, making room for a managerial point of view to be researched. For example, the motivational tools that managers can use in social businesses to motivate their employees can be researched. In addition, the mechanisms that link the different perceived motivation factors can be further studied to gain insight on the process of reaching higher motivation among the employees. Further research could also concentrate on finding additional perceived motivation factors to be added to the factors presented in this study.

In addition, although educational background was studied, other demographical factors were not. This leaves room for a larger study, which may shed light onto the coherence of how different demographical factors influence perceived employee motivation and employment choice.
List of references


Appendix

Appendix 1 Interview guide

I. Before the interview: contact

- Who is the person contacted?
- Contact (done via e-mail).
- Determination of the place (if possible at the company site; if not: via Skype or on Phone).
- Discussion about how the conversation is in the interest of the respondent (and also the company).
- Information about the approx. length of the interview.

II. Conversation started:

- A short introduction of myself; explain how it came to mediation.
- Explanation of the process (why audiotape, etc.) – Obtaining the consent.
- What are the data required for: Master Thesis. Note on feedback and provide this if desired.
- Discussion of the topic.

III. Main Part:

Personal Background:

- Position?
- Highest degree?
- Background?
- Where did you work before?
- What were your responsibilities?
- Do you have previous work experience within a social business?
- What are your own values?
- Are you member of any non-profit organizations? (i.e. WWF, childcare programs, etc.)
  - If yes, why?

Social Entrepreneurship/Business:

- Why did you choose the company you now work for?
- What is according to you the mission of the company?
- What does the company stand for?
- Do you think that your company differs from others?
  - If yes, in which way?
Appendix

- What do people out of your environment think about your job/the company you work for?
- What do you think is the standing of the company in the public?
- What do you think is the main differences between a social business and a for-profit one?

**Motivation:**

- What was the main reason to work for that company?
  - Which factors influenced your choice of company/industry?
- What motivates you in your job/what kind of factors influence your work motivation?
- What is important to you in a job?
- Do you have the feeling that you help others/do something good to society?
  - Impact on motivation? – Is this (to help others) important to you?
  - If yes: in which way?

**Value congruence**

- What are the main values of the company?
- Do the company values match with your own ones?
- If so, what does this mean for you?
- Did this influence your employment choice? In general, do you think it is important that the company’s and your values match?

**Meaningfulness**

- Do you perceive your work as meaningful? What do you think is the purpose of your job?
  - In what ways does this manifest, what makes you feel that?
  - Impact on motivation?
  - Compared with your previous job/other jobs, what satisfies you in the actual one? Is it different?

**Prosocial motivation**

- How would you describe your work affects the people around you, inside the company, the society at large?
- Do you have contact with the company’s clients? In which way? What kind of feedback do you get?
- What is the outcome of your work? What is the importance of seeing the outcome?
Task significance

- How would you describe your position in the company? How does your work influence the company?
- How do you see that your work influences others?
- In which way is your position able to have an impact on pursuing the mission of the company?
- What kind of role has your work in your life for you?

Outlook:

- Do you want to stay in that company? Why/why not?
- Why should/should not people apply for a job/company like yours?
- Is there anything you would like to add?

IV. Summary:

- A brief summary of the interview with conclusion. Perhaps even more additions to the interviewee. Obtaining informed consent.

V. Interview completion:

- Thanks for the willingness to be interviewed.
- Outlook: What is going to happen next? Transcription, processing, completion of the work.
- Possibly obtaining the permission to follow-up for clarification.

Interview guide in Finnish

Taustatiedot

- Nimi:
- Ammatti, asema:
- Koulutus:
- Tausta
  - Aikaisemmat työpaikat
  - Vastuu
  - Aikaisempi kokemus yhteiskunnallisista yrityksistä tai järjestöistä
- Oletko jäsen jossain hyväntekeväisyyssjärjestössä?
- Mitä pidät omina arvoisin?

Yhteiskunnallinen yritys

- Miten päädyit työskentelemään nykyiseen työpaikkaan? Mitkä tekijät vaikuttivat valintaasi? Yritysmuodon vaikutus?
Appendix

- Kerro oman sanoin mikä on yrityksesi missio?
- Mitä yrityksesi edustaa ja mitä se pyrkii edistämään?
- Miten sanoisit että yrityksesi eroaa muista?
- Miten koet että yrityksesi näkyy ulospäin? Mitä muut sanovat yrityksestänne?
- Mitä muut ihmiset ajattelevat yrityksestäsi ja työstäsi? Vaikuttaako se omaan kokemukseni?
- Mikä on suurin eroavaisuus yhteiskunnallisella yrityksellä ja ns. normaaliyyella yrityksellä?

Motivaatio

- Mikä oli tärkein syy että hakeuduit nykyiseen työpaikkaasi?
  - Kerro lisää, mitkä muut syty vaikuttivat?
- Mikä vaikuttaa / minkälaiset asiat vaikuttavat työmotivaatioosi? Miten ja miksi?
- Mikä on tärkeää sinulle työssäsi? Miksi?
- Tunnetko että työlläsi on positiivinen vaikutus muihin ihmisin, yhteiskuntaan, tai ympäristöön?
  - Miten tämä ilmenee?
  - Millä tavalla?

Arvot

- Mitkä ovat yrityksen arvot?
  - Vastaavatko ne omia arvojasi?
  - Mikä tämän merkitys on sinulle?
  - Vaikuttiko valintaasi hakeutua yritykseen?
  - Onko tärkeää että arvot ovat yhtenevät?

Merkityksellisyys

- Koetko että teet työtä jolla on tarkoitus? Minkä sanoisit olevat työsi merkitys?
- Miten tämä näkyy?
- Vaikuttaako motivatioosi ja miten?
  - Verrattuna aikaisempiin työpaikkoihin, mikä vaikuttaa tytärväisyysesi?

Prososiaalinen motivaatio

- Miten työsi vaikuttaa muihin ihmisin, yhteiskuntaan, kollegoihin?
- Oletko tekemisissä asiakkaiden kanssa? Miten? Saatko palautetta työstäsi asiakkailta?
- Näetkö oman työsi tuloksia? Mikä merkitys on omien tuloksien näkemisellä?

"Task significance"

- Miten kuvaillisin asemaasi yrityksessä, miten työsi vaikuttaa yrityksen toimintaan?
- Miten koet että sinun työsi vaikuttaa yrityksen tavoitteeseen saavuttamiseen?
- Miten koet että työsi vaikuttaa yhteiskuntaan, ihmisin tai muuten?
- Minkälainen rooli työllä on elämässäsi? Mitä työsi tarkoittaa sinulle?
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Tulevaisuus

- Haluatko jatkaa nykyisessä työpaikassa? Miksi?
- Miksi jonkun pitäisi hakeutua yritykseen?
- Lisättävää?