Leading Creative People and Processes

Illustrations from the fashion industry

Author: Sara Meijer
Supervisor: Pr. Dr. Philippe Daudi
 Examiner: Pr. Dr. Björn Bjerke
 Date: 02.06.2014
 Subject: Business Administration
 Level: Master thesis
 Course Code: EALM1
ABSTRACT

Creativity places a more and more important role in organizations today. It is even said that creativity is critical for organizations and seen as a key factor in smaller firms.

This thesis is investigating the environment through which leaders involved in creative organizations lead creative people and related issues. Thereof the research issue: “Investigating the environment through which leaders involved in creative organizations lead creative people and processes.”

I have been inspired by the method Grounded Theory. The thesis is composed by both secondary- and primary data. Two interviews have been conducted with leaders involved in creative organizations.

Further, made the leaders experience from the interviews and the theoretical framework it possible to draw some conclusions in understanding leading creative people and processes.

Keywords: Creativity, leadership, creative people, creative processes, creative environment and fashion.
Acknowledgement

I would like to express my gratitude to my tutor Professor Philippe Daudi. Professor Daudi has given me guidance during this master thesis project that has helped me complete my work.

As well as to the tutors Mikael Lundgren, Björn Bjerke and Maxmikael Wilde Björling who all have given me advices during the course.

I would also like to thank my interview partners, without them this thesis had not been possible.

Sara Meijer

2th of June
Kalmar
TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................................. 1
   1.1 CREATIVITY .................................................................................................................. 1
   1.2 CREATIVE WORK .......................................................................................................... 1
   1.3 CREATIVE ORGANIZATIONS ....................................................................................... 2
   1.4 CREATIVE LEADERSHIP ............................................................................................. 2
   1.5 RESEARCH FIELD ........................................................................................................ 3
   1.6 RESEARCH FOCUS AND RESEARCH ISSUE .............................................................. 4
   1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS ............................................................................................... 4
   1.8 OUTLINE ...................................................................................................................... 5

2. METHODOLOGY .................................................................................................................... 5
   2.1 PROCESS OF RESEARCH .............................................................................................. 6
   2.2 A QUALITATIVE APPROACH ....................................................................................... 7
   2.3 GROUNDED THEORY ................................................................................................. 7
   2.4 APPROACHES OF THE GROUNDED THEORY ............................................................ 8
      2.4.1 My approach to the Grounded Theory ................................................................. 9
   2.5 TECHNIQUES FOR DATA COLLECTION .................................................................... 9
      2.5.1 Primary data .......................................................................................................... 9
      2.5.2 Secondary data .................................................................................................... 10
      2.5.3 Theoretical framework ...................................................................................... 11
   2.6 TECHNIQUES FOR DATA ANALYZING .................................................................. 11
      2.6.1 Open Coding ....................................................................................................... 11
      2.6.2 Axial Coding ...................................................................................................... 12
      2.6.3 Selective Coding ............................................................................................... 12
      2.6.4 Memos and Diagrams ...................................................................................... 12

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ............................................................................................ 14
   3.1 LEADING CREATIVE PEOPLE AND PROCESSES .................................................... 14
      3.1.1 Leader characteristics ......................................................................................... 14
      3.1.2 Influence tactics .................................................................................................. 15
      3.1.3 Organizational characteristics ............................................................................ 17
3.2 SUMMARY OF THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ................................................. 19

4. WHY IS FASHION IMPORTANT? ...................................................................... 21
   4.1 FASHION AS A SOCIAL IDENTITY .......................................................... 22

5. EMPIRICAL DATA ............................................................................................. 24
   5.1 HOW DO YOU LEAD CREATIVE PEOPLE AND PROCESSES? .......... 24
       5.1.1 Interview one ................................................................................. 24
       5.1.2 Interview two ................................................................................. 26

6. PRESENTING AND ANALYZING THE FINDINGS .......................................... 28
   6.1 OPEN CODING ......................................................................................... 28
   6.2 CUSTOMIZE THE LEADERSHIP BASED ON EVERY EMPLOYEE .......... 29
   6.3 CREATIVE PEOPLE NEED GUIDANCE AND DIRECTIONS .............. 29
   6.4 CREATIVE PEOPLE NEED STIMULATION AND MOTIVATION .......... 29
   6.5 CREATIVE PEOPLE NEED ENOUGH FREEDOM ......................... 30
   6.6 A LEADER OF CREATIVE PEOPLE NEEDS TO BE CREATIVE ........ 30
   6.7 CREATIVE PROCESSES NEED AN ORGANIZED AND STRUCTURED LEAD .. 31
   6.8 CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT THAT FACILITATES CREATIVITY ........ 31
   6.9 THE NEED FOR DIVERSITY IN A CREATIVE ORGANIZATION .......... 31
   6.10 SELECTIVE CODING ........................................................................... 32
       6.10.1 The importance of a creative environment ................................. 34

7. CONCLUSIONS ................................................................................................. 35
   7.1 CONCLUDING MY WORK ......................................................................... 35
   7.2 DISCUSSION .............................................................................................. 36

REFERENCES

APPENDICES
TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Process of my research. ........................................................................................................ 6
Figure 2. My use of the Grounded Theory......................................................................................... 13
Figure 3. Main category..................................................................................................................... 33
1. INTRODUCTION

During this first chapter the reader will be presented with creativity phenomena as such and seen from different point of views while highlighting some important aspects that will be important to become familiar with to encounter the forthcoming chapters. Further the research field and research focus of this thesis will be presented, along with the research issue.

1.1 CREATIVITY

Creativity is seen as a phenomenon where something valuable and new is shaped. The ideas can manifest themselves in many number of ways, they often become something we can see, smell, taste, hear or touch. Creativity is characterized by the ability to perceive the world in new ways, to find hidden patterns, to make connections between seemingly unrelated phenomena and to generate solutions. Creativity involves two processes: thinking, then producing. (Fillis, 2000)

Within the area of creativity one usually separates between creativity and innovation. Creativity is according to Amabile (1996) defined as: “Creativity is the production of novel and useful ideas in any domain.” (Amabile, 1996 pp. 1) Innovation is by the same author defined as: “Innovation is the successful implementation of creative ideas within an organization.” (Amabile, 1996 pp. 1) In other words, creativity is the generation of new ideas. Innovation, the implementation of these ideas into action, as Mumford and Gustafson (1988) puts it.

Creativity has for many organizations come to be seen as a key goal and on organizational performance as a potentially powerful influence. (Arad, Hanson, & Schneider, 1997; Drazin, Glynn, & Kazanjian, 1999; Tushman & O’Reilly, 1997) Fillis (2000) further mean that creativity is critical for organizations and seen as a key factor in smaller firms. The importance of collecting and cultivating creativity from outside and within the organization goes hand in hand with leaders motivating these creative resources. (Amabile, 1983; 1994; 1996)

1.2 CREATIVE WORK

Creativity is involved in all kind of jobs that somehow involves certain types of tasks. One can say there are two main processes involved in creative work. First, creative activities with principal to initiate idea generation. Second, innovation activities with principal to implement these new ideas.

Creative work is often associated with artists and scientists but creative work occurs in any kind of job that involves some certain types of tasks were you need to think one step further. Creative work is something that requires expertise. (Mumford, Scott, Gaddis & Strange, 2002) For understanding creative people one can look at the use of work as a source of
identity (Chalupsky, 1953). Mumford et al (2002) means that one notable characteristic of creative people is that they posit a high investment and a constant development in expertise.

1.3 CREATIVE ORGANIZATIONS

Creative work is produced in creative organizations. A creative organization might be described as a complex, social, political and technical system (innovation.cc). One might argue for the fact creative organizations are complex, however, according to me, I would rather describe them as experimental, diverse and universal. A creative organization is required to be flexible but nevertheless forget to control entrepreneurial risk and also to provide freedom to look for new knowledge through the process of learning and experimentation. (innovation.cc)

Creativity is without any doubt an important aspect in today’s organizations as they strive to succeed and stay alive among their competitors on the market. Hence people that bring new ideas to the table are seen as assets and are therefore highly desirable. Many scholars and experts in the field therefore emphasize the importance creativity has on organizations. (Fillis, 2000) Nystrom (1990) has provided evidence demonstrating that growth and profit may be related to innovation and creativity. It is therefore not surprising that organizations place premium on innovation under circumstances of global competition, fast technological change, and the appearance of new manufacture technologies (Dess & Pickens, 2000; Drazin & Schoonhoven, 1996; Gryskiewicz, 2000). The impact of creativity and innovation on organizational performance is evident as mentioned by Mumford, Schultz and Osburn (2002). Deiser (2011) states that creative organizational design is the new strategic weapon.

According to Amabile (1998), the associations made between creativity and artistic originality can lead to misperception about the suitable place of creativity in business organizations, yet it is a fact that creativity can profit all functions in an organization. The more creative and innovative the employees are, the more long-term success the organization will achieve. So rather than constantly strive after finding “the next big idea", bringing creativity and innovation to what you currently doing is a better idea. Since this will provide the organization a sight of an industry innovator, meaning the organization the competitors will try to copy. (huffingtonpost.com)

All organizations can be more creative and innovative no matter what industry they are operating in. When applying creativity and innovation to every aspect within the organization, it enables the organization to stay ahead of a changing marketplace and their competitors. (huffingtonpost.com)

1.4 CREATIVE LEADERSHIP

As mentioned above, the importance of collecting and cultivating creativity goes from outside and within the organization hand in hand with leaders motivating these creative resources. This is why leadership has an important role in cultivating creativity in a creative organization. (Amabile, 1983; 1996)
New manufacturing techniques, global competition and hasty technological change have placed on top on creativity and innovation. Although many different things influence creativity and innovation in organizational settings, there is a reason to believe that leaders and their behavior represent a particularly powerful influence within the area of creating a creative environment. (Mumford et al, 2002)

Bennis and Nanus (2004) refer to the leaders as being responsible for the set of ethics or norms that regulate the behavior of people in the organization. Leaders must have as a priority to engage the right people at the right time, with the right amount in order to achieve creative work. By recasting the roles of the employees, rather than by casting a strategy where employees are assumed to perform creativity, one has the chance to start desirable engagement (Amabile & Khaire, 2008). One could therefore claim, the leadership role is of very high importance in terms of choosing the right methods that create room for creativity to blossom within the organization. This is what Christensen (2010) means when he says that management is without any doubt the most gracious profession if it is done in the right way.

1.5 RESEARCH FIELD

Creativity and innovation has been studied from many different point of views, the strategy (Hitt, Hoskisson, Johnson & Moesel, 1996; Parnell, Lester & Menefee, 2000), climate (Amabile & Gryskiewicz, 1989; Isaksen, Laver, Ekvall & Britz, 2001), structure (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Damapour, 1991, 1998; Pierce & Delbecq, 1977), individual performance capabilities (Mumford, Marks, Connelly, Zaccaro & Johnson, 1998; Runco & Sakamoto, 1999), broadcasting practices (Abrahamson, 1991; Rodgers & Adhikurya, 1979) group interactions (King & Anderson, 1990; Mumford, Feldman, Hein, & Nago, 2001). Among this list is also different point of views on leadership. According to Mumford et al (2002) has an obvious role on influencing and increasing the probability of idea creation by followers into useful development of these ideas into products.

Due to this thesis the reader will therefore be provided with leadership taking place in creative environments in organizations dealing with creativity on a day to day basis. In this thesis I want to investigate the environment through which leaders involved in creative organizations lead creative people and processes. If there are any certain qualities the leader need, should the leadership style be addressed in a certain way or do creative people even need a leader?

Creativity is involved in many different industries. Designing cars within the automobile industry is creativity, furniture design involves creativity and the person cooking food within the cuisine industry is also creative, just to mention a few. In this thesis I choose to illustrate the fashion industry as one of the industries where the creative process is of great value. The fashion industry is illustrated in this thesis due to personal interest of mine as well as the fact it is a big industry concerning many people. My choice implies certain conditions further in this thesis.
1.6 RESEARCH FOCUS AND RESEARCH ISSUE

Both leadership and creativity are two individual research fields and as Bennis and Nanus (2004) put it, “there is no cookbook for leadership” (Bennis & Nanus, 2004 pp. 207), neither is there for creativity. What I may consider to be a good leadership style, might another person consider as a non-appropriate leadership style, since this has to deal with our own interpretations. This also refers to creativity.

As mentioned above, creativity is an important aspect in establishing and preserving a competitive advantage for organizations on the market. Experts say to succeed, organizations must place high importance on right-brain functions, like artistic, big-picture thinking and the ability to put things into context. (Meisinger, 2007) Hence people that bring new ideas to the table are seen as assets and are therefore highly desirable. (Fillis, 2000) It is the leader’s role to engage the right people at the right time, in order to achieve creative work. (Amabile & Khaire, 2008). One could therefore claim that the leadership role is of very high importance in terms of choosing the right methods to create room for creativity to cultivate within the organization.

Previous research has often put attention to understanding the process of creativity, less attention has been drawn into understanding how to lead creative people. (Haag & Coget, 2010) The purpose with this thesis is therefore to investigate, describe and understand the crucial aspects in leading creative people and processes. From this, the research issue is formulated in the following way:

➢ Investigating the environment through which leaders involved in creative organizations lead creative people and processes.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

The word “creativity” is often used in this thesis and in this context, creativity means a phenomenon whereby something new and valuable is created (Fillis, 2000).

The pronoun “I” can also be found and in this thesis it refers to me, Sara Meijer, the author.
1.8 OUTLINE

To provide a better overview of how the thesis is structured, each chapter is presented below.

**INTRODUCTION**

During the first chapter, the reader gets an introduction to the subject and the thesis. Then the research field, research focus and research issue is presented.

**METHOD**

After getting an introduction and the reader feel comfortable with the subject, the implementation of the essay is described. A description will follow to the Grounded Theory method and my approach to Grounded Theory. Further my techniques for data collection and data analyzing.

**THEORY**

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework related and relevant to the thesis. The topic being covered, is how about leading creative people and processes.

**EMPIRICS**

Before the Empirical part, the reader will be presented with a chapter about fashion and why it plays an important role.

This empirical chapter describes the two interviewed leaders and a summary of the most significant findings during the interviews.

**ANALYZE**

After getting a review about the empirical chapter, the material will be analyzed in this chapter. Categories found in the empirical experiences will be shown together with a theoretical interpretation. A model of the main category will also be available.

**CONCLUSION**

Finally, I conclude the thesis and the research issue is answered, followed by a discussion.
2. METHODOLOGY

During this chapter I will present my way for achieving the result of this thesis. The reader will be familiar with the Grounded Theory and my approach of the Grounded Theory. Further, the methodology of collecting data and of analyzing data will be presented.

2.1 PROCESS OF RESEARCH

The researcher is, according to Arbnor and Bjerke (2009) the “creator of knowledge”. Meaning, the researcher investigates how the reality looks like, for being able to discover, to reveal, to draw attention to or to create knowledge (Arbnor & Bjerke, 2009). However it has to be kept in mind that different understandings and expectations might occur between the researcher and the reader. Hence the importance that I, the researcher, explain what has been done and why, to make sure not to leave the reader with any question marks.

Already at the stage of the thesis proposal I decided to write about fashion since it is a big interest of mine. Even though I had established that fashion was going to be the main subject of my thesis, it was hard to see the entire thesis in front of me. While reading literature about fashion and social construction it was still hard to find the way to continue. I went to my tutor Philippe Daudi for some inspiration and advice, he introduced me to the subject creativity and how to lead clever and creative people. Then it became clear what my research direction would be.

By gathering information about creativity, creative leadership and leading creative people, I established a foundation of my theoretical framework. Furthermore, interviews from leaders in creative organizations gives a deeper understanding about leading creative people and processes and further a higher possibility to complete the aim of the thesis.

Figure 1 describes the process of my thesis and the various steps that made the thesis result in a model. The model displays that I started by doing a pre-study within the research field. Followed by a literature review and collecting an theoretical framework. When the theoretical framework was somewhat established, the interviews were made. Then the reflection and coding procedure was started as I at the same time analysed the findings. However, this model is not followed step by step since the constant comparison method has been applied.
2.2 A QUALITATIVE APPROACH

For this research, a qualitative approach is used. The research will be based on interviews of leaders in creative organizations, as well as different collected theories about leading creative people. With a qualitative data collecting process, I was able to collect information that answers how leaders do, leading creative people. Meaning in what way and why leaders give directions to creative people. By using a qualitative method, I got access to a wide variety of data resources and different methods of data. A qualitative research includes interviews, observations, videos, documents, drawings, diaries, memories, newspapers, biographies, historical documents, autobiographies, and other sources. (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) A qualitative research is more open to the subject, therefore also more focused on relationships and the connections with the relationships. Further is a qualitative approach trying to explain the social reality of different groups, cultures and individuals. (Best & Khan, 1989)

The qualitative approach focuses on feelings, attitudes, perceptions, beliefs and values (Ranjit, 2011). This can only be told by people who have this specific experience. Strauss and Corbin (1990) also states that this approach adapts individual experiences, feelings, emotions and behaviors. Additionally also organizational behaviors, cultural patterns and interactions. (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) To be able to show how leaders manage to lead creative people and processes I needed to speak with leaders, who posit a leader role in a creative organization. Focus on understanding, explore and clarify the gathered information through an open frame of enquiry. Questioning about how they personally act in the leader role, gave me empirical data based on the leaders experiences. This is more useful for this research rather if I am asking what creative leadership means.

This approach gave me the possibility to put myself in the role of the leader and see the world from their perspective. (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) The leader’s behaviour has not been studied in the normal and daily work, so therefore it cannot be concluded with safety. However, I was able to understand how the leaders describe themselves and their leadership style from their own experiences.

2.3 GROUNDED THEORY

Using a qualitative approach, the Grounded Theory is a common method. This model is an inductive method that generates theory by explaining phenomena theoretically. (Martin & Gynnild, 2011) In this thesis, I have been inspired by the method Grounded Theory.

In the book The Discovery of Grounded Theory in 1967 by Glaser and Strauss the Grounded Theory was first introduced. Before this theory, the traditional logic-deductive method was used in research. Glaser and Strauss (1967) believed the researchers used such strategy because the lack of ability to generate theories or explanations. So Glaser and Strauss introduced the Grounded Theory strategy, which aimed for helping the researchers learn how to interpret data. The authors argue that real life is complex, variable and changeable. Hence, the researcher needs to find the theory grounded in the reality in order to understand what is going on. The Grounded Theory is based on the qualitative approach and the method starts
with collecting and analyzing data in consecutive comparison to data that already exists. (Glaser & Strauss, 1967)

The Grounded Theory is a systematic way to collect and interpret data, as well as develop theory for the qualitative research. The theory was considered appropriate because it can track and validate the model, developed from qualitative research. Being able to collect empirical data without assumption, the Grounded Theory requires the researchers to act in the definite environment, in the ambition to maximise the possibilities of discovering the most findings from the data. (Goulding, 1998) Without assumption, does not mean the researcher should know nothing about the research field they want to act in. The theoretical sensitivity is required to develop and conceptualize theory from the collected data. The necessary perspective knowledge and theoretical insight into the research field can help the researcher to qualify this theoretical sensitivity. (Glaser & Strauss, 1967)

The analysis of the Grounded Theory is done while the data are collected, so the researcher is required to use memos and diagrams to help identify important concepts. Here does also the constant comparison method play an important role, since it generates properties of categories through exploring similarities and differences across incidents within the data. The purpose of such process is to descript a certain phenomenon through a theory which is grounded in the collected data, so the abstraction of the information shall be done during the entire process of research in order to accomplish the goal. (Goulding, 2005)

Something applied to many qualitative researches is the saying of Goulding (1998) that “the role of grounded theory was, and is, the careful and systematic study of the relationship of the individual’s experience to society and to history” (Goulding, 1998 pp. 51). The Grounded Theory however differentiates itself because of mainly five different aspects. First, data is simultaneously collected and analysed. Second, the researcher does not develop analytical codes and categories from hypothesis but rather from emerging data. Third, the theories are constructed already during the process of research and not only in the end of the research. Fourth, is to the fact of the constant comparison between different sources of data and already expounded concepts. As referred as the constant comparative analysis. At last, another aspect distinguishes the Grounded Theory is the so called memos and diagrams, which are writings done to be able to analytically analyse the collected data. (Corbin & Strauss, 2008)

2.4 APPROACHES OF THE GROUNDED THEORY

After a time, the authors Glaser and Strauss had to split the Grounded Theory because of different understanding of the method. The result was two main parts in the theory.

Glaser wanted to keep the original identification of the grounded theory, meaning that the theory shall be developed by interpreting the emergent concept from data. One can argue that Glaser emphasises that the data will tell the story themselves. (Glaser & Strauss, 1967)

Strauss instead highlights systematic coding techniques of multiple coding procedures. With these strict procedures, analyses of data can be done more carefully to find out all the possible understandings related to the data. (ibid, 1967)
2.4.1 My approach to the Grounded Theory

The aim for me when using the Grounded Theory is to gain understanding of the relationship between social actors and their interactions. This in turn will build up a picture of reality, based on the leader’s experiences. I started to look for general concepts and own interpretations. With the method Grounded Theory I went deeply in the research area and the study of our leading creative people and processes by conducting interviews and then connecting them to the theoretical framework.

While using the Grounded Theory, I have collected data and at the same time analysed the data. The theoretical findings for this thesis has systematically been collected, analysed and then compared. Gathered more theories to see if further results had been discovered within the research field or if the theories I already found was sufficient to cover the field. When the data led to confirmation of my findings, the data was completed (Corbin & Strauss 2008). Later on I finished the theoretical sampling process by putting it into a summary of the most important findings in this research field.

After the theoretical sampling process, I analysed the empirical data with multiple coding procedures and compared primary data with each other. Inspiration came from Strauss’s approach of the Grounded Theory and the multiple coding processes, this approach can obtain more information because of the coding procedures. During the entire thesis, writing memos has been of great value for me. Partly from the literature but also from the interviews.

2.5 TECHNIQUES FOR DATA COLLECTION

In the section of data collection should relevant information on how empirical data has been collected be visible for the reader (Styhre, 2013). Depending on when, how and why information is collected is usually data distinguished. These data are primary and secondary data. In this thesis, both primary and secondary data has been used. This since primary data provides current information while secondary data has a greater variety of sources. (Christensen, Engdahl, Grääs & Haglund, 2010)

2.5.1 Primary data

The primary data that has been collected for this thesis is through face-to-face meetings with leaders in creative organizations. The face-to-face interviews gave me a deeper understanding (Bjerke, 2007) on how leaders lead creative people and processes. Through the interviews, I collected as much information as needed about characteristics, attitudes, opinions and perceptions from the leaders in creative organizations. Here it is important and vital to ask the right questions, by having clear questions. To avoid misunderstandings I used non-structured, open-ended interviews which have high conceptual yield and minimal opportunities to inject constructivist elements into the interview. These methods also give the interviewee a chance to answer the question by him- or herself without feeling affected by the researcher. (Odis, 2011)
In order to complement the theoretical framework and to understand how creative people and processes are led in practical, two interviews have been done. Since my aim was to investigate the process through which leaders involved in creative organizations lead creative people and processes, I interviewed leaders somehow concerned with creativity and working with clothing, textile and design. Clothing, textile and design are parts of the fashion industry, ideal for this thesis would have been to do interviews with leaders working with Haute Couture in the fashion industry, but this was unfortunately not possible.

Two interviews have been made with leaders in creative organisations, forming the empirical part of the thesis. When conducting an interview one needs to see it as interplay of talking and listening, where the participants acts on an equal level. Sometimes the interview questions were not always asked in the correct order if I had the feeling another order would be more appropriate or if the interviewee by herself gave the answer of another question. The questionnaire started with more basic questions to get the conversation started and to make the interviewee feel comfortable with the situation. The questions then became more defined and concrete. Sometimes I asked questions that were not planned since we ended up in interesting conversations that led to attendant questions. This led to a more relaxed situation and I believe the interviewee felt more secure with giving authentic answers.

The leaders I interviewed were Malin Månsson and Nanette Espinasse. In chapter five are the two leaders presented more deeply as well as the findings of the interviews. Why I chose to interview these two leaders were mainly for three reasons. First, they are leaders involved in creative work, within the fashion industry. Secondly, they have long experience of both leadership and creative work, furthermore, they could contribute with valuable knowledge for this thesis. Third, they were available and prepared to help me.

When looking for candidates to interview, my business mentor helped me with providing contact information to leaders involved in creative organizations. Then I contacted the potential interviewee’s explaining who I am, what I studying and the aim of the thesis. This thesis is only conducted by two interviews, unfortunately most of the leaders I contacted were not able to help me due to lack of time. The ideal situation would of course have been several more interviews. However, I am though grateful for the two leaders who wanted to participate in an interview and I believe the interviews have given great insight to the research issue of this thesis.

To ensure the validity of the thesis, the interview questions were tested on randomly picked people before the interviews were conducted. This was done to ensure the questions were of the right kind and easy to understand. After the test were no further changes made since the questions were perceived as intended. When the interview took place, I was careful not to affect the interviewee’s opinion and gave them the opportunity to answer freely.

2.5.2 Secondary data

In addition to the primary data has also secondary data been collected for this thesis. The data previously collected and compiled in a different context is known as secondary data. Secondary data consists of information that is available for instance in public data banks or
within an organization. (Christensen et al, 2010) The secondary data of this thesis is underlying for the upcoming chapter 4 about fashion. This data has been collected from magazine articles, literature, videos and webpages, and was mostly related to the field of fashion. Since the interviews have been conducted by leaders working with clothing, textile and design, a chapter about fashion and why fashion plays an important role has been conducted.

The sources used for the secondary data have been carefully examined before a decision has been taken to use the source and if criticism to the source in the literature has arisen, the original source has been sought. The source topicality has also been taken into account.

2.5.3 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework consists of theories from books and scientific articles, dealing with creativity and leadership. The literature has been borrowed via Linneus University's Library while scientific articles were mainly collected from Google Scholar. The keywords of greatest value for this thesis has been creativity, innovation, leadership, leading creative people, creative leadership, fashion, design, creative environment, leading creatively.

2.6 TECHNIQUES FOR DATA ANALYZING

During the period of analysing the findings in the data, Corbin and Strauss (2008) systematic coding techniques of multiple coding procedures has come to hand. The authors define coding as the process of analysing data. Further they claim that this process is “the act of giving meaning to data”. (Corbin & Strauss 2008, pp. 64) The methods here will be: open coding, axial coding, selective coding and memos and diagrams. With the aim to help me understand, interpret and use the data correctly.

2.6.1 Open Coding

“Open Coding is the interpretive process by which data are broken down analytically.” (Corbin & Strauss, 1990 pp. 12)

Data of the Grounded Theory were analysed at the same time as it was collected. I noted memos directly after the data had been composed to describe the situation and understanding of it. Meantime I started the analytical process by transcribing and analysing the data to acquire understanding. Next step was to separate them into distinct units of meaning. Here it was important that the analysis was still broad to make sure more data could be collected. (Goulding, 2005) When a researcher asks questions, the original purpose shall always be in mind, however, one should be open for the unexpected (Strauss & Corbin, 1997).

The coding procedure started by encoding the data from the interviews line by line. When using the Grounded Theory, the researcher is not limited to the formal interview data, instead, everything that comes in the researcher's path when the study area is examined might be used in the analysis. In some case has informal discussions with relatives or friends relating to the area as well as scientific literature been of value to my coding. I encoded the data by
summarizing each line of text in the interview, further compared the data with each other, and tried to find latent patterns.

2.6.2 Axial Coding

“In axial coding, categories are related to their subcategories and the relationships tested against data.” (Corbin & Strauss, 1990 pp. 13)

The job for the researcher in this process is to specify the relationship between the concepts in the open coding process which will be the foundation of theory construction. One concept will be explored to find out its dynamic relationship with others. The deeper analyse, the clearer relationship between the concepts. The categories are then compared with the theoretical framework to find some inspiration or new information for generating theory. (Glouding, 2005)

During my research, I have compared the theoretical framework with the collected empirical data. This was made in order to find some results by analysing the data for key words and similarities in the given answers from the leaders in the interviews. The theoretical framework was always taken into consideration.

2.6.3 Selective Coding

“Selective coding is the process by which all categories are unified around a “core” category, and categories that need further explication are filled-in with descriptive detail.” (Corbin & Strauss, 1990 pp. 14)

It is this process that describes the conclusions and bonds together my earlier established categories. Here, I identified the core category which has the main purpose (Goulding, 2005), in other words, a concept that explains most of what is happening within my research area. When I found a possible core category, I encoded only the data relevant to this concept. Selective coding is done repeatedly during the research and has the most connection with other concepts. In concept with core category, the researcher can conclude the Grounded Theory and make it clearer to the reader.

2.6.4 Memos and Diagrams

When writing this thesis, a lot of reading has been done. To be able to obtain a structure of everything I have read, Corbin and Strauss’ concept of memos and diagrams was used. This meant that after any literature I read and found valuable for this thesis a short summary has been written. Writing these memos has been of great help since it made it easier to remember all the read literature as well as getting an overview of the research.

Further it was valuable to have memos to go back to if additional information was needed. Memos have been used during the whole thesis, both after reading literature and after the interviews were completed. (Corbin & Strauss, 2008)
In Figure 2 my use of the Grounded Theory is portrayed. The figure shows how I arrived at the result through the different coding techniques and through the comparative analysis. Memos and diagrams are not included in the model, despite the fact that my written memos helped me during the whole thesis.

Figure 2. My use of the Grounded Theory. Made by the author.
3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Except from the theories about creativity, creative work, creative organizations and creative leadership mentioned in the first Introduction chapter, will further theories about leading creative people and processes be introduced in this chapter.

3.1 LEADING CREATIVE PEOPLE AND PROCESSES

According to Mumford et al (2002), in order to achieve creativity and innovation for a leader it is important that the leader views their leadership role as a supporting player whose job is to stimulate and facilitate the work of others. The goal of the leader is therefore encourage creative thoughts on followers. (Mumford et al, 2002)

Common theories of looking at leading creative people tends to claim that the leader should leave his or her creative followers alone and simply support and facilitate their work, they should inspire them by giving a vision or be a role model by behave like creative gurus themselves. The authors also identifies that leaders of creative people should elicit and support idea generation, structure ideas and promote ideas. Sessa (1998) also agrees since he means that the basic idea of leading creative people is in the field of the followers and not from the leader. The leader’s role is to encourage creativity on the part of their followers.

3.1.1 Leader characteristics

Research has shown that technical expertise and creative problem-solving skills are vital when leading creative people, this because it gives a basis for structuring an unclear task as well as gives the credibility that is required to the usage of influence. (Mumford et al, 2002)

In studies made by Andrews and Farris (1967) it was showed that technical skills is not only positive for creative leadership but also in motivation skills and the ability to keep group relationships together. Being able to define and frame problems as well as evaluate creative ideas in an effective way, a leader must own creative problem-solving skills. One can argue that key role a leader posit when leading creative people is to help their followers define different problems in terms of the organizations needs and goals. Leaders absent from technical skills and creative problem-solving skills might feel it harder to represent the group in a satisfactory way, communicate with the group in an effective way, meet the needs within the group, be an appropriate mentor for new employees and measure the implications of the members’ interactions. One says that a key finding in this research refers to the fact “that creative leaders display substantial technical skills and expertise”. (Mumford et al, 2003 pp. 427) Though, one should consider that technical skills and expertise may not be satisfactory for a creative leader. A need for understanding the organization is also vital, also have expressed a technical mission if their activities and feedback was showed to be useful. Hence, leader creative thought have a need of both broad understanding and exposure. (ibid, 2003)

“As group tasks become more complex, or more novel and ill-defined, a greater premium will be placed on leader expertise and creative problem-solving skills.” (Mumford et al, 2002 pp. 714)
Transformational leaders regarding intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration might achieve what is needed for stimulating effective work on creative people. (ibid, 2002) Creativity requires personal focus, therefore is motivation needed, motivating the creative people positively by inspiration and negatively with pressure if necessary. With meanings as this is a good way or do not waste more time on this project. Creative people need clearness in their directions and sometimes also stopping points since creativity can lead you to be obsessed and never feel when it is time to stop. Whereby the leader step in and gives directions. (Haag & Coget, 2010)

“Transformational and charismatic leadership may enhance creativity and innovation through motivation and intellectual stimulation.” (Mumford et al, 2002 pp. 715)

Creative job tasks tend to be unclear, hence a leader of creative people might need to possess planning skills. If the employees feel uncertain about their task, the need for the leaders planning and structure is highly appreciated. Especially environmental scanning and forecasting activities are shown being two important parts in the planning skills for a leader of creative people. Here does also the importance of sense-making by leaders play an important role, especially when leading a team of several members interacting to be creative together. (ibid, 2002)

“Effective leadership of creative ventures will require substantial planning skills.” (ibid, 2002 pp. 716)

Creative people have a tendency for not being easily convinced, hence a leader of creative people will need both persuasion and social intelligence. In other words, their social skills and social intelligence. In a more detailed explanation leaders of creative people need wisdom and perceptiveness for knowing when and how to persuade there creative, also manage effective team management under often stressful situations. They will need flexibility for being able to manage interaction that might occur between creative people with often strong egos. Perceptiveness and flexibility are also good traits to possess since it helps the leader knowing when to deliver feedback in the right way.

“The leaders of creative groups will need substantial social skills particularly the flexibility required to address the needs of different constituencies and the wisdom required to appraise the appropriateness of solutions vis-à-vis these constituencies.” (ibid, 2002 pp. 719)

3.1.2 Influence tactics

Regarding the fact that different expertise, sensemaking, transformational, planning skills and social skills are valuable aspects, a leader of creative people must get his or her employees to produce new ideas and products. Concerning this matter, Mumford et al (2002) means that the leader needs to find a few influence tactics which in short includes reduce stress and ambiguity as well as encourage both exploration and individual initiative. One say that successful leaders of creative people do this by two different tactics, first tactic deals with leading people, second tactic deals with leading the work.
Oldham and Cummings (1996) propose four important attributes in leading creative people, these are: intellectual stimulation, support and freedom. These attributes will now be described more in detail.

Since creative work deals a lot with solving problems, one say that intellectual stimulation helps to encourage innovation and creativity.

“Leaders of creative groups should use interactional tactics intended to encourage idea generation.” (Mumford et al, 2002 pp. 721)

Previous research argues for the importance of support in creative work. In the field of leadership of creative people one talk about idea support, work support and social support.

“Leaders should provide people working on creative projects with multiple forms of support (e.g. idea, work, and social support).” (ibid 2002, pp. 724)

Freedom enhances creativity in the way it allows the employees to follow their own insights. However, here balance is important, since both too much freedom and non-freedom had a tendency to constrain innovation. Haag and Coget (2010) also means creative people need their freedom for brainstorming and creation without distractions.

“Leaders should allow followers freedom when working on creative efforts provided that this freedom does not result in a lack of clarity about goals and goal attainment strategies.” (Mumford et al, 2002 pp. 724)

Leadership of creative people will require some kind of structure. Some tactics that might be useful for encourage structure is: output expectations and feedback as well as diversity. These will furthermore be described in more detailed.

Output expectations and feedback has shown to be helpful to creativity both because it allows the leader to lead the creative work without disturbing their work but also because it inspires the employees to ask for feedback when needed. For a leader to be successful in a creative environment he or she needs to devote both time and effort in evaluation activities, seeing evaluation as an investigative activity. Here is also feedback playing a role. Depending on followers reactions to this feedback show the leaders success. A creative leader most likely place an importance of delivers the feedback in an effective way. Feedback acceptance on the other hand depends on the trust the followers has in the leader. (Mumford et al, 2003)

“Leaders should use output expectations, and a variety of different output expectations, as well as ongoing progress monitoring, as methods for inducing structure in creative work.” (Mumford et al, 2002 pp. 726)

There are several reasons to believe that diversity is wanted within leadership of creative people. Since diverse management teams tend to get a better result in complex problem solving as well as having a more solid ground to make decisions.

“Leaders should assign people to project teams to ensure appropriate levels of diversity.” (ibid, 2002 pp. 729)
3.1.3 Organizational characteristics

For enhance creativity, the right culture and climate needs as support. In such climate should leaders of creative people not punish an employee’s failure or risk-taking, instead encourage to challenge ideas.

Creative people tend to be different from other employees since creative people incline to have high level of expertise, having their identity deeply devoted in to their work, high achievement motives and at the same time lower affiliation and power motives. With this in mind, one view is that creative people should not be led but left alone and instead lead themselves. (Haag & Coget, 2010) However, there are several theories talking against the fact that creative people do not need a leader. Mumford, Connelly and Gaddis (2003) on the other hand argue against the fact that leaders involved in creative processes plays a supportive role. In this view, the leader posit a more direct and engaged role in the creative process. The authors mean that a leader creative thought rotates around experience and missions, with the leader with his or her creative activities, whose role is to serve ideas to provide practical innovation. One say a leaders creative thought is mainly stimulated from his or her followers ideas. This fact rules under two conditions, partly when the leader has followers providing the leader creative ideas and thoughts. Or when the leader are trying to create conditions where creativity is more possible, and engaged with followers will the leader and his or her followers start a process with an constant cycle of innovation and creativity. This cycle is claimed to characterize many creative groups. Here the leader contributes with a combination of practical expertise, mission knowledge as well as feedback recommendations. (Mumford et al, 2003)

Leaders might be seen as role models for their followers, who in turn may imitate or at least be inspired by their leader. Therefore the leader’s personality and creative ability has a direct or indirect capacity to influence organizational creativity. Directly, leaders might influence creativity through behavior, personality, encouraging or discouraging the followers to be creative and innovative, in other words when the leader him- or herself displays own creative behavior. Indirectly, leaders might influence by creating a work climate enhancing creativity, by showing appreciation and understanding of the employee’s creative behavior. However, to become an effective role model for the followers, the leader must also show what creative behavior means. Mathisen, Einarsen and Mykletun (2012) points out that creative leaders are seen as models that motivates and inspires their followers who in turn learn creative behaviors and procedures by following their creative leader. One say that followers more often like to discuss ideas with an creative leader than a less creative leader, furthermore, with a more positive outcome as well. (Mathisen et al, 2012)

It is said that supportive, inspirational and non-controlling leadership is what promotes employees to be creative. Mathisen et al (2012) means that additionally to these three attributes, leaders who directly expose their creativity with their followers will also inspire to creative thinking into the entire organization. One argues that it is vital for leaders to be creative for being able to promote creativity in the organization. The authors Mathisen et al, (2012) argue for the fact that leaders having personalities associated with creativity also
promotes creativity to his or her followers as well as within the organization. By promoting a creative environment, employees will be more inspired themselves to act creatively which lead to a creative outcome of the final product. (ibid, 2012)

There will always be different aspects that might influence the creative outcome in an organization, like legislations, regulations, economical aspects, customer aspects and etcetera. These aspects cannot be controlled by the leader or the employees but Mathisen et al (2012) means that creative behavior is probably more linked to leader behavior with no necessary impact from these factors.

Creative leadership is according to Palus and Horth (1998) defined as the ability to work with people to create shared understanding of complex and rapidly changing situations and to generate possible responses. The authors means there are two necessary competencies for leading creatively. The first competence is rational skills such as planning, analyzing and decision making. These are typically skills required for a leader. The other competence is the so called neglected competencies. They include: noticing, sense-making, personalizing, legitimizing intuition, collaborative inquiry as well as serious play. (Palus & Horth, 1998)

A leader requires making quick judgments, here is your own perception an asset. For situations of higher complexity another type of perception is crucial, the called, noticing - Taking time to observe in a deeper and detailed way going past what you already think that you see. (ibid, 1998)

Sense making can be seen as the process of creating understanding, it can be described as “you hear one thing here, one thing there, and you’ve got to put the story together.” (ibid, 1998 pp. 2) To create shared understanding is a critical mission in an organization and fundamental to achieve creative leadership.

People tend to be more creative when they are inspired by inner drivers and interests rather than by external pressure, hence the importance of personalizing. Since personalizing implies to find a way to connect work with personal interests and drivers. (ibid, 1998)

Legitimizing intuition means to create an environment that makes room of the kind of thinking where your own feelings and intuitions play a bigger part. (ibid, 1998)

Palus and Horth (1998) mean that creativity comes from people in pursuit of shared interests. Therefore is collaborative inquiry the fifth creative leadership competency since it refers to being able to organize, sustain and participate on difficult challenges. (ibid, 1998)

Serious play involves learning about complexities and subtleties of an issue were you actively bend the rules and tests the limits. Through this it is possible to find new patterns and ways to go around the issue. All of these six neglected competencies mentioned must be used together with right amount of structure in order to achieve creative leadership. (ibid, 1998)

Mumford et al (2002) argue that leadership of creative work appear to require an integrative style that permits the leader to orchestrate expertise and their employees rather than lead. This style involves three components: idea generation, idea structuring and idea promotion. Idea
generation involves the leader not only to help the employees generate ideas but also create an environment where ideas are more likely to be created. This environment involves for instance freedom, diversity, open communication and role modeling from the leader. Idea structuring includes guidance within technical and organizational expertise, output expectations and integrates the projects. Idea promotion deals with the fact that all resources needed for the creative work is offered. (Mumford et al, 2002)

3.2 SUMMARY OF THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

- “Leading creative people: Orchestrating expertise and relationships”

Mumford et al, (2002) talks about different leader characteristics, influence tactics and organizational characteristics in theories of leading creative people. Some propositions they mention is that higher value will be placed on leader expertise and creative problem-solving skills. Planning skills is needed when leading creative people as well as social skills. Further, they mention the importance of the leader providing his or her followers with motivation and support. One proposition mentions that leaders should give freedom to their creative followers, however, not so much freedom it fallouts of goal achievements. Moreover, the authors discuss leading the work with propositions such as ensure appropriate levels with diversity and understanding of the organization’s strategy. In conclusion the authors suggest and integrative style that lets the leader orchestrate expertise and the creative people rather than leading them.

- “Leading creative people: Lessons from advertising Guru Jacques Séguéla”

The view from this article is that creative people need freedom and should therefore lead themselves. However they will need motivation and directions from the leader, who always needs to be clear and certain in the given directions. (Haag & Coget, 2010)

- “How creative leaders think: Experimental findings and cases”

In this theory the leader of creative people plays a supportive role and is involved in the creative process as a supporting hand. Also in this article they authors mention the importance of technical skills and expertise, they also mean that an understanding for the organization is crucial. A leader of creative people must also devote time for evaluation and feedback to their followers. (Mumford et al, 2003)

- “Creative leaders promote creative organizations”

In this article, the theory about leaders of creative people is that leaders are seen as role models for their followers. They mean leaders might influence creativity in different ways to their followers. It is according to this article supportive, inspirational and non-controlling leadership that promotes creativity. To be able to lead a creative organization, it requires that the leader him- or herself is creative as well. Leaders need to apply their creativity in a way that promotes a creative environment in the organization. (Mathisen et al, 2012)
“Leading Creatively”

In this article the authors mean that a leader of creative people needs two different kinds of competencies. First, they will need rational skills such as planning, analyzing and decision making. Second, they will need neglected competencies such as your noticing and observation skill, sense-making skill, your ability to connect with yourself and create room for that thinking, organizing skills and at last being able to test the limits and reach one step further. (Palus & Horth, 1998)
4. WHY IS FASHION IMPORTANT?

As explained earlier, creativity is involved in all kinds of jobs that somehow involve certain types of tasks. According to me, people working with clothing, textile and design refers to creative people working with creative processes. Also Santagata (2004) refers to fashion, design and art as creativity-based goods. Clothing, design and textile go under the concept fashion in this thesis. Hence, the reader will be provided with a chapter of what fashion is and why it plays an important role in today’s society. Discussing why fashion is important can be described from many different angles, however, within the frame of this thesis I would like to restrict myself suitable for this thesis.

Fashion is one of the world’s most important creative industries. It is the major output of a global business all over the world with annual sales of more than 200 billion dollars in United States only. This number is larger than the annual sales of books, movies, and music combined. (Hemphill & Suk, 2009)

“Fashion is not something that exists in dresses only. Fashion is in the sky, in the street, fashion has to do with ideas, the way we live, what is happening.”
– Coco Chanel (chanelcollections.com)

Already in the fifteenth century in France, fashion was considered so important a special fashion department was established. Today, the significance of fashion has not been reduced. Svendsen (2004) means that fashion being the most influential phenomenon of the west world civilization from the renaissance and forth. The author emphasizes that an understanding of fashion should therefore add to an understanding of us as human beings. It is hard to give an exact explanation on what fashion is, Kawamura (2007) explains that fashion is not the visible clothing, but the invisible element that includes within the clothing. Trying to understand what fashion is about one can separate on two categories, one that fashion refers to clothes or that fashion is a general ideology that among others asserts itself in the clothing area. (Svendsen, 2004) Smith (1984) means that fashion belongs to all areas where the taste has a central part. Lipovetsky (2002) on the other hand defines fashion like this: “fashion is a definite form of social change, independent of a decided object. It is first of all a social mechanism, that is characterized by a specific short duration and by more or less noticed changes that makes it possible influencing completely separate spheres of collective life.” (Lipovetsky, 2002 pp. 16)

Fashion is sometimes also about showing social status. Being better than the people in the same social class as ourselves and trying to reach the same level as the class above through mimic. With other words, it is both about differentiation within the class and imitation of the class above. This refers to one classical explanation of how fashion is spread, that fashion is created in the top and then trickles down to the social layers. A truly trivial explanation to why fashion is changing would be the fashion houses simply follow advices from firms in Paris and London, so called fashion forecasts, who give advices to the fashion houses about
what they believe will be fashion next season. In this way they create good soil for self-fulfilling prophecy. (Svendsen, 2004)

Today we separate on three different main categories within fashion, these are: Luxury fashion, Industrial fashion and Street fashion. Within Luxury fashion the most expensive part is Haute Couture, which means High fashion. It involves expensive material and high intensive labor. The exclusive Haute Couture Collections are made upon a special request, customized and measured to fit the particular client perfectly. Haute Couture garments are very expensive and only affordable for a small part of the society. Today there are only thirteen fashion houses that are allowed to call their clothing Haute Couture. These are: Adeline André, Chanel, Christian Dior, Christian Lacroix, Dominique Sirop, Emanuel Ungaro, Franck Sorbier, Givenchy, Jean Paul Gaultier, Jean-Louis Scherrer, Elie Saab, Giorgio Armani and Valentino. (fashionguide.se)

Since Haute Couture then provides a low return on investment for the design houses, Haute Couture is more and more leaving the market and Prêt-á-porter has instead gained a greater significance. Prêt-á-porter or as it is also called, “Ready-to-wear collections”, are ready-made clothes in standard sizes, designed by fashion designers and sold in stores around the world. Often it is these collections that interpret the commercial trends and those who follow the fashion press. Prêt-á-porter emerged in the 1960s in connection with the young designers who wanted to create fashion independent of the Haute Couture prescribed line. Today, new trends are more and more coming from Prêt-á-porter. Industrial fashion is being mass-produced but reaches from expensive clothing lines by designers to the cheap clothing chains. The Street fashion is created by people in different subcultures. There are sliding bridges between all the three categories. (Svendsen, 2004)

4.1 FASHION AS A SOCIAL IDENTITY

Fashion is the way you represent yourself, with the choice of your clothes, to the world that detriments how the world views you. Corrigan (2008) says that everything about a person is indicated by clothing, by a slight examination of the wear may everything socially important be determined.

Fashion is not just clothes or fabric according to Kawamura (2007) where she makes a distinction between these two and points out that fashion has a nature of being a social conception in human minds. However, the connection between fashion and clothes is undeniable where fashion stands for the immaterial whilst clothes and fabric for the material part which leads to that fashion is expressed through clothes. (Kawamura, 2007)

Lipovetsky (2002) claims that fashion as a device for generating aesthetic and social judgment it has favored the critical stare of the sophisticated and it has inspired more or less agreeable judgments of the classiness of others. However fashion has not been simply a stage for the appreciation of the spectacle presented by others; it has also set free an investment of self, an extraordinary aesthetic self-observation. “Fashion goes hand in glove with the pleasure of seeing, but also with the pleasure of being seen.” (Lipovetsky, 2002 pp. 29) It can therefore easily be claimed that fashion affects us as humans in more than one way, and as Svendsen
(2004) suggests that a broader understanding of fashion should therefore contribute to an understanding of ourselves. He claims that if philosophy is a subject that leads us into having a better understanding of ourselves and in fashion is as rich with influence power on us then fashion should be taken seriously as a subject for further philosophical exploration. Svendsen (2004) points out the connection between fashion and identity by meaning that fashion and clothes are a settling part of the social construction of the ipseity. Tradition does not any longer give a person its identity, it is rather something we choose ourselves by being consumers. Fashion is more about expressing one’s own identity than just being about the differentiation of a class, where clothes become a part of the character and not something external in relation to one’s identity. (Svendsen, 2004)
5. EMPIRICAL DATA

Below I will give a short background presentation about the two leaders I have interviewed, then a small summary of the significant parts of the interviews.

5.1 HOW DO YOU LEAD CREATIVE PEOPLE AND PROCESSES?

The results achieved from the two interviews have given great insights. Even though only two interviews have been made, I believe they are of great value to this thesis. Of course, it would be preferable with more interview partners, if this was the case, I would dived deeper into the subject. However, I believe these two interviews have given me enough data to conclude the thesis.

5.1.1 Interview one

Name: Malin Månsson

Experience: Project leader, board member and self-employed.

About: Today is Månsson running her own business, both the company Misura Italia that provides the customer with handmade leather handbags from Italy. Also the communication bureau Misenti Communication. Before Månsson started her own business, she worked as Project leader at different Communication and Marketing bureaus. Malin Månsson has more than twenty-five years of experience in the field of leading creative people.

Interview: The interview took place 29th of April 2014 in Kalmar in the home of Månssons. The interview was conducted in Swedish and lasted for 70 minutes. Since the interview took place in the home of Månssons, the setting was informal and relaxed. She showed great interest in my research and gave well considered answers.

“As a leader I am demanding, professional, competent, human and fair.”

That is how Månsson describes herself as a leader. Further she describes herself as very controlled, organised and structured leader. As a leader of creative people she means this is a crucial condition, since it is the leader’s job to make sure all the creative processes ends up in a finished project.

Månsson means that creativity is a very broad word but might be defined as the ability to create a solving that is better than what the customer expected as well as the ability to think outside the box. Someone able to create something attractive and unexpected but also delivers results is a creative person. Furthermore Månsson consider herself being a creative person, she means that it is essential to be a creative person in her work. Hence she also considers
herself as a creative leader, if she was not a creative leader she would neither be a good brief for her followers.

The interview continues with talking about the organization and Månsson notes my question about diversity. Further she adds the importance of employees with different backgrounds, nationalities, gender and age. In a creative organisation should one plus one equals three. “Diversity is a key factor. The day we all think the same, we can close the business”. It is important to create an environment that cultivates creativity. “It needs to be an environment that allows the creative people to be stimulated and think outside the box”

When leading creative people Månsson talks about the importance of both having a creative side but also structure and methodology. She means that creative people need a kind of framework, within they can work freely but they need help from a leader to put the framework together. “Do you tell a creative they can do whatever they want, they will look like a question mark”. In other words, they will need a leader that gives guidelines, directions and stimulation, then they can work freely. However, by Månssons own experience, the leader also needs to control different stages in the process and check the final process.

A key aspect Månsson mentions several times during the interview is customization, in other words, adjustment to all individuals. She means that all humans are different and it is important to adapt your leadership based of the employees in the team. “All employees must be treated individually and unique, as a leader you must know how to deal with your followers in the right way.” As a suggestion from Månsson, create subgroups within the group that are similar. This makes it easier for the leader to know how the different groups prefer the leader to act. Here Månsson also mentioned the vital aspect of getting to know your followers, “if you do not know your followers you cannot know how to lead them.”
5.1.2 Interview two

**Name:** Nanette Espinasse

**Experience:** Director of department and Project leader.

**About:** Espinasse works as a Director of department, as well as Project leader at Marketplace Borås. In collaboration with others, Marketplace Borås work to strengthen the region around Borås within fashion, textiles and design.

**Interview:** Unfortunately Espinasse did not have the time for a meeting in Borås, she therefore preferred an interview through Skype. I called her from my apartment in Kalmar were I could talk without interruptions. The interview was conducted in Swedish and lasted for 65 minutes. Even though the interview was via Skype, I got the feeling Espinasse tried her best to give me the right impression of her as a leader and took the time answering my questions, despite the fact she was under time pressure.

“As a leader I am always trying to be clear and give clear directions.”

Espinasse describes herself as a leader always trying to give sense to her followers but also encourage them to create own space for responsibilities and be able to reach their goals.

When I ask Espinasse what the word creativity means for her, she defines it as being able to think new and fresh, think again and not be afraid of failing. “A creative person is fearless and is able to think beyond the simple and easy way out, dares to think outside the box instead of the obvious.” Espinasse considers herself being both a creative person and a creative leader, this to the fact that she is always trying to think one step further, not only in her work and with her followers but also in her personal life.

Furthermore, I ask Espinasse about the organization and she describes the organization as a place with all kind of people working. Espinasse means that she like working with “odd birds”, as she calls them. She continues talking about diversity and how diversity enriches the organization as well as the creative thinking. “If we all are the same we get thin and might miss a big target group on the market, if we all think differently there is a bigger chance we cover a bigger target group on the market”

However, in an organization with a high range of creative people and diversity, it requires a lot of structure. Espinasse means that good project leaders is a key factor since they need to catch the creative processes and keep the projects moving forward. “It is the leaders task to make sure that the employees finish what they started, if everyone always thinks about new ideas it is easy to miss out of goals and achievements because you forget to move forward.”

When leading creative people, Espinasse talks about the importance of being both a creative leader but also a controlling leader. “In this organisation one needs to be a bit of a control freak but it is important to give all the employees the opportunity to fly free at the same time.”
When I ask Espinasse if creative people needs a leader or can run their work more freely she totally agrees to the fact they will need a leader, she means without a leader it is a risk all creative projects just flies around, nothing gets done and people might lose focus. “Creative people need a leader telling them guidelines and directions, however you never know how long time it will take to solve the problem, that is why they will also need their freedom after getting their directions.”

In accordance to Månsson, Espinasse also talks about customize the leadership, she puts it like this: “we are all different people, the leadership must to some extent also be different – even if one is to be fair and treat everyone equally – it is a balancing act.”
6. PRESENTING AND ANALYZING THE FINDINGS

In this chapter the information obtained during the interviews together with the theoretical framework will be analyzed. The categories found in the coding, is based on the empirical data. For each category, I have made a theoretical interpretation. Further a model of the categories will be presented.

6.1 OPEN CODING

Since I have been inspired by the Grounded Theory in this thesis, the emergence of categories from the data as an experience of the empirical reference of the leaders being interviewed, since the purpose with the Grounded Theory is to find categories emanate from the empirical findings. (Odis, 2011) As suggested by Corbin and Strauss (2008) I have compared the two interviews with each other and identified similarities in both interviews. As mentioned earlier I started my coding procedure by encode the data from the interviews line by line. The data was encoded by summarizing each line of text in the interview. Further, I compared the data with each other, and tried to find latent patterns. As well as identifying key words, these key words are thus grounded in the empirical experiences of the two leaders being interviewed. The key words found in the categories have been used by the interviewed leaders, even in the title of the category. The words used by the leaders in the interviews speak for their experience and my coding is grounded in this empirical experience.

The identified key words are: Customization, individualization, employee, guidance, directions, stimulation, motivation, freedom, creative personality, creativity, leading creatively, organized, structured, environment, diversity. These key words compose eight key categories:

- Customize the leadership based on every employee.
- Creative people need guidance and directions.
- Creative people need stimulation and motivation.
- Creative people need enough freedom.
- A leader of creative people needs to be creative.
- Creative processes need an organised and structured leader.
- Create an environment that facilitates creativity.
- The need for diversity in a creative organization.

For each category, I have made a theoretical interpretation from the theoretical framework. This will now be analysed.
6.2 CUSTOMIZE THE LEADERSHIP BASED ON EVERY EMPLOYEE

Both Månsson and Espinasse put great emphasis on the importance of leading creative people individually. They mean all people are different and there is a need for different people in a creative organization, hence a bigger value is placed on customize the leadership style. “*All employees must be treated individually and unique, as a leader you must know how to deal with your followers in the right way,*” as Månsson puts it.

To be able to customize your leadership style based on the employees within the team follows the importance of getting to know the followers. If the leader does not know his or her followers, he or she will neither be able to lead them as the follower prefer.

6.3 CREATIVE PEOPLE NEED GUIDANCE AND DIRECTIONS

The previous common view saying that creative people do not need a leader has many arguments talking against this theory. Many earlier approaches dealing with leadership of creative people and organization hold that the leader is not part of the creative process. The leader is instead seen as having a supporting role of stimulate and facilitate the work of the followers. One can say, leaders who deal with creative people are more involved in orchestrating their employees. (Mumford et al, 2002) Sessa (1998) means that the basic idea of leading creative people is in the field of the followers and not from the leader. The leader’s role is to encourage creativity on the part of their followers. Also Haag et al (2010) claim that creative people should not be led but left alone and instead lead themselves.

The theory that creative people do not need a leader is according to this proposal claimed wrong. This proposal says the opposite, creative people needs a leader that is able to step in and give guidance and directions. One can even claim that creative people tend to need more guidance and directions from their leader than other followers. Månsson means that creative people are so involved in the creating process they tend to forget the aim of the process. In accordance to give the creative followers guidance and directions Mathisen et al, (2012) means that supportive, inspirational and non-controlling leadership is what promotes the employees to be creative.

6.4 CREATIVE PEOPLE NEED STIMULATION AND MOTIVATION

A leader of creative people and processes needs to stimulate and motivate their followers. This is because motivation and stimulation tend to drive the employees to think outside of boundaries and think one step further. Hence the leader needs to step in with motivation and stimulation to encourage the employees and give them new energy to continue.

With this category the literature also agrees. Mumford (2002) means that creative work deals a lot with solving problems, leaders of creative groups should use interactional tactics intended to encourage idea generation, the authors claim that intellectual stimulation helps to encourage both innovation and creativity.
Further Mumford et al (2002) describes that stimulation is required to inspire creative people. Haag and Coget (2010) do also agree in this matter, they mean motivation is needed in creative processes. Creativity requires personal focus, hence the leader should motivate the creative employees positively by inspiration and negatively with pressure if necessary. (Haag & Coget, 2010)

6.5 CREATIVE PEOPLE NEED ENOUGH FREEDOM

To the previous statement that creative people work best by themselves is to some extent true. Leaders of creative people must allow their followers some freedom, they will need freedom when working on a creative process, however, this cannot result in lack of clarity about goals and goal attainment strategies. (Mumford et al, 2002) Further Mumford et al (2002) says that freedom enhances creativity in the way it allows the employees to follow their own insights. However, here is a balance important, since both too much freedom and non-freedom has a tendency to constrain innovation.

Both Månsson and Espinasse talked about the importance of giving their employees freedom while working, however too much freedom might create chaos. One can say creative people need help from the leader putting together a framework, ones they got help putting together a framework they are able to work freely. Without freedom within the framework they will be strangled but the leader needs to help them create their framework. Further, Haag et al (2010) mean that creative people need freedom for brainstorming and creation without getting any distractions.

6.6 A LEADER OF CREATIVE PEOPLE NEEDS TO BE CREATIVE

Both Månsson and Espinasse argue for the fact that a leader of creative people and processes needs to be a creative person him- or herself. Leaders might be seen as role models for their followers, who in turn may imitate or at least be inspired by their leader. Therefore the leader’s personality and creative ability has a direct or indirect capacity to influence organizational creativity. Directly, leaders might influence creativity through behavior, personality, encouraging or discouraging the followers to be creative and innovative, in other words when the leader him- or herself displays own creative behavior. Indirectly, leaders might influence by creating a work climate enhancing creativity, by showing appreciation and understanding of the employee’s creative behavior. However, to become an effective role model for the followers, the leader must also show what creative behavior means. Mathise et al (2012) points out that creative leaders is seen as models that motivates and inspires their followers who in turn learn creative behaviors and procedures by following their creative leader. One say that followers more often like to discuss ideas with an creative leader than a less creative leader, furthermore, with a more positive outcome as well. (Mathisen et al , 2012)

It is said that supportive, inspirational and non-controlling leadership is what promotes employees to be creative. Mathise et al (2012) means that additionally to these three attributes, leaders who directly expose their creativity with their followers will also inspire to
creative thinking into the entire organization. One argues that it is vital for leaders to be creative for being able to promote creativity in the organization. The authors Mathise et al (2012) argue for the fact that leaders having personalities associated with creativity also promotes creativity to his or her followers as well as within the organization.

6.7 CREATIVE PROCESSES NEED AN ORGANIZED AND STRUCTURED LEADER

Månsson and Espinasse mean creative processes tend to be quite unorganised and floating, that is why an organised leader is required, in order to canalize the creative ideas and processes. Also the leader needs make sure they end up in a finished project.

In this proposal Mumford et al (2002) claim that creative job tasks tend to be unclear, hence a leader of creative people might need to possess planning skills. If the employees feel uncertain about their task, the need for the leaders planning and structure is highly appreciated. Especially environmental scanning and forecasting activities are shown being two important parts in the planning skills for a leader of creative people. Here does also the importance of sensemaking by leaders play an important role, especially when leading a team of several members interacting to be creative together. (Mumford et al, 2002)

6.8 CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT THAT FACILITATES CREATIVITY

Creating an environment that facilitates creativity deals with several objects. Partly the surroundings, the atmosphere and the ambience within the organisation but also the role of the leader. Mumford et al (2002) mean that, the right culture and climate needs as support for enhancing creativity. In such climate should leaders of creative people not punish an employee’s failure or risk-taking, instead encourage to challenge ideas.

Regarding the fact that different expertise, sense-making, transformational, planning skills and social skills are valuable aspects, a leader of creative people must get his or her employees to produce new ideas and products. Concerning this matter (Mumford et al (2002) mean that the leader needs to find a few influence tactics which in short includes reduce stress and ambiguity as well as encourage both exploration and individual initiative. By promoting a creative environment, employees will be more inspired themselves to act creatively which lead to a creative outcome of the final product. (Mathisen et al, 2012)

6.9 THE NEED FOR DIVERSITY IN A CREATIVE ORGANIZATION

There are several reasons to believe that diversity is wanted within leadership of creative people. Since diverse management teams tend to get a better result in complex problem solving as well as having a more solid ground to make decisions. (Mumford et al, 2002)

To this fact do also Månsson and Espinasse agrees. They mean it is a key aspect of having diversity in a creative organization, there cannot be employees thinking all the same. As Månsson says: “Diversity is a key factor. The day we all think the same, we can close the business”.

31
After the categories were related to each other axially, the process of selective coding started, which refers to when the analysis leads to one main category as all the other categories can be integrated in. (Corbin & Strauss, 1990)

In the process of selective coding, I tried to find similarities, differences and connections between the eight categories, in order to find a main category. At the first stage I saw connections between some of the categories.

‘Creative people need stimulation and motivation’ connected with ‘Creative people need enough freedom’ affects each other in the way when employees get more influence their motivation will increase, which will affect the effectiveness of the organization (Bolman & Deal, 2012), in this case, producing creativity.

‘Creative people need guidance and directions’ connected with ‘Creative processes need an organized and structured leader’ affects each other in the way that creative processes tend to be somewhat fuzzy and need a leader who gives both the process and the employee’s structure.

‘A leader of creative people needs to be creative’ is connected to ‘Creative people need stimulation and motivation’. They relate to each other because of the fact that for being able as a leader to stimulate and motivate the followers to think one step further and think outside of the box the leader must him- or herself be able to think in this direction.

‘The need for diversity in a creative organization’ is related to ‘Creative processes need an organized and structured leader’. These two categories are seen as related since in a creative organization with many different kind of people and mindsets it tend to be quite messy. Hence a structured and organized leader needs to make sure the organization moves forward.

Through this selective coding process I could later on identify one main category that was created into a theory. This theory is explained in a model in Figure 1. This model connects all the eight categories together, the main purpose is seven categories lead to the eight category. The seven boxes with key words in the model represent the categories:

- Customize the leadership based on every employee.
- Creative people need guidance and directions.
- Creative people need stimulation and motivation.
- Creative people need enough freedom.
- A leader of creative people needs to be creative.
- Creative processes need an organised and structured leader.
The need for diversity in a creative organization.

All of these categories create an environment where creative people feel is an environment that facilitates creativity. It results in an organization where the employees feel they get stimulated and motivated by their leader. They have enough freedom working on their creative processes, and with some guidance and directions from the leader they are on the right track. With a leader who knows his or her followers and is further able to adapt the leadership style individually. Even though the organization consists of diversity. Additional is the leader a creative person him- or herself and able to inspire the employees to think one step further. As well as being organised and structured in order to canalize all the creative processes.

All these factors lead to an environment with aspects creative people tend to appreciate. This in turn leads to the last category:

Create an environment that facilitates creativity.
6.10.1 The importance of a creative environment

When business is linked with creativity, people tend to get more motivated and more efficient in their work. Without a creative environment, the employees will not feel inspired nor have the ability to develop within their work. Further Amabile (2012) claims that people are more creative, productive, committed and collegial in their jobs when they have a positive creative environment in the daily work. The importance of a creative environment especially applies within the fashion industry where creativity always is involved in the daily work.

In accordance with the theoretical framework one can see this model has similarities with integrative style Mumford et al (2002) discusses. They say that leadership of creative work appears to require an integrative style that permits the leader to orchestrate expertise and their employees rather than lead. This style involves three components: idea generation, idea structuring and idea promotion.

Idea generation involves the leader not only to help the employees generate ideas but also create an environment where ideas are more likely to be created. This environment involves for instance freedom, diversity, open communication and role modeling from the leader. Idea structuring includes guidance within technical and organizational expertise, output expectations and integrates the projects. Idea promotion deals with the fact that all resources needed for the creative work is offered. (Mumford et al, 2002)
7. CONCLUSIONS

Finally, the conclusions are presented of the completed thesis. Based on description and analysis the research issue is answered. Further will a discussion part be held and further research questions will arise.

7.1 CONCLUDING MY WORK

With this thesis I wanted to investigate the environment through which leaders involved in creative organizations lead creative people and processes. The reader was firstly introduced with background information about creativity and the aim of the thesis. A theoretical framework within the research field has been presented for the reader. Secondary data about fashion has been collected and two interviews with leaders of creative people and processes have been conducted. The data findings were then analyzed according to the Grounded Theory. Through this analyse I have identified eight key categories. These eight categories led to a connected model (Figure 1), showing aspects that leads to an environment where creativity tend to blossom. Further is the research issue discussed.

- Investigating the environment through which leaders involved in creative organizations lead creative people and processes.

All people are unique, when working with creative people it is important to customize your leadership based on all employees within the team. For instance, some prefer a leader giving a lot of feedback in writings while others might prefer a leader giving them less feedback in words. Hence the importance for getting to know the followers and further be able to give the employees individual appropriate leadership style.

Since creative people tend to be overwhelmed with the creative process they sometimes miss out of structure. That is why a leader is needed, since creative people need guidance and directions. However, one cannot forget creative people need freedom while working. If the leader does not provide the employees with freedom they will feel strangled and the creative process might be inhibited. Apart from needing guidance and directions, creative people also need stimulation and motivation from their leader. Since stimulation and motivation enables creative people to think outside of boundaries and one step further.

The need for being creative as a leader of creative people and processes is vital, if the leader oneself is not creative, she or he will not be able to lead creative followers. With several ongoing creative processes it tends to be quite messy within the organisation, this is why a leader of creative people and processes needs to be organised and structured. Partly to pick up all the creative processes and make sure they end up in a finished project but also to be able to handle business related issues within the organization.

It is the leader’s job to create an environment that foster creativity. If the employees feel they work in an environment helping creativity to flow, this will generate to a more positive
outcome of the creative process. The need for diversity in a creative organization is vital for creative processes to blossom in the organization.

7.2 DISCUSSION

This thesis generated in a model on aspects to consider when leading creative people and processes. Since my inspiration has been by the Grounded Theory I will not know if this model is verified since the purpose with the Grounded Theory is to generate idea rather than to prove or verify the theory. (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) However, this model can according to me be seen as an aspect leader of creative people and processes should consider and have in mind. In a creative organization, are the employees the biggest key factor according to me, since a creative process is not being made by itself. It is always a creative brain that is behind a design of clothing. Hence the importance of creating an environment that fosters creativity. If the employees do not feel happy in their workplace they will neither be creative and this might affect the finished project, further it might be a setback on the entire organization.

Since this thesis only was conducted by two interviews has an interest of further research arise. I hope others would like to investigate in the same research and dive deeper into the research field with more leaders to interview. It would have been of interest to see if the research issue would have the same answer if more interviews had been done. Further have other questions arise during the research like: how is the leadership different within industries? Might the same model generated from this thesis be appropriate when leading followers in general? Is creativity a condition for an organizations success? Is it the leader that creates people to be creative?

This thesis is illustrated from the fashion industry. For me, fashion is everywhere and everything. Fashion extends beyond just clothing. Walking in the city and you see people wearing clothes, old buildings or expensive restaurants, all this concerns the word fashion. The buildings are designed for being beautiful and the restaurant is modern according to fashion within interior.

For me fashion is beautiful things and being surrounded by beautiful things makes you feel good. Emotionally you often feel better wearing a nice garment, but why is this so? For me, it deals with the fact that everyone enjoys being beautiful and feel good about themselves. Fashion and beautiful processes can achieve this. Hence one can claim there is a need for fashion.

Fashion concerns everyone, even though you approve of it or not. Fashion is creativity, fashion is even art. Within the field of art, there is an artist, creating something, the same applies with fashion. There is always a creative designer behind a garment, a furniture or a building.

Further is creative leadership growing in importance. According to previous studies, creativity was ranked as the most important attribute needed in leaders. Hence I see this thesis as valuable for the field of leadership. Creativity is important, as a leader you must know how to create an environment where creativity tend to blossom. Especially in the fashion industry
were creativity is the foundation for designing clothes. Further, I see this thesis valuable for leaders in the fashion industry working with design since the generated model in this thesis provides the leader with notable aspects to consider when leading creative people and processes.

To conclude this thesis I would like to end with providing the reader a quotation:

“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.” - John Quincy Adams
(creativeleader.com)
REFERENCES


ADDITIONAL READINGS


ORAL REFERENCES

Espinasse, Nanette, Project Leader – Marketplace Borås, 2014-04-28, Kalmar

Månsson, Malin, Project Leader – Misura & Misenti, 2014-04-29, Kalmar

INTERNET LINKS


Fashionguide.se: Din guide till mode online. Collected 2014-03-17 hr. 14:32 from: http://www.fashionguide.se/plaggtyper/haute-couture/


VIDEO

Appendix 1 - Interview Questions

1. How would you describe yourself as a leader?
2. What does the word creativity mean to you?
3. Do you consider yourself as a creative person?
4. Do you consider yourself as a creative leader?
5. What is a creative person for you?
6. Do you have creative people in your organization?
7. Is there a high range of diversity in your organization?
8. Do you like to be surrounded by creative people?
9. Do you like to work with creative people or do you avoid working with them?
10. If you were surrounded only by creative people how would your leadership be?
11. Do you believe that leading creative people is a rewarding activity?
12. Are you a more laissez-faire or a more controlling leader?
13. Do you think that creative processes need to be organized and lead by a leader?
14. Do you think that creative people need to be more lead and directed than others? Or the opposite way?
15. Do you think creative people need more freedom when working on creative efforts?
16. Have you had any experience when leading creative people and processes?
17. Are creative people, in your experience, easy or difficult to work with?
18. Have you been yourself a member in a creative organization lead by a creative organization?
   If yes, please tell me about the experience?
19. Do you now have a “recipe” for leading creative processes and people? If yes, please share?
20. What are the advantages by being surrounded by creative people?
21. What are the disadvantages by being surrounded by creative people?
22. What qualities do you need to lead creative people?
23. Are you an encouraging leader, facilitating for your followers to become more creative?
24. Would you say that you give your employees different kind of support in their work?
25. Are you a organized person that likes planning or a more relaxed person?
26. Could you enumerate the major differences between leading an organization involved in a creative process such as fashion and industrial organization?