Top Management Commitment to Lean
- The effects of side-bets on the implementation’s success

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Commitments come into being when a person, by making a side-bet, links extraneous interests with a consistent line of activity

Howard Becker, 1960
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We hope that this study will raise the understanding of how to sustain their top manager’s commitment for a more successful implementation.

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Abstract

Problem – Lean is a concept used by organizations to become more efficient, thus more competitive. However, it has been documented that only a small portion of all implementations actually succeeds. Research has suggested critical success factors and pointed out top management commitment as being vital for a successful implementation. It is therefore confirmed that without top managers’ involvement, the venture cannot succeed. However, despite existing research on how to succeed, top managers are still lacking commitment which has caused many implementations to fail.

Purpose – This study aims to use the side-bet theory of Becker (1960) to explore the phenomena to why top managers’ commitment is vacillating during the implementation of Lean. The research question is; Why is top managers’ commitment not consistent to Lean implementation when regarding their side-bets?

Methodology – Data collecting has been qualitative where semi-structured interviews have been executed with five top managers of different organizations. Some have succeeded to implement Lean and some have not. The side-bet theory has been used to create a framework for where the empirical data is constrained to.

Conclusions – Before and during the implementation, top managers are only committed to a successful implementation if they find themselves having enough penalties associated with a failed implementation. Only when they realize that there exists side-bets and penalties of enough magnitude, their commitment will be consistent and the implementation successful. The side-bets which have shown to be decisive to determine a consistent or deviating commitment are the ones belonging to ‘Generalized cultural expectations’ and ‘Impersonal bureaucratic arrangements’. The penalties associated with these side-bets have been of socially form than economically. Furthermore, these side-bets and penalties have shown to arise when top managers and their organization have made it clear that the Lean venture is of highest priority and any sidestep from it is considered as wrong.

Implications – This study has contributed with an understanding of why top manager’s commitment is consistent or deviating during the Lean implementation. Research so far has suggested how top managers’ commitment is deviating and consistent. This study provides the explanation of why. By exploring the answer to why top managers lack commitment, the possibility of ensuring consistent commitment is raised. Referring to Becker (1960) people operates only when they understand why and find value in a certain kind of activity.

Delimitations – The study is only focused on the dimension of continuance commitment. There is a possibility to study other dimensions of commitment in this field of research (i.e. affective and normative commitment). The findings are based on Swedish top managers, thus using the findings outside Sweden should be proceeded with caution since culture has effect on commitment.

Key Words – lean implementation, top management commitment, side-bet theory
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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Every company employs their own strategy in order to become more competitive (Porter, 1990). However, Porter (1990) argues that the basis and character is mostly the same because companies achieve competitiveness towards their competitors through various innovative acts; new technologies, new processes and new ways of doing things. These acts to gain productivity are sometimes not even considered as “new”, ideas which have already been known for some time but just not pursued by others.

To be competitive, there is a need for organizations to use tools and techniques to reduce waste and concentrate on what is giving value (Alaskari et al., 2013). Different methods within the field of efficiency have been developed in order to improve organizational processes and become more competitive (Schweikhart and Dembe, 2009). The concept of Lean belongs in these strategies and it consists of a set of principles, practices and ways to manage and improve processes.

Womack and Jones (2003) explained Lean as a smarter way to use resources, thus becoming more efficient and creating more value for a company. Waste activities are eliminated through various actions and the goal is shortly to be able to produce more value with the same resources. A survey was conducted asking the reason why organizations have chosen to implement Lean, where 70 percent answered that they did it to improve the overall performance (Bhasin and Burcher, 2006). With an improved overall performance, some organizations which have succeeded with Lean have increased their productivity gains up to four times. The major part of these organizations felt that Lean has strengthened their organizations positioning in the competitive market (Bhasin and Burcher, 2006). A survey included in Bhasin and Burcher (2006) has shown that 55 percent of corporate executives have thought Lean as extremely critical to achieve world class status. Another 40 percent meant that this is somewhat critical for their organization to just stay competitive.

But implementing a new or better way in the sense of efficiency is not an easy task as it comes with critics and obstacles (Porter, 1990). Alaskari et al. (2013) argues that implementing Lean can give undesirable results if the implementation is not done correctly, thus having a negative impact on the process. Malihe (2012) mentioned that organizations which have decided to implement the concept of lean can face enormous difficulties. The methods used in Lean can be so difficult that even the people whom know it well might not be able to duplicate it (Emiliani, 1998). Financial resources, workers, time and management can consist of obstacles which a firm must get through in order to benefit from the implementation of Lean (Malihe, 2012).

The studies on critical success factors (CSF) have been adopted widely by organizations which wants to know what is of most importance in order to succeed with Lean (Alaskari et al., 2013). Companies which are considering CSF can prepare themselves in advance for challenges and difficulties associated with the implementation. Despite the fact that there are
Puvanasvaran (2009) mentioned that only a small portion of all Lean implementations actually succeeds. "Only some 10 percent or less of companies succeed at implementing TPM and other lean manufacturing practices" (Puvanasvaran, 2009 p.930).

1.2 Problem Discussion

Tools and techniques used within Lean are rapidly increasing every day (Taleghani, 2010). Alaskari et al. (2013) mentioned that the implementation of Lean and its tools is highly demanded nowadays from both manufacturing and service organizations. However, it seems that most effort to implement these tools and techniques does not provide the desirable results (Taleghani, 2010).

Puvanasvaran (2009) explains the major problem which causes failed implementation of Lean is because of behaviors exhibited by people in the organization, lacking trust and commitment towards this change. Ford (1973) argues that an activity which requires persistence and continuity also requires more commitment from people to perform these activities. It is therefore important to focus on involved individuals behaviors during this change (Bhasin and Burcher, 2006).

Studies within the field of Lean implementation has discussed management commitment as one of the most common factors to decide if Lean implementation will be successful or not (Boyer, 1996; Worley and Doolen, 2006; Achanga et al., 2006; Sim and Rogers, 2009; Boyle et al., 2009; Boyle et al., 2011; Kundu and Manohar, 2012). Alaskari et al. (2013) highlighted in their study which was conducted over hundreds of articles, generalized factors which are critical when implementing Lean. The most common factor found in Alaskari et al. (2013) was top management commitment. If top managers do not dedicate and commit themselves to the implementation of Lean, arising difficulties can lead to a failed implementation (Boyle et al., 2009; Taleghani, 2010).

"...lack of commitment may lead to a host of other issues, including limited access to resources, lengthy decision-making processes, and communication breakdowns.” (Boyle et al., 2009 p.86).

" The conversion process is difficult and if upper management is not on board, it becomes even more difficult” (Taleghani, 2010 p.287)

Boyle et al. (2011) argues that managers are still holding back on the concept of Lean, despite the fact that it has been spread widely with academic acceptance, and positive results from the Lean Enterprise Institute. Even with so many sources existing today to acquire information about Lean (i.e. theory, results and challenges), the managers are still lacking involvement and commitment in the activities to make it successful (Boyle et al., 2011).

A study of top managers and their organizations in US and UK showed that 25 percent of the top managers implementing Lean did it not because they actually wanted it, but because they were forced to do so (Engineering Employers’ Federation, 2001; Bhasin and Burcher, 2006). Another large sample meant that if their organization did not implement Lean, they could not
improve their performance in today’s competitive environment which could give consequences (Bhasin and Burcher, 2006).

Becker (1960) presented the side-bet theory and refers to how people are forced to be committed because of the awareness of penalties associated with not being committed. Regarding the statement where some top managers are forced to being committed to Lean, would mean in the sense Becker (1960) that there exists penalties associated with not being committed to Lean. Furthermore, Becker (1960) explained that these penalties emerge depending on the individual’s past activities. What the individual has engaged with in the past will create different penalties for what might have to be faced one day. These past engaged activities have created what Becker (1960) called the side-bets, thus the side-bet theory. The validity of the side-bet theory has several times been criticized, see appendix A. However, Becker’s theory has been defended from the critics, making the side-bet theory accepted among sociological researchers.

Previous research has presented how organizations and top managers can succeed with Lean (Boyle et al., 2011). However, regarding all the studies that have been done in this area, organizations are still failing to implement Lean due to vacillating commitment from top management. Becker (1960) explains that the reason for having vacillating commitment is because people do not have the in depth understanding of their current and previous actions. If you do not know what you are doing and why you are doing it then you cannot be commitment towards it.

This study aims to use the side-bet theory of Becker (1960) to contribute an explaining the phenomena to why top managers’ commitment is vacillating and lacking during the implementation of Lean. Furthermore, by explaining why commitment is lacking, it also aids people who want to succeed with their Lean venture by raising their awareness of the side-bets and penalties associated with their Lean venture. As Becker (1960) explained, if someone is aware of the existing penalties then they can also avoid them by being more committed to succeed. This study aims to answer the research question: Why is top managers’ commitment not consistent to Lean implementation when regarding their side-bets?

Figure 1.2.1 Approaching the field of study.
1.3 Purpose
This study aims to use the side-bet theory of Becker (1960) to contribute with an explanation of the phenomena to why top managers’ commitment is vacillating, or even lacking during the implementation of Lean.

Why is top managers’ commitment not consistent to Lean implementation when regarding their side-bets?

1.4 Delimitation
This study has used Becker’s side-bet theory and therefore the focused part of commitment included in this study is aimed towards the dimension of continuance commitment. However, we do not contradict that other dimensions of commitment (i.e. Affective and Normative commitment) does not serve an important role in this field of research.
2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework consists of three themes as illustrated below. The side-bets have been presented by Becker (1960) to impact on commitment, and top management commitment has been suggested to impact on the Lean implementation process (Boyer, 1996; Worley and Doolen, 2006; Achanga et al., 2006; Sim and Rogers, 2009; Boyle et al., 2009; Boyle et al., 2011).

![Diagram of Theoretical Framework]

Figure 2.1 Design of Theoretical Framework

2.1 Lean

The concept of Lean started after the Second World War, where the Japanese realized they had to compete with US in a total different way (Singh, Bhim et al., 2010). The Japanese could not afford to compete against facilities like the ones existing in USA and therefore focused more internally on their organization (Singh, Bhim et al., 2010). Schweikhart and Dembe (2009) explained the purpose of Lean as to optimize the production, thus Womack and Jones (2003) explained that this is done by the elimination of waste activities. These waste activities are performed actions which do not contribute with anything of value to the organization and its customer. Singh, Bhim (2010) explained Lean as to reduce waste in human effort, inventory, delivery time and space. Hence, these savings in the organizations should give a higher response to customer demand, increased product quality and make the production line more efficient. Worley (2006 p. 230) stated Lean as; "Systematic removal of waste by all members of the organization from all areas of the value stream".

According to Morgan and liker (2006), the concept of Lean has developed so much that it is now not only used in the manufacturing but has also been adapted by other industries. This is possible due to that waste activities have many different forms and can exist anywhere (Singh, Bhim et al., 2010). However, just starting to eliminate waste activities can be rather difficult if an organization does not know where to start. Therefore, Womack and Jones (2003) presented five principles behind Lean which must of all time be considered in organizations which are striving to eliminate waste activities. Furthermore, Womack and Jones (2003) argues that four of them are continuously working together to form the fifth one, see figure 1.2.1.
Ivarsson et al. (2013) discussed that many organizations today does not fully understand the true meaning behind Lean and this is a common problem which leads to a failed implementation. Ivarsson et al. (2013) suggests that managers are commonly mistaken Lean as venture only belonging to the operative line, thus does not need the management to interact with. Hence, Petersson (2010) argues that the management has the key task to study the concept of Lean and further on share it among the organization with continuous interaction and evaluation of the development.

Similar to Petersson (2010), Ahrens (2006) argues that Lean is a management philosophy. Ahrens (2006) meant that managers which have tried to use Lean within their organization has done it with the image that the tools can be applied at any time with less difficulties. Ahrens (2006) therefore argues that if an organization is considering using Lean, the organization must first understand that this is a philosophy with principles and not tool to be used only at the operational line.

Petersson (2010) meant that Lean is not a concept fitting short term goals. Rather Petersson (2010) argues that to be able to use Lean, an organization should be aware that this can be a long term venture which will take years before showing desirable results. Implementing Lean can therefore be quite costly in the beginning (Achanga et al., 2006).

With existing suggestions on to how to succeed with Lean, the studies of CSFs have arisen to provide support for managers and organizations to implement Lean (Boyle et al., 2009; Kundu and Manohar, 2012).

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1 For further reading about the Lean principles, see Womack and Jones (2003) Lean thinking
2.1.1 Critical Success Factors

There are many studies on CSFs for Lean implementation with a wide range of results. Researchers have defined success as following (Alaskari et al., 2013 p. 1):

“The limited number of arrears in which results, if they are satisfactory, will ensure successful competitive performance for the organization”

Lean implementation is a complex process where several critical success factors have been recognized (Kundu and Manohar, 2012). The implementation is considered complex because it is an application of systematic techniques, methods and principles, therefore it is not just about applying a set of tools. Alaskari et al. (2013) argues that Lean implementation requires considerable investment in both time and money, where several CSFs must be considered at all time. Determining and working with the previous researched-found CSFs for Lean implementation is a valuable step towards a more successful implementation (Alaskari et al., 2013).

The studies of CSFs is considered important because it is promoting knowledge and increases the understanding of which factors are critical to consider when implementing Lean (Alaskari et al., 2013; Kundu and Manohar, 2012). Managers can formulate more fitting strategies depending on these CSFs which in turn will result in increased overall success rate (Alaskari et al., 2013).

Kundu and Manohar (2012) mentioned in their study of Lean implementation several CSFs in public service. Two of these were active leadership and commitment. Furthermore, they also proposed several CSFs for IT-support industries as management leadership, support and top management commitment. Achanga et al. (2006) studied CSFs focused on small and medium firms, and the findings were of four categories with similarities to Kundu and Manohar (2012). These were; leadership, management, finances organizational culture and skills and expertise.

Alaskari et al., (2013) provided a comprehensive and summarized literature review, studying over hundreds of articles for CSFs of Lean implementation. The findings were of total 83 CSFs but the authors generalized them into 18 different categories because many CSFs were similar to each other, only differentiating by name. Top management commitment was most common followed by change in organizational culture, effective leadership and effective communication.
Boyle et al., (2009) compared two different Lean implementations within a leading European manufacturing firm where one was considered failure and the following successful. The difference between these two ventures was the top management commitment.

"Top management commitment is a must. The employees must see that management is interested in the changes. Without the commitment, employees will not see the necessity to spend even one minute thinking about the project” (Boyle et al., 2009 p. 85).

Bhasin and Burcher (2006) argue that a big part of Lean is about how managers can change the current culture of the organization and there should exist a clear strategy and vision to face this change. Therefore, it takes considerable time and requires long term commitment (Bhasin and Burcher, 2006). But this long-term commitment is rather hard to keep (Boyle et al., 2009).
2.2 Commitment

Trying to define commitment can many times be problematic (Becker, 1960; Kanter, 1968; Ford, 1973; Meyer and Allen, 1991; Calhoun, 2009; Carter, 2012). The reason can be that commitment has been widely used whenever it was felt to be needed without any further explanation of the true meaning behind it (Becker, 1960). Commitment has a complex nature and is difficult to study even within the field of social science (Becker, 1960; Stebbins, 1969; Carter, 2012). The usage of commitment occurs in many situations, but it is typically used when there are lack of explanations to define why an individual is deviating from a given course without clear motives to do so (Ford, 1973).

According to Kanter (1968) commitment refers to the willingness of individuals to give their time and effort to social systems where it can be seen as self-expressive. Calhoun (2009) explains commitment as intention to use time and energy towards a purpose. Meyer and Allen (1991) meant that commitment can be explained when it binds an individual’s actions towards a direction, which Becker (1960) also called ‘Consistent behavior’ or ‘Consistent line of activity’.

2.2.1 Commitment in three Dimensions


Meyer and Allen (1991) explained that affective commitment is the affective connection to the organization, continuance commitment as penalties when leaving an organization and normative commitment as moral obligation to fulfill in the organization. Linking the three dimensions of commitment together in the stage of turnover, Meyer and Allen (1991) suggests that the difference between the three dimensions of commitment is in the state of mind.

![Figure 2.2.1 Three dimensions of commitment.](image-url)
Mayer and Schoorman (1992) argues that high affective commitment is related to a person’s willingness to produce, while high continuance commitment is related to the desire to participate or stay at a current position. These dimensions are closely related to each other and can be hard to distinguish but it is necessary to know the difference if one is to study the concept of commitment (Wallace, 1997). Furthermore, Wallace argues that many researchers have not considered the different dimensions in their study, thus giving non correlating results.

2.2.1.1 Affective Commitment
Stebbins (1969) argues that affective commitment can be defined as a frame of mind that is created by rewards from a certain position of social identity, in which a person finds a need for. These rewards are subjectively defined and depend on the individual, what he or she wishes to gain by operating. People who have shown to have high value commitment are more willing to perform in order to reach a purpose which they care for (Mayer and Schoorman, 1992).

A question which can explain value commitment was presented by Stebbins (1969 p. 527): “what attracts the person to a given position?”

2.2.1.2 Normative Commitment
Normative commitment is associated with a sense of responsibility to continue employment with a specific organization and specific role (Meyer and Allen, 1997). The internalized normative behavior against responsibility and commitment allows employees’ feel more appreciated to continue membership of a specific organization (Meyer and Allen, 1991). The normative element is described as is part of commitment where individuals think morally regarding for their rights to be remaining in the organization (March and Mannari, 1977).

2.2.1.3 Continuance Commitment
Stebbins (1969) argues that continuance commitment is a psychological state that is different from value commitment because it does not arises from the presence of rewards. Rather, it arises from the presence of penalties which are associated with leaving a certain position. Stebbins (1969) argues that it can basically be explained as what is preventing a person to change from one position to another.

According to Mayer and Schoorman (1992), continuance commitment has shown to affect individuals’ intention to keep the current position and stay as a part of a project or organization. People have the awareness of the economic consequences associated when leaving a position or organization (Meyer and Allen, 1997).

Stebbins (1969 p. 527) defined continuance commitment as "the awareness of the impossibility of choosing a different social identity . . . because of the imminence of penalties involved in making the switch".
2.3 Side-bet Theory as Continuance Commitment

According to Powell and Meyer (2004), there is a study that has been very important in the field of commitment. Powell and Meyer (2004) regard Howard Becker as the pioneer in his seminal paper ‘Notes on the Concept of Commitment, 1960’.

Becker (1960) presented his theory of side-bet as a theoretical tool for explaining that a line of activity a person is engaged in is often the results from prior activities which have created side-bets. Many times these side-bets can be extraneous from the line of activity a person is currently engaged, making it hard to distinguish them from each other (Becker, 1960).

The theory of side-bet goes well with the dimension of continuance commitment, and it refers to anything that is of importance and could be lost if a person changes the current position to engage in another (Stebbins, 1969, Wallace, 1997; Meyer and Allen, 1984; Meyer and Allen, 1990). These important things are time, effort and money which a person has invested in the current position. However, Becker (1960) discussed that it could also be more than one side-bet affecting a consistent line of activity. In terms of multiple side-bets, Meyer and Allen (1984) argues that if the multiple side-bets are related in terms of value, the continuance commitment becomes more consistent.

Becker (1960) explained the side-bets as social mechanism which by operation creates penalties (i.e. losing investments), thus forcing a person's commitment into a certain line of activity. Wallace (1997) explained when a person changes a current line of activity, there might exists some penalties for this person. If the benefits of the new change cannot cover the penalties associated with leaving the old one, the person is more likely to stay the way they are.

However, there are many kind of side-bets but a certain line of activity can only be affected by the side-bets which are conventionally valued in that activity (Becker, 1960). An economically side-bets with its penalties for example would only a effect a person's commitment where money has a value, thus does not affect other kinds of commitments towards other line of activities.

Becker (1960 p. 35) exemplified how continuance commitment is achieved by side-bets;

"Suppose that you are bargaining to buy a house; you offer sixteen thousand dollars, but the seller insists on twenty thousand. Now suppose that you offer your antagonist in the bargaining certified proof that you have bet a third party five thousand dollars that you will not pay more than sixteen thousand dollars for the house. Your opponent must admit defeat because you would lose money by raising your bid; you have committed yourself to pay no more than you originally offered".

The example shows how commitment is achieved by an economical side-bet. The buyer staked something valuable in a prior activity which has clearly affected the buyer's consistent line of activity towards buying this house. The buyer of the house involved other interests which are extraneous from the action he right now is engaged in. If his line of activity would be considered to be truly committed (i.e. consistent) towards buying this house, the prior
made side-bet should not have existed in first place, or having an impact on the current situation. It has affected his current behavior and now it is too expensive, thus buying this house is no longer a feasible alternative. The buyer has no longer a desire, thus is not committed to buying the house for the original price because of the side-bet and its penalty (i.e. loss in money).

### 2.3.1 Five categories of Side-bets

Many times, a person's commitment is determined in different ways without them being aware of it (Becker, 1960). This goes on until they will face a critical situation to make an important decision, realizing that some side-bets have been pre-made for them. What Becker suggests is that a person can find that the involvement in something has in different ways already made side-bets and determined his or her future activity. Becker (1960) concluded that there are different side-bets belonging in different categories. Furthermore, Becker argues they can be closely related making it difficult to distinguishing those from each other. Powell and Meyer (2004) tested these categories of side-bets in their study of organizational commitment and their results showed support for Becker’s categories.

**Generalized Cultural expectations** were explained by Becker (1960) as cultural rules which are pre-set and which a person adapts after. Cultural expectation as an external force can constrain a person’s act towards a certain line of activity, thus affecting his consistent behavior (Becker, 1960). Furthermore, Becker discussed that sometimes people who change their mind too often can be considered by other to be untrustworthy and erratic. There might not exist a rule saying that a person cannot change his mind, but because others expect him to follow a certain direction, he does not want others to think badly of him and thus he is
constrained towards a line of activity. Powell and Meyer (2004) exemplified this as how many hours a person must stay at work or how much is appropriate to work without getting on bad terms with others. This is also a form of how an individual is willing to contribute to its company and to what extent he is being expected to be loyal to the company and their work (Griffin and Hepburn, 2005).

*Impersonal bureaucratic arrangements* were explained by Becker (1960) as pre-made side-bets for a person by the operation of impersonal bureaucratic arrangements. These are rules and regulations which already exist within an organization and which a person must adapt according to. Powell and Meyer (2004) explained this category as policies and organization creates in order to encourage long-term employment. These side-bets are therefore many times to bind the employees in an organization, forcing them into the direction to benefit the organization. If this employee would deviate from this direction, he or she would suffer in forms of social or economical penalties (Griffin and Hepburn, 2005).

*Individual adjustment to social positions* is about how people adjust themselves to a position or line of activity. Becker (1960) explained this as getting used to something and making it a part of a repeated line of activity which prevents future change, even if this future change means an improvement from the current position, some people does not want to take this risk of losing what they have now. Powell and Meyer (2004) discussed that people who have gotten used to a line of activity will become less attracted to invest time and money in new projects, skills and change.

*Self-presentation concerns or face-face interaction* occurs when a person attempts to present a consistent public image that requires a different behavior in a particular fashion (Powell and Meyer, 2004). Becker (1960) explained this as living up to an expected image and is many times occurring at early stage at introducing oneself to another. When someone has once claimed to be of a certain kind of person, this person does not want to be caught lying and therefore does things necessary to live up to that image.

*Non-work concerns* are referred to the side-bets which are made outside the organization (Powell and Meyer, 2004). Furthermore, Powell and Meyer (2004) exemplified this by explaining that an employee which is establishing roots in a community can risk to be disrupted if this employee decides to leave the organization he or she is working for and would need to search for employment at another location.
3 Methodology

The research question has worked as a guide when choosing between the different methods suitable for this study; *Why is top managers’ commitment not consistent to Lean implementation when regarding their side-bets?*

To study how side-bets have impacted on commitment which in turns impact on the Lean implementation process, it is necessary to know the results of the Lean venture. The methods chosen must therefore be based on the fact that the Lean venture must have shown clear results, successful or not. Furthermore, since the side-bets are most of the times personal, the empirical data should be based only on top managers themselves.

The literatures were found in: ISI web of Science, Emeraldinsight, Sociological abstracts, Ebscohost, Google scholar and Summon (Halmstad University). Keywords used were: lean, lean implementation, lean philosophy, lean critical success factors, lean top management commitment, commitment, side-bet theory, continuance commitment.

Boyle et al. (2009) which was found on Google Scholar, explained two different Lean ventures where top management commitment was decisive. Boyle et al. (2009) provided detailed information of what difficulties and how these came into being throughout two Lean ventures. It raises the understanding of the importance of top management commitment when implementing Lean.

Becker (1960) which was found through searching on ‘Sociological Abstract and Google Scholar’ provides explanations and hints to the concept of commitment, focused on the dimension where people operates because of the awareness of penalties. Just as top managers and organizations operate because they want to be competitive, if they are not, the penalty would be an endangered position in the market.

3.1 Research approach

The main variables and themes were found through existing literature which could be used to create a frame to constrain the upcoming empirical data inside this frame. This study has used the five categories of side-bets for where the empirical data would belong inside. Ejvegard (1993) suggest this method because it will be easier to analyze and categorize the data later on. However, Ejvegard (1993) argues that the expectations and categories should be based on previous valid research.

This study has also used existing literature to formulate the research question and objectives. Enough was therefore already known in the field of study to have a frame and several expectations, but not enough was known to make a quantitative study and explain why commitment is deviating. Therefore, the qualitative study was chosen in order to gain more and in depth information which could explain a phenomena existing in previous research.
3.2 Research strategy

3.2.1 Qualitative study
Bryman and Bell (2007) mentioned two different ways to approach the empirical data. The first one was through a qualitative study and the second quantitative. Jacobsen (2002) explained the qualitative as more in depth with the possibility to generate new data. Saunders et al. (2009) suggests that a qualitative method is preferable in situations to reveal an understanding of ‘what’, ‘how’ and ‘why’.

The following statement is adopted from Saunders et al. (2009 p. 324); ‘When it is necessary for you to understand the reasons for the decisions that your research participants have taken, or to understand the reasons for their attitudes and opinions, you are likely to need to conduct a qualitative interview’

As this study aims to generate knowledge for understanding why top management commitment can vacillate, the statement above has been an encouragement for choosing the qualitative method.

3.2.2 Selection of organizations
Previous research has defined top management to be the most critical success factor and does not only apply to the production industry. Rather, Alaskari et al (2013) suggests that it is like that in general to all firms.

With top management commitment as being generalized to apply for all organizations, the selections of the organizations were allowed to range from each other and did not have to be of similar type and background. Some organizations have successfully implemented Lean and achieved improved efficiency when others have not. The latter have experienced different hardships where many of those are direct results of how the top managers have been committed during the implementation.

The first criteria for the participating organizations are based on location. Only Swedish firms have participated, with the solely purpose to not mix different national cultures with each other. Becker (1960) argues that culture is one of the factors to differentiate people from each other, thus people with similar culture have more similar values and “penalties”. Therefore, all organizations are Swedish.

The second criteria for the participating organizations are the work with Lean implementation. All organizations had to have personally experienced the implementation of Lean, and the results did not matter. In fact, different results would even be an advantage with the purpose of this study as it could be related to the variation of consistency of commitment.

3.3 Organization selected
The selected organizations were of different types and background. The criteria to determine where they belong to are explained below. Table 3.3.1 illustrates a list of the organizations.
3.3.1 Organization/Participator
The reasoning to why the organizations and participants are anonymous is because this study is rather personal, studying an individual's side-bets made in life. It can therefore be considered to be too private to share in a public publication. By having all the interviewee’s and their firms anonymous will give a possibility to use sensitive information which might not be possible if they could be connected back to the participant, thus also risking their social position if sensitive information is presented with their name.

3.3.2 Top Manager
Regarding Mintzberg's (1993) definition of who can be considered as a top manager, all participants fit in this category even though they have a different job titles.

The criteria to be considered as a top manager was that their concerns are global in the organization and with the responsibility for: “... ensuring that the organization serve its missions in an effective way, and also that it serve the needs of those who control or otherwise have power over the organization (i.e. owners, government agencies, unions of employees, pressure groups)” (Mintzberg, 1993 p. 13)

3.3.3 Size
Based on the criteria’s from European Commission (2003).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Turnover</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Employees &lt; 250, Turnover ≤ € 50 m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Employees &lt; 50, Turnover ≤ € 10 m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micro</td>
<td>Employees &lt; 10, Turnover ≤ € 20 m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3.4 Stage
In this study, there are two stages of Lean implementation to be considered and they are ‘successful’ and ‘not successful’. The definition to successful is adopted from the theoretical framework as “The limited number of arrears in which results, if they are satisfactory, will ensure successful competitive performance for the organization”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Participator</th>
<th>Top Manager</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delta</td>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Production</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epsilon</td>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Production</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theta</td>
<td>Production Manager</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Production</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi</td>
<td>Production Manager</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Production</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Not successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpha</td>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Production</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Not successful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table. 3.3.1 List of organizations
3.4 Data collection

The information about the participants and their work with Lean was based on semi structured interviews as primary data. According to Jacobsen (2002) primary data is the most trustworthy type of data. The primary data was collected between the periods of 21/02/2014 to 5/05/2014.

However, some minor and complemented information was collected at organizations website as secondary data. These secondary data were mainly used for further groupings of the organizations.

3.4.1 Semi structured interviews

The semi structured interviews had the aim to guide the interviewees into the field of commitment and followed up by discussions depending on their response. Saunders et al. (2009) explains that it will generate richer and more detailed data. The discussions with the interviewees were mainly to let the interviewees reflect over what they have done in the past which affected their commitment during the implementation of Lean. This is according to what Saunders et al. (2009) meant when they explained that the interviewees can “think aloud” about things which they might have not thought of before. Jacobsen (2002) argues that this method also makes it easier for the interviewee to answer in their own terms because the discussions would increase the understanding of the purpose.

However, Saunders et al. (2009) discussed that there can be problems associated with this kind of structure. Saunders et al. (2009) meant that there is a possibility for the interviewer to create bias and not being neutral when asking questions, thus affecting the interviewee’s response. Furthermore, there is also a risk where the interviewee does not wish to reveal information which can be considered as ”sensitive”, which Saunders meant will make the interviewee put him/herself into a more socially desirable role and only provide a partial picture. This can therefore lower the reliability and validity of the data.

To ensure that the collected data keeps a high validity and reliability, the purpose, questions and everything of major importance regarding this study were carefully explained more than once.

- **Firstly**, the participants’ received the first contact by mail and were asked to participate in a study concerning Lean. The date for the interview would be set later on when more was known.
- **Secondly**, the participants were informed about any major changes which would impact on the interview and they were free at any time to turn down the participation. In other words, contact was ensured at all time through mail and telephone. The date for the interview was set around 1 - 2 months in advance and could be changed at any time until 1month left of the deadline for this study.
- **Thirdly**, a brief explanation of the topic together with the interview guide were sent in advance, giving the respondent more time to think it over and prepare.

Before starting the interview, the purpose of the study was once again discussed. Ejvegard (1993) suggests that being very clear can be help raise the possibility for better cooperation
with the interviewee. It was explained that this would be a neutral study and only used in the field of research, and that sensitive information was not to be connected back to anyone. All participants were promised to be anonymous and all detailed information was to belong within intervals. “To make sure that the interviewee opens up and make sure this person says all he or she knows, you can ensure this person that the data will be confidential” (Ejvegard, 1993 p. 48)

All interviews were recorded to make sure that no details were forgotten during the discussions. The interviews were transcribed and sent back to the interviewees’ for correction before starting to analyze it.

3.4.2 Designing the items
Powell and Meyer (2004) studied commitment within an organization studying why an employee is committed to stay at a certain organization. Their study showed positive results with Becker’s five categories of side-bets and with this reason; items were been borrowed from that study and modified to benefit the purpose of this study. However, Powell and Meyer’s (2004) items were from a quantitative study for employees and their items aimed to answer the question of: How responsible is each of the following for the fact that you are continuing to work for your current employer.

The borrowed items had therefore undergone a modification to fit a qualitative study and open up discussions. The modified items were aimed to give an answer of why top managers’ commitment is not consistent during Lean implementation, depending on side-bets. The guiding question which was used to modify the items was: How responsible is each of the categories of side-bets, for the fact that this person is continuing with Lean implementation?

3.5 Analyzing the data
The analysis of the data has gone through both deductive and inductive approaches. Saunders et al. (2009) presented three ways to analyze qualitative data. These were;

1. Summarizing of meanings
2. Categorization of meanings
3. Structuring of meanings using narrative

These three ways to analyze depends on what kind of approach has been used during the study. They are different from each other where one can be more deductive and formalized, such as categorization of meanings. Structuring of meanings using narrative on the other hand is more inductive where the researcher’s own interpretation is used to analyze.

A framework for categorization has been made (i.e. five categories of side-bets) in advance and the empirical data was expected to belong in these. However, since Becker (1960) meant that the categories of side-bets can be hard to distinguish, the analysis of data has been a mix between categorization of meanings and structuring of meanings using narrative.

Therefore, the data was also depending on the researcher’s own interpretation to be able to distinguish and categorize the data. Another reason for using a mixed analyzed technique is
because the interviews were semi structured and the data was therefore not following an exact order or structure, and had to be relied on the researcher’s own interpretation.

Figure 3.5.1 The process of analysis

3.6 Validity and Reliability

Ejvegard (1993) suggests that it is important to ensure the validity of the research (i.e. does the study’s purpose focus on the right thing). Top managers had in earlier research stated that Lean is a concept for achieving efficiency and competitiveness. If it is not implemented, there can therefore be difficulties in the competitive market. There exist therefore penalties if Lean is not implemented which in turns of this brings us to the dimension of continuance commitment. The validity of this research has therefore been strengthened by explaining the relations between the existing research and literatures.

Elgmork and Norborg (1985) argue that as long a theory is showing correlations with observations, it is considered valid. The side-bet theory which is used can therefore be considered as still valid because it has been well defended against critical attacks. An example is the critics received from Ritzer and Trice (1969) where their observation did not show correlations with Becker’s theory. In turns of this, Stebbins (1969) defended Becker and explained that Ritzer and Trice had mixed up different dimensions of commitment when testing the side-bet theory.

The empirical data has gone through different processes to ensure its reliability. The data was transcribed through voice recording from the interview and was later on sent back to the interviewee for correction. The data has therefore been corrected before going through the analysis. Furthermore, the empirical data has been collected through interviews with at most two people from each organization and all on the management level. The data can therefore be argued to be subjective because of its limitation of people from each organization and because of the only perspective of the top manager. However, this perspective was necessary because side-bets are most of the times personal. Collecting personal data about a top manager from someone else might therefore not reflect the truth of top managers’ side-bets.
4 Empirical data

This chapter will describe the different organizations’ Lean ventures. All information is primary data collected from top managers’ discussions during the interviews. This information has also been corrected by the top managers. Furthermore, detailed information is purposefully audited in order to preserve anonymity.

The organizations are divided into three different groups where similar organizations are grouped together.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Delta</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Epsilon</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theta</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Chi</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Not successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alpha</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Not successful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 Groupings of the organizations

The interviewees will further on be referred as the organizations name (i.e. top manager for organization Alpha will be referred to as Alpha.

4.1 Organization Alpha

Alpha explained that the Lean venture has been ongoing for around to 1-5 years, where it was the shareholders who were the promotors. With earlier successful work with Lean, the employment was for therefore solely purpose to implement Lean and make the organization more efficiency, Alpha said.

Learning more about Lean from conferences, even after the previous successful implementation was of great important, Alpha said. However, sitting at home and doing self studies was not something Alpha appreciated as it was referred to as “too boring”. Alpha had own personal goals to fulfill and these were that Alpha is a person enjoying improvement changes even though Alpha described oneself as not being a problem solver. When people understand Lean, they can learn to be more efficient, solve own problems and thus also decrease their workload, Alpha said.

Alpha had been entrusted a high position in the organization to implement Lean. Furthermore the position was explained to be strengthened and more sustained if Lean succeeded, Alpha said. Throughout the implementation, Alpha described the implementation of Lean to only consist of a small amount of expectations to be fulfilled. The shareholders, who expected the organization to turn Lean, had shown to be more interested in positive financially performance rather than Lean, Alpha said. From the employees view, Alpha stated “If there were any from employees, then maybe to come up with some improvements”.

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Furthermore, Alpha revealed that the Lean venture was rather confidential from the public and also the customers. “We do not go out in public that we started with Lean because then it would cause a lot of price discussions”.

Alpha described the Lean venture of being of very low priority in the organization and they had no clear plan, timeframe, rules or policies which were needed to be followed. “We had meetings in the morning but it was not like the top manager had to be involved”. The arrangement which they did have was mandatory meeting to discuss Lean but these were however not followed to the extent it was expected to “We can work with Lean one day but suddenly the next day something else might be more important”.

The Lean venture was therefore something that might bring extra dividends to the shareholders but the number of side-bets to succeed with Lean was not very high. Alpha explained that if the organization would be in a situation where Lean would be the decisive solution for the organizations survival then it would have a higher rate of success. Because of the low priority in the organization, the penalties associated with a failed implementation were not of very high magnitude, Alpha explained.

Alpha described the private life as being much separated from work, thus they do not impact on each other.

4.2 Organization Chi

Chi explained that the Lean venture has been ongoing for around 5-10 years, where it was the owner who was the promoter. Chi had earlier positive reputations in the organization for being good with improvement changing processes, Chi said. It was important to learn about Lean and this was done by combining previous knowledge with, self studies, Lean consultants and learning from other partner organizations, Chi said. Chi’s personal goals were to be a knowledgeable manager and not be satisfied with the current but instead aim at continuous improvements and Lean had the same vision as Chi has, chi explained.

Chi, together with another colleague was the ones responsible for the implementation process. But Chi explained that there was no plan, time frame or concrete results to be achieved within any time period. “It was more like a small pilot project”. With a low priority in the organization, expectations decreased not long after the start of the implementation as people ran out of stamina to continue with this venture, Chi explained. But a clear plan was something that Chi would have wanted “If we had a timeframe which forced us to follow it and be involved then I believe that we might have been positively influenced and not prolonged the Lean venture”, Chi said.

The results of the implementation varied sometimes, positive and negative. Because there were so many fluctuations, the desire to implement Lean decreased, Chi said. The Lean venture started to lose even more priority and the value for the Lean venture quickly decreased and was explained as “It was not right ranked in any way”. After half a year there was no desire to continue this anymore and one of the top managers even quit the position, Chi said. However, the other top manager quitting the position had really nothing to do with the Lean implementation not succeeding as they did not have any clear reward or punishment
system associated with the Lean venture. “Our positions in the organization would not be changed unless we drive down the ditch”, Chi stated.

The penalties with not succeeding fully with Lean was therefore of small magnitude. Chi explained that they are doing well today with only small parts of Lean used in the organization. “The things you knew in the beginning have been strengthen as you know when you are doing right”. Chi therefore explains that the organization has worked on strengthening the existing working culture with the help of some principles in Lean. It has helped them with their competitiveness, even if Chi described that the overall Lean venture is not successful. “With increased demand on efficiency and quality, it was not possible to do it the old way. If we had not done this then I do not believe that we would have difficulties existing today”.

Chi suggests that people should not try to be fully Lean because implementing the whole concept in the organization is a difficult task. Instead, only parts of it should be used “I am passionate about some parts of Lean but not the whole concept because it is so large”. With the small improvements they have made with Lean, people’s view on Chi has become more positive.

Except from some close suppliers and customers, it was not known or expected by anyone else outside the organization that they were trying to succeed with Lean implementation.

Furthermore, Chi explained that the work can many times impact on what you do in your spare time because everything is linked. It can cause you stress which in turns influence on your well-being and how you behave against others. But Chi was not known if the Lean venture would impact because it was so small in the organization.

4.3 Organization Delta
Delta explained that the Lean venture has been ongoing for around 5-10 years, where it was the owner who was the promoters. With earlier successful work with Lean, the employment was for therefore with the purpose to implement Lean and make the organization more efficient.

Delta learned about Lean through a lot of different sources, Delta said. These were through seminars, studying at home and also by other organizations which had succeeded with Lean. This has created a certain image which Delta appreciated to have, both on oneself but also by others. Delta was therefore considered of being very knowledgeable about Lean, good at finding solutions for continuous improvements “I enjoy changing processes and make sure that positive things occur. It is a prestige-thing to be able to solve the problem by self without external help”.

Delta described the current environment in the organization as being very messy where it affected the deliveries to the customers. Delta explained that efficiency and competitiveness was of major importance to why they valued the Lean venture. The organizations had to improve their internal efficiency, keep better order, and satisfy the raising demands from customers. If a change was not to occur, the organization would have a difficult time keeping
the customers, Delta explained. Delta suggested to the owner that the Lean venture would take three years to implement and by then, results were ensured to be noticed “If you are working well then 3 years should be a good time to aim for”. Delta described the successful venture as depending on Delta’s clear constrained time frame but also the plan for the implementation. The plan ensured that changes to Lean were really occurring “When we started out the project, we had decided that there should be meetings every morning and none should be absent”.

Delta took on a position and authority as a high manager and could make any changes as long as Delta was sure this would be an improvement, ”Having the authority to decide, change and do as you please”. The expectations from the owner have been high throughout the implementation and are still high today. But it was not only expectations from the owner. Employees, customers and even external interested people had expectations on Delta to succeed with Lean which has motivated Delta to continue with the work “this has strengthened the implementation”, Delta also stated.

If the internal expectations from both the owner and the employees would not be fulfilled, it would be difficult for Delta to keep the position in the management. Externally, customers had a strong influence demanding that Delta and the organization would fulfill their expectations on good deliveries and right quality. “If I did not do well on the tasks I was expected to do then I might not have been here today”.

As a new person joining an organizations, Delta had to work hard already from the beginning to prove, not only towards oneself but also others in the organization that Delta deserves the position “I came as a new person into this organization and proved that I do not only speak Lean, but also proved that it works. I therefore hoped that their view on me has become more positive”. Delta explained that the organization and also Delta’s own position is today stronger than it was back in the days before Lean. The crisis for example during the years of 2008/2009 could have been very problematic if the changes to Lean were not ensured “the company’s position would have been much worse”.

However, family was not included in these people as Delta’s family was not interested in Delta’s work. Delta explained that it is good to try separate work from the private life so you can relax. However, Delta suggests that everything is connected and if there were difficulties during the Lean implementation it also raised the possibility to negatively influence on your private life. Stress for example was common if you did not manage to do your task well. With stress it also raises the possibility to affect other things in your private life as you do not have the energy and motivation to continue other activities “You might skip some training if you are too stressed”.

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4.4 Organization Epsilon

Epsilon explained that the Lean venture has been ongoing for around 15-20 years, where it was the shareholders who were the promoters. With increasing workload, competitive and demand from both customer and suppliers, Epsilon described the organizations as rather tense. “With increased orders and work load, we had to be able to handle it. The organization expected me to be involved to improve the productivity and also reduce the stock”. The traditional way of working was not an option and they had to rely on a new working culture. “If we did not do this, the new would have much more difficulties to face competitors and financial crises, especially during 2006-2008”. Competitiveness through better processes and improved customer satisfaction was therefore important to focus on.

Epsilon had a background with similarities to Lean and throughout the implementation Epsilon is continuously learning more about it. Conferences, studying at home, consultant but also networking with other organizations have been of great help, Epsilon says. Epsilon’s self-fulfillment as deep down being a typical engineer and always looking for solving, improving and knowledgeable about the tasks was something that has encouraged Epsilon with the work. It is important to have personal goals to strive for, Epsilon says. “I have spent a lot of time to learn how to be Lean and achieve what we have today”.

Throughout the implementation, Epsilon had a lot of expectations from both the shareholders, employees but also externally as students and journalists. The Lean implementation was therefore rather well-known both internally and externally, Epsilon said. Epsilon together with other managers created a plan, timeframe, rules, rewards but also penalties for the Lean venture. Every manager, including top managers had goals which they needed to fulfill to keep their position and none were an exception because to succeed with Lean was of most importance in the organization. “The top management have meetings whenever it is needed, but a must is once every third month”. If the top manager was to ignore these meetings then Epsilon explained it as the whole Lean venture would go negative “everything would fall into pieces”. Furthermore, if the performance from the top and middle managers would not be as desired, it could lead to an evaluation period with the worst case as losing your position “It can lead to the situation where you will not stay as a manager or leader if you do not fulfill these expectations”.

Having clear instructions on what be done has been a good way to work, Epsilon explains. A clear direction and making sure that sidesteps from it is not appreciated in the organization, by anyone is something that has made the organization so successful today, Epsilon says. “This is a good way to work because it is clear on what has to be done. If someone does not agree on this way of working, it might also be hard to keep their position in the organization”.

The successfulness of the implementation of Lean has lead to a stronger position for Epsilon because people appreciated the change “many people have the image that I have done something good for the organization”.

Epsilon explained that difficulties or even a failed implementation impacts a lot on your private life. Stress from work is very common and it impacts on what you do on your spare
time “Increased absence from both the management and employee is possible if this happens and therefore must be avoided”. To succeed is therefore important because it also affects how happy you can be when you are with your family.

4.5 Organization Theta
Theta explained that the Lean venture has been ongoing for around 10-15 years, where it was the top management together with the shareholders to promote it. Earlier attempts to implement more efficient processes had not succeeded well due to lack of top management involvement. However, this time the organization was explained to really need it because of the continuously growth of competitors “We want to be competitive and have satisfied customers”. The Lean venture were therefore of highest priority and people who did not agree to the change had a hard time staying at their current position, managers as employees “Improvements are important for everyone to feel good and at the same time be more competitive”.

Theta had earlier experience with tasks similar to Lean. Seminars, self-studies and networking before and also during the implementation have been a great source of knowledge and motivation, Theta said. With education it is positive in the way that it opens up yourself and lets you have view and see things differently to solve difficulties which occurs when implementing Lean “If you know more, then you can do more”, Theta also stated.

The expectations for Theta to succeed with Lean have been high throughout the whole implementation process, mostly internally from the shareholders and employees. Knowing what to do, when to do it and how to do it was something that Theta had to ensure to have an answer on. This was necessary to keep the image, trust and effectiveness in the organization by showing good leadership, Theta said. Theta explained that as a leader, you expect of yourself to make your own demands and fulfill them. Theta was not a person with burning passion to the work with Lean, but Lean was more of a way to fulfill Theta’s own personal demand for improvement changes.

The external expectations were from close suppliers and customers who demanded Theta’s organization to be more efficient. There existed a certain time frame which was expected to be followed and within that time, results with Lean were needed to be noticeable. However, Theta explained as Theta’s family to not expect anything from the Lean implementation as work was separated from private life.

Theta, together with other managers made a clear plan consisting of tasks, rules and regulations based on the principles of Lean to ensure that the right changes were to occur. Mandatory meeting in the morning was for example very appreciated “The successful venture we had here is because top management made sure that everyone in the organization, including themselves must be involved “.

Theta explained that if the work with Lean did not show enough good results it might sometime require both the employees and the managers to stay at work overtime. This can impact on what you are doing in your spare time and therefore to work overtime is not always
appreciated. “This is something that you want to avoid and instead do well the first time”. Theta practice sports on the spare time and this can be very affected if there were difficulties with the Lean implementation. Furthermore, if the implementation were to fail, not only the top managers would risk their own position but also employees’ position would be endangered.

During the start of the implementation, Theta explained that there was another top manager which did not think much of the implementation. The expectations, rules and other obligations to fulfill with the Lean venture were not fulfilled and this person is no longer a part of the organization.
5 Analysis

This part is focused on finding patterns between the side-bets from the interviews and their Lean implementation processes. Some top managers have succeeded better than other and the side-bet theory will be used to help explain why they have different outcomes. The successful ones are in group 1 and 2. Top managers in group 3 have not succeeded.

What can be distinguished in the following pages is not side-bets between organizations different in size, service, production or ownership. The clear difference is between the successful and the non-successful. However, this is easiest to see in the categories of *generalized cultural expectation* and *impersonal bureaucratic arrangements*. In the other three categories, the side-bets have been rather spread between the top managers.

Some categories have more side-bets than others. What is important to remember is that the interviews were semi structured and the aim was to have discussions with the interviewees. Only side-bets which the interviewees brought up are therefore included in the tables.

As Becker (1960) stated, the more side-bets the higher is the commitment. However, the side-bets must also have the right kind of penalty to force people to be committed. The penalty varies between the organizations but the common ones found in group 1 and 2 were survival. Group 3 on the other hand did not have so many penalties, at least not of the magnitude that the top manager explained have affected their will to implement Lean.
5.1 Generalized Cultural Expectation

This category was explained by Becker (1960) as cultural rules which a person adapts after. Powell and Meyer (2004) exemplified it was how much a person is expected work or be involved to not get on bad terms with others. What has been found is a clear difference between the successful organizations and non-successful.

What is important to regard here is that some top managers in the non-successful group have explained that they have had several side-bets in this category. But by analyzing they have said, it can be suggested that just stating something might not always mean it.

Alpha for example explained that there existed several expectations for Alpha to succeed with Lean because Alpha was first employed with the solely purpose to implement Lean. However, the Lean venture was not really important because as long as the business went well, it would not really matter if this was through Lean or not. Similar to Alpha, Chi had explained that in the beginning there were expectations both from the owner and the employees for a successful Lean implementation. However, none of them really understood the concept of Lean. The expectations and will to implement Lean decreased shortly after they started because people did not understand it. Today the Lean thinking is only on smaller parts in the organization.

Referring back to Becker (1960), these situations and side-bets would not increase the top management commitment because they do not really serve the purpose to implement Lean.

Looking upon what the top managers have said, table 5.1.1 provides an illustration of which side-bets existed for the top managers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectation</th>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>Group 3</th>
<th>Group 3</th>
<th>Group 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Side-bet Owner/Shareholder</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeframe</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External people (journalists, students etc.)</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1.1 Patterns in generalized cultural expectation

The most obvious findings here, regarding the table is that organizations which have succeeded with Lean had more side-bets in this category. Furthermore, it shows no major difference between organization in group 1 and organizations in group 2, even though they are of different size.
5.2 Impersonal Bureaucratic Arrangements

Becker (1960) explained this category as pre-set bureaucratic rules and regulations. A person who engages in a certain activity (in this case Lean implementation) can find that there exist rules in this activity and which a person must adapt after. Powell and Meyer (2004) explained it as rules, regulations and policies an organization has created to encourage the work. Table 5.2.1 shows the findings of the side-bets belonging in this category. It shows a clear difference between group 1 and 2, comparing to group 3.

Similar to previous category, even if an interviewee state that there exists a certain kind of side-bet, this must be interpreted with what they have said about the venture. Alpha said that there were mandatory meetings for discussing Lean in the organization. It was supposed to discuss the development of the Lean venture but the priority to discuss Lean was rather low. Instead other important things could be discussed instead, proving these mandatory Lean meetings less effective for the implementation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arrangements</th>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>Group 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Side-bet</td>
<td>Delta</td>
<td>Epsilon</td>
<td>Theta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall plan of the venture</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory meetings for Lean</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved individual position</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority to make the changes</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority in organization</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2.1 Patterns in impersonal bureaucratic arrangements

Table 5.2.1 shows no difference between group 1 and 2, only between top managers in successful organizations and non-successful. Successful top managers have more side-bets in this category than the others. But a similarity is that they all were arranged to have high authority to make the changes.
5.3 Individual Adjustment to Social positions

People who get used to a certain line of activity (in this case Lean) can find that they want to continue with it because changing it will also mean changing a routine they have (Powell and Meyer, 2004). People who have found themselves adjusted towards a certain change will also find it easier to invest time and money towards this change.

Table 5.3.1 shows how the top managers have adjusted themselves to become more Lean. It therefore shows what activities and side-bets they have made to replace their traditional way of working to adjust to the concept of Lean.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjustment</th>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>Group 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Side-bet</td>
<td>Delta</td>
<td>Epsilon</td>
<td>Theta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous experience</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferences</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-studies</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External consultant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.3.1 Patterns in individual adjustment to social positions

This category has shown to be more similar between the side-bets than the previous two categories. It is different in several categories but the findings have been spread and to find a clear pattern here is more difficult than in the other categories. What can be distinguished is that alpha only had two side-bets in this category.

5.4 Self-presentation concerns

This category is about how people view a certain person which might require this person to behave in a particular way (Becker, 1960). If you claim to yourself and also others to be of a certain kind of person, you will do what it takes to fulfill it and not be caught lying.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-pres.</th>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>Group 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Side-bet</td>
<td>Delta</td>
<td>Epsilon</td>
<td>Theta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge about Lean</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Striving for improvement</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A problem solver</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.4.1 Patterns in self presentation concerns
How top managers’ view on themselves to the extent they want to succeed with Lean varies between the top managers. Not so many side-bets were found in this category due to that the top managers sometimes did not know exactly how to describe themselves that could be related to Lean implementation. There were different descriptions of how they thought of themselves, but in general there were only three side-bets.

5.5 Non-work concerns

This category is about how the private life is affected by work (Powell and Meyer, 2004). It covers everything outside work as family, activities, networking etc.

There were variations in this category where most of the interviewee’s have claimed that the private life outside work is affected by the Lean implementation. Everyone except Alpha have for example discussed that if there are hardships with the implementation, it might cause you stress which can in turns lead to unhealthiness. This will in turn also affect your activities and how to behave towards your family. A lot of side-bets were therefore linked together in this category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-work.</th>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>Group 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Side-bet</td>
<td>Delta</td>
<td>Epsilon</td>
<td>Theta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.5.1 Patterns in non work concerns
5.6 Consequences for not succeeding with Lean
The penalties associated with a failed Lean implementation were of higher magnitude in group 1 and 2 than group 3. Group 1 and 2 have therefore been included together because of similar penalties.

5.6.1 Group 1 and 2
If the Lean implementation would have been a failure, there were many different penalties which would arise. Lean was considered to be of high priority where the managers thought Lean would be the right thing to do. They were therefore committed to a successful Lean implementation because beyond a failed implementation, it would lead to penalties.

“People act consistently because activity of some particular kind is regarded as right and proper in their society or social group and because deviations from this standard are punished” Becker (1960 p. 33).

A deviation of the top managers’ commitment from Lean would first lead to a situation where critics would be aimed towards the top manager. A negative image of the top manager could start to grow among the people in the organization.

Delta for talked about the importance of showing that you have “Prestige” and that you really are a top manager. A person with the right kind of knowledge and always knows what to do. Keeping your image as a leader was therefore important in both group 1 and 2. If the distrust would grow towards the top manager, it could lead to the top managers risking their position in the organization. “It can lead to the situation where you will not stay as a manager or leader if you do not fulfill these expectations” Epsilon said. Lean was therefore something considered as the right thing to do because it would ensure that these penalties are avoided.

But it was not only work-related penalties which were recognized by these top managers. They suggest that a failed implementation would also have a negative impact on the time outside work because it cause stress and you cannot relax. “Increased absence from both the management and employee is possible if this happens and therefore must be avoided”, one of the top managers said.

With many different penalties stacking up, it would lead to an uncontrolled situation, thus trying to find a solution could be too late. A similar finding was presented by Becker (1960) where Becker suggests that even thought penalties can be small alone, together they can constitute of a penalty of very high magnitude.

In this case, all smaller penalties stacking with each other would lead to a situation where the organization can no longer stay in the market and people would lose their job.
5.6.2 Group 3

Both top managers in this group explained that Lean was a small pilot project where it was not a high priority in the organization. Financial performance was sometimes more important and to put all focus to make the Lean venture successful was of lower priority "It was not high ranked in any way. We can work with Lean one day but suddenly the next day something else might be more important", Alpha said. Chi explained it similar to Alpha where Lean as not being of top priority to consider every day. Chi and the organization were so stabled positioned in the market already and it was fine with only small parts of Lean being used and not the whole concept.

These kinds of situations are referred by Becker (1960) to lead to deviation of commitment. Becker (1960) suggests that side-bets producing commitment are only made within systems of value. Becker argues that people who do not make it clear that something is valuable will find themselves lacking the commitment. To ensure commitment, Becker suggests that a social group must make it clear of what is right and taking away sidestep from it should be considered as wrong and followed by penalties. This means that if top managers do not value Lean implementation (Alpha and Chi), then there would be no side-bets and therefore no commitment.

The will to succeed with Lean quickly decreased in both organizations and the penalties from a failed Lean implementation also decreased in magnitude. The top managers did therefore not find Lean implementation important for themselves anymore and neither for the organization. Becker (1960) stated a similar situation where people might have an interest in a particular kind of activity but the commitment towards this activity is consistent only when there is a real need for it: “Even though one has such an interest, he will not act to implement it (will not act so as to win his side-bet) unless he realizes it is necessary” (Becker, 1960 p. 36).

Depending on the results of Lean, the organizations in these groups thought differently how it would affect their life outside work. Chi suggests that everything is related and it even affects your family because you would feel sad if you have failed. Alpha described it as the opposite because work was not supposed to have any effect on the private life.
6 Discussion

The previous tables from the analysis chapter have shown what kind of side-bets existed throughout the Lean implementation. It shows that some side-bets are similar and some are different, depending on which top management it concerned.

What is important to keep in mind is that all organizations have experienced Lean implementation. Some have succeeded and some have not. This means that there might exist similar side-bets. Some categories of side-bets might therefore be similar between the organizations. But the key to this study which is to find the source for lacking commitment can only be found in the categories where the side-bets are clearly different between successful organizations and non-successful organizations.

6.1 Generalized Cultural Expectation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectation</th>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>Group 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Side-bet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner/Shareholder</td>
<td>Δ</td>
<td>Ε</td>
<td>Θ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>Δ</td>
<td>Ε</td>
<td>Θ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeframe</td>
<td>Δ</td>
<td>Ε</td>
<td>Θ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer</td>
<td>Δ</td>
<td>Ε</td>
<td>Θ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External people (journalists, students etc.)</td>
<td>Δ</td>
<td>Ε</td>
<td>Θ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1.1 Patterns in generalized cultural expectations

So what does this table tells us? First of all we can clearly see that there is no difference in turns of expectations regarding the size of the organization. What is important to focus on here is between the groups, the successful ones and the non-successful. When, why and how did it become so different between them? Could this have been a major reason to why some did not succeed?

The difference between these top managers’ lies early at the implementation. Top managers in all groups had similar thoughts about Lean before the implementation. They all agreed that Lean is a concept which could help the organization to become more efficient, thus more competitive. However, it was during the early implementation that it has shown the clear difference to why some have succeeded and some not. The gap here between the top managers has shown to have arisen because of the people around the top manager (i.e. owner/shareholder, employees, customers etc.)

In some organizations, it was well understood the value of the Lean venture for the organizations’ best. If people in the organization view Lean as something of most importance, it will increase the magnitude of the penalties associated with not fulfilling the side-bets. At the same time this will give room for even more side-bets to be made.
Top managers in group 1 and 2 fully understood that any performed activity deviating from a successful implementation is wrong and will be punished. However, these punishments were not only about themselves and their own position. In fact, they were very aware that they had to shoulder a heavy burden if people in the organization would be unemployed because they have failed. Losing their own position as a manager and carrying the burden of knowing that people are unemployed because they have failed was a penalty with enough magnitude to make the top managers committed to fulfill the expectations. “If I did not do well on the tasks I was expected to do then I might not have been here today, one of the top managers in the successful organization also said.

In the opposite group (i.e. group 3) this venture was more like a test to see if the organization can be more efficient or not. But it has already been proven by previous research that Lean can be applied to any situation and any place. Singh, Bhim et al. (2010) suggests that waste exists everywhere and it is not about if an organization can become more efficient, it is about how they want to be more efficient.

People must understand that not showing value towards Lean will decrease the success rate as it decreases the expectations towards top managers to succeed. The top manager will not operate on their own to succeed with Lean if owners or employees do not clearly show their expectations. Only then, top managers will commit themselves to fulfill the side-bets and the implementation. This is due to that people only operates towards a purpose when they find themselves not doing so is considered as wrong in other people’s eyes, which is confirmed by Becker (1960).

But why did people not expect anything from the top manager? It has shown that the value in the organizations in group 3 have been aimed at financial performance. For example Alpha focused on performing financially for the shareholders and employees to be satisfied, even if the purpose in the beginning was for Alpha to implement Lean. As long as they were satisfied, it was fine because penalties would not arise until the financial performance is going negative. The values in the company was therefore actually aimed at financial measures and the penalties associated with not being profitable was far heavier than the Lean ventures’ progress.

It can now be concluded that lack of side-bets in this category is one of the major reasons to why top management commitment is not consistent to implement Lean. The fault here does not lie at a single individual in the organization but at everyone on it. A common understanding of the values of the Lean venture will give rise to side-bets in this category. And only then will the Lean venture have a higher success rate and consistent top management commitment.
6.2 Impersonal bureaucratic arrangements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arrangements</th>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>Group 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Delta</td>
<td>Epsilon</td>
<td>Theta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall plan of the</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>venture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory meetings for Lean</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved individual position</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority to make the changes</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority in organization</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2.1 Patterns in impersonal bureaucratic arrangements

Similar to the previous category, this one shows no difference between the organizations in turns of size. Instead, it shows the difference between successful organizations and non-successful. When, why and how did it become so different between them? Could this have been a major reason to why some did not succeed? Rules and regulations have existed in most of the organizations but the difference lies within top managers’ extent to fulfill these side-bets.

The top managers which have succeeded with Lean regarded the venture as being a major priority in the organization. This has lead to the arrangements for the Lean implementation as been mandatory to follow and no sidesteps were tolerated. If the top manager in the successful organization did not follow these arrangements, they could receive penalties in forms of warnings, removal of current position or even removed from the organization. The penalties were clearly of high magnitude because just being absent from the mandatory arrangements was clearly wrong and not acceptable.

The top managers in the successful organizations explained these side-bets as being very important to have and even more important to fulfill. These side-bets exists for the solely purpose to make the Lean venture successful, thus deviating from them therefore decreases the rate to succeed. An overall plan with mandatory meeting where top managers must participate have been time consuming but so important to fulfill “The successful venture we had here is because top management made sure that everyone in the organization, including them must be involved”, Theta said. Similar statements were also confirmed by both Delta and Epsilon, where Delta stated "When we started out the project, we had decided that there should be meetings every morning and none should be absent”.

However, some similar side-bets were found at the non-successful organizations. But since Lean was not of high priority in the organization, neither were the side-bets there was no clear penalty if these were not followed “We had meetings in the morning but it was not like the top manager had to be involved”, Alpha said. This made Alpha less active to implement Lean.
because Alpha was not constrained to involve in the Lean venture. Chi’s situation was similar to Alpha because Chi explained that the Lean venture did not really develop so much that it fully changed any position or process “Our positions in the organization would not be changed unless we drive down the ditch”.

Furthermore, the authority is important to be able to make a change in the organization, especially when implementing a new concept like Lean. However, all top managers in the organization were given enough authority to make change but if that has improved their commitment to implement Lean is not very clear. It can be argued that the authority to make any change in the organization does not enhance commitment to Lean, because in Alpha’s and Chi’s case the authority instead gave them the possibility to focus on other tasks and not fully on Lean. Full authority can therefore work as a psychological constraint for the top managers. Wallace (1997) suggests that authority can indicate for people that they now have a certain purpose. Others, especially Alpha in this case instead felt that the authority opens up the possibilities to commit to something else because you are free to do as you please.

These previous findings show that we should not be blindly looking at if a top manager has a certain side-bet or not. Obviously, you cannot commit if you do not have a certain side-bet of a kind. But without the penalty to force persuasion towards fulfilling the side-bet, top managers will still lack commitment. Referring back to Becker (1960), Alpha and Chi would be examples of people that have found side-bets and penalties in some other line of activities rather than the original (i.e. Lean). And this is also why their commitment has not been consistent.

The priority of the Lean venture must therefore be of top priority if one wants to succeed with Lean. If the Lean venture has the top priority in the organization, then not only having, but also to the extent to fulfill the side-bets will be more positive.

It can now be concluded that not only lack of side-bets in this category but also the extent it is fulfilled is one of the major reasons to why top management commitment is not consistent to implement Lean.
6.3 Individual adjustment to social positions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjustment</th>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>Group 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Side-bet</td>
<td>Delta</td>
<td>Epsilon</td>
<td>Theta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous experience</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferences</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-studies</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External consultant</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.3.1 Patterns in individual adjustment to social positions

How a person adjusts to a certain social position affects how much this person will change towards another (Becker, 1960). In this case, the new position is to become more Lean.

The table has shown to vary, not between organizational sizes but individually. The top managers have in different ways adjusted themselves to Lean and it shows no clear difference between the groups. Hence it can be argued that this category is not the issue to look at when one is to understand why top management commitment is deviating. Because adjusting yourself to Lean does not really mean the more sources to gain this knowledge is better than having just a few. The amount of knowledge might even just be enough with one knowledge source.

To strengthen this argument, for example Alpha and Epsilon seems from the table to be a opposite pair. Epsilon had five different ways to become more adjusted to Lean when Alpha only had two. But this does not necessary mean that Alpha lack adjustment of Lean and therefore did not commit. Alpha had earlier succeeded to implement Lean in another organization and is very knowledgeable about Lean, how to behave Lean and how to implement it. Alpha did therefore not lack commitment to succeed because there was a lack of adjustment to Lean. This is further on also similar to Chi who knew enough about Lean to implement parts of it but still did not implement the whole concept. The adjustment to be Lean is therefore not the key to explain why top management commitment is deviating, at least not today where we know so much about it already.

These findings can be related back to what Boyle et al (2011) argues that top managers knows enough about Lean, where knowledge is not the problem. It is confirmed that top managers are holding back their commitment because of other reasons than lack of knowledge (Boyle et al., 2011).

It can be concluded that side-bets in this category is important to succeed with Lean but not of interest to find the major reasons to why top management commitment is deviating when implementing Lean. It might have been the issue in the past but not today.
### 6.4 Self-presentation concerns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-pres. Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>Group 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Side-bet</strong></td>
<td>Delta</td>
<td>Epsilon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge about Lean</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Striving for improvement</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A problem solver</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.4.1 Patterns in self-presentation concerns

What can be seen in the table is that the top managers all had the image as being people striving for improvement changes. Most of them also considered themselves as having enough knowledge about Lean to implement it. This has clearly helped most of them to implement Lean, especially when deciding to start implement it because the top managers and Lean embraced the same value and vision. Delta among the successful top managers explained for example that it was important to prove to you, but also other that you do not only speak, but can also perform. It was important to live up to the image you have created and to make people have a more positive view on you.

One can look at the difference between Chi and the other three top managers which have succeed with Lean and argue that this category does not really tell us so much about deviating commitment. It can be argued that it has helped top managers to start with the venture. But this is not enough evidence to say that this has been a major difference on the top managers’ commitment throughout the implementation.

However, regarding existing research (i.e. Becker, 1960: Meyer and Allen, 1991) stating that more side-bets to fulfill then stronger is the commitment. Because of the poor findings of the number of side-bets in this category but also the minor penalties, it can be concluded that it provides no clear explanation to why commitment is consistent or deviating. The top managers seems to regard what is happening around them to be of more value then fulfilling their own self image.
6.5  Non-work concerns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-work.</th>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>Group 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Side-bet</td>
<td>Delta</td>
<td>Epsilon</td>
<td>Theta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.5.1 Patterns in non-work concerns

What can be seen here is again a variation of side-bets among the interviewees. It shows no clear difference depending on organizational size or successful or non-successful. Rather the difference is very individually and similar to previous category. How the Lean implementation is affecting with penalties outside work is therefore not a category showing difference between successful or not successful top managers. This can be due to that fact that Swedish top managers view business as business and do not appreciate to overlap work with private life even if some explained that everything is connected.

Epsilon which has succeed with Lean had the most side-bets followed by Theta, Delta and Chi. There is therefore a mix here between successful top managers and non-successful. This is further on also confirmed by the findings that Delta and Theta has the same number of side-bets as Chi, even though Delta and Theta has succeeded well with the implementation and Chi not.

It can be concluded that the number of side-bets found in this category does not make it possible to draw a conclusion for showing any reason to why top management commitment is not consistent.

6.6  Consequences for not succeeding with Lean

Regarding the penalties for not fulfilling the side-bets have shown to be a major difference between top managers in successful and not successful organizations. For a top manager to be committed, the top manager must be aware that not succeeding will be punished.

The penalties for every side-bet can be regarded to be of smaller magnitude in all cases. The difference between consistent and not consistent commitment concerns if the penalties stack on each other and what they together will lead to. This was also confirmed by Becker (1960), stating that small penalties can together consist of a large penalty and force someone to be committed.

The penalties have varied but it seems that social penalties have been more common than economical penalties. The economical penalties were on the organizational level of survival. The social penalties on the other hand were more individually and concerned other people’s view and image towards a top manager. Distrust and bad reputation in and outside the organization seems to be a common social penalty which all top managers wanted to avoid.
It can be argued that the welfare system in Sweden might have an important role here. The system might have created a certain support for top managers to face their economical penalties, thus they feel safer. But there is no support for their social penalties because this is how the society view on them and the only person who can change it is themselves.

A good question to ask here is: *what has given the rise of these penalties?* The findings has shown that the penalties only helps top managers to stay committed if the organization and themselves has made clear that the Lean venture is the most valuable thing they have. If the implementation would go bad, then so will also everything else. The Lean venture cannot and should not be viewed as a test if it can bring more efficiency to an organization. Hence, it has already been proven by previous research that Lean does creates efficiency, and it can be implemented everywhere as waste also exists everywhere. The difference here, regarding the rise of the penalties therefore lies in the state of mind of the involved people. If top managers and their organizations believe that Lean is valuable, only when they do that, there will exist side-bets with the right kind of penalty to ensure your commitment.
7 Conclusion

The purpose to understand why top management commitment is not consistent has been the subject as the research question was: *Why is top managers’ commitment not consistent to Lean implementation when regarding their side-bets?*

What has been found in this study is based on five Swedish top managers and can therefore not be used for generalizing. Instead, the findings should be viewed as an introduction on how deviating top management commitment can be explained.

First of all, it must be well understood that it is difficult to say what side-bets are the most important for every top manager to ensure their commitment to a successful Lean venture. People will always have different values and priorities, and this cannot be changed because this is who we are as individuals. The level of impact a certain side-bet has on commitment might therefore differ depending on which top manager it concerns.

Before and during the implementation process, top managers are only committed to a successful implementation if they find themselves having enough penalties associated with a failed implementation. Only when they realize that there exists side-bets and penalties of enough magnitude, their commitment will be consistent and the implementation successful. The side-bets which have shown to be decisive to determine a consistent or deviating commitment are the ones belonging to ‘Generalized cultural expectations’ and ‘Impersonal bureaucratic arrangements’. The penalties associated with these side-bets have been more of socially form than economically. Furthermore, these side-bets and penalties have shown to arise when top managers and their organization have made it clear that the Lean venture is of highest priority and any sidestep from it is considered as wrong.

However, some non successful top managers discussed that they had some side-bets in those categories, but they did not pursue the side-bets because it was obviously no penalties associated with them. The major problem for deviating commitment does therefore not only lie at top managers lacking side-bets in these two categories. Just as much important as having the side-bets, it must be noted that the extent to fulfill them is just as much important.
## 7.1 Managerial Implication

The results of this study raise the awareness of the existence of side-bets and penalties for top managers when implementing Lean. If top managers realize the existence of this subject, it is also more likely that they will stay committed to avoid the penalties.

Furthermore, the result of this study also indicates that top management commitment will not be consistent unless the organization put their whole heart into the venture. It is not enough to say that lack of top management commitment is depending on the top managers themselves. The responsibility for ensuring top managers to stay committed lies also at the people around. Top managers operate with the awareness of social penalties (i.e. reputation, image etc) and the ones impacting on those social penalties are the people around the top manager. Owners, shareholders, employees and even customers have a very strong impact on the top managers’ commitment to ensure a successful implementation of Lean. We are all in this together and that is how it should be.

## 7.2 Theoretical Implication and Future Work

This study has contributed with an understanding of why top manager’s commitment is consistent or deviating during the Lean implementation process. Research so far has suggested how top manager’s commitment is deviating and consistent; this study provides the explanation of why. By having the answer to why top manager lack commitment, the possibility of ensuring consistent commitment is raised. Referring to Becker (1960), people operate only when they understand why and find value in a certain kind of activity.

This study can be seen as an introduction to study top management commitment with the side-bet theory. All questions have not been answered yet and there is a great possibility to continue on this study. What has been presented so far is which categories are important to look upon in this field of research but it does not explain the level of impact each side-bet has on top management commitment to Lean implementation. There is therefore a possibility to make a quantitative study on these findings. Choosing a side-bet for example about the owner/shareholder and ask “How responsible is this side-bet for the reason that you are implementing Lean?”. Having a scale and measure how much each side-bet has impacted on top managers’ commitment will raise our understanding of what side-bet is most significant when distinguishing between a successful implementation and a non-successful.

Another direction to continue with this study is to go even deeper within the field of commitment. The side-bet theory suggests that people operates by the awareness of penalties. This means that if people are afraid of penalties, they must have something valuable to them which they do not want to endanger. Linking the findings from the side-bet theory with other dimensions of commitment can therefore be the next step. It has been found in previous research for example Meyer and Allen (1991) and Powell and Meyer (2004) that the other two dimensions are Affective commitment and Normative commitment. When this is done, there might be a possibility to link the findings from three different dimensions of commitment, and only then can we provide a better explain of the phenomena to why top managers are lacking commitment to Lean.
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Appendix

7.3 A Critical literature review

Commitment

There seem to have been a wide range of studies about how to succeed with Lean and its implementations. Most of them point out top management commitment as important and explains what the top managers should do during the implementation of Lean (Boyle et al., 2009; Boyle et al 2011; Puvanasvaran, 2009; Petersson at al., 2010; Taleghani, 2010). They suggest that top managers must stay committed in different days during the implementation but they do not provide any explanation to why the commitment is deviating at certain points. Therefore, they do not provide any insight understanding to why some Lean implementations are failing due to lack of top management commitment. The reason to why they do not provide the insight understanding can be that there is no exact fully accepted definition to commitment to be found.

Sociological researchers have provided different explanations to commitment, yet these are not generally accepted among all sociological researchers (Becker, 1960: Kanter 1968: Ford, 1973: Stebbins, 1969: Meyer and Allen, 1991: Powell and Meyer, 2004: Calhoun, 2009). Their explanations to commitment are similar to each other as they aims at an individual’s will to follow a certain direction or belief, which can also be referred to as consistent behavior. However, they do not provide an exact definition of commitment but instead meant that commitment can be used widely, making the concept of commitment rather complex to define. With three dimensions of commitment which were presented in many theories for example Powell and Meyer (2004) and Carter (2012), makes it understandable that commitment again is hard to define. "What commitment actually constitutes, however, is not easily defined” (Carter, 2012 p. 137)

Becker (1960) presented a study on commitment and created a fundamental base to many of today's research on commitment and consistent behavior. However, Becker suggests that commitment is so complex that we can only provide hints to it. The criteria’s for a theory to fully conceptualize commitment have several requirements;

"Such a theory would contain a definition of the nature of acts or states of commitment. It would specify the conditions under which commitments come into being. It would indicate the consequences for behavior of acts or states of commitment” (Becker, 1960 p.35).

Regarding more modern research on commitment for example Meyer and Allen (1991), Powell and Meyer, (2004), none of them have provided an explanation to meet up the requirements which are mentioned in Becker (1960). They have built on Becker (1960) and provided hints to what commitment is, but yet missing a definition to meet up the requirements and could therefore not be fully accepted as a conceptualization of commitment.
With this understanding of commitment in sociological research, it is understandable that business management researchers cannot provide the insight understanding of top management commitment. Because yet, not even the sociological research have a fully acceptable conceptualization and definition to commitment.

**Side-bet Theory**

Becker (1960) was considered to be one of the pioneers to try conceptualizing parts of commitment, explaining basic theories about commitment and its characteristics. However, Becker (1960) has also faced critical attacks.

Ritzer and Trice (1969) made an empirical study of Howard Becker’s side-bet theory which showed no truth in what Becker presented. They therefore concluded that the side-bet theory of Becker (1960) should be rejected. In turns of this, Stebbins (1969) provided arguments that Ritzer and Trice (1969) had mixed up the dimensions and that their entirely investigation should be invalidated, where Becker (1960) is still valid.

Wallace (1997) argues that previous studies which have not supported the side-bet theory of Becker (1960) have limitations. Wallace (1997) therefore argues that before making a conclusion of abandoning the side-bet theory, studies must first consider all the limitations, and once again the side-bet theory was defended from other critical attacks.

It seems that the critical attacks which Becker (1960) has encountered have been turned down one by one, making the side-bet theory accepted. More studies based on the side-bet theory have emerged which have showed correlations with what Becker (1960) presented.
Intervjuguide från Högskolan i Halmstad (Interviewguide in Swedish)

Vad gör vi?

Idag finns det mycket forskning inom området Lean, där forskare har hänvisat till många viktiga faktorer att tänka på när en organisation skall börja införa Lean. Men trots att så mycket forskning har gjorts inom detta område så har luften gått ur många Leansatsningar, speciellt under implementering.

En fördjupning visade tydligt att ett starkt engagemang hos de högre ledarna är en nyckelfaktor för att implementering av Lean skall lyckas. Forskning har hittills beskrivit hur en ledare skall engagera sig under implementering men mycket lite forskning har förklarat var styrkan till detta engagemang kommer ifrån. Det är även här som vår studie har tagit sin början.


Vilka är ni?

Ni är sammanlagt 5 organisationer som har valt att delta i vår studie, varvid era organisationer sprider sig i lokalisering. Alla deltagare och organisationer kommer att vara helt anonyma i vår studie. Vi är därför neutrala och endast drivna av studiens syfte för att undersöka vart styrkan till en ledares engagemang kommer ifrån.

Avslutning

Vi bifogar frågorna med detta dokument och ser fram emot att ta del av era kunskaper och erfarenheter.

Vänliga hälsningar

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Grundfrågor

1. Kan du beskriva överskådligt hur Lean i din organisation ser ut idag? Dvs vilka delar av Lean arbetar ni med?

2. När började din nuvarande organisation införa Lean? Vem var beslutsfattaren att införa det?

3. Hur såg organisationen ut innan införandet av Lean?

4. Hur såg övergången ut från det traditionella arbetssättet till Lean?

5. Vilken befogenhet hade du under införandet av Lean? Dvs. hur mycket kunde du påverka arbetet?

6. Kan du på tidslinjen markera ut en viktig händelse under implementeringen?

![Tidslinje för Lean implementering]

Howard Becker’s teori om engagemang

Många frågor kommer att följas av en följdfråga där vi gärna ser att du motiverar kort hur det påverkat ditt arbete vid implementering.

Förväntningar från andra

1. Vad var ditt förväntade bidrag till organisationen under Lean implementeringen? (Dvs. vad skulle du personligen ästadkomma). Vilka konsekvenser ger det om du inte uppfyller förväntningarna?

2. Hade organisationen någon tidsram för införandet av Lean som du skulle fullfölja? (Dvs. att du borde gjort så här mycket inom Lean-arbetet under en viss tid).

3. Hur mycket stöd har du fått från organisationen för att införa Lean?

4. Har ni gått ut offentligt att ni arbetar eller kommer att arbeta med Lean?

Självbild

5. Hur ser du på dig själv i förhållande till Lean och implementering? (Dvs. är du en person som brinner för det?)
6. Beroende på resultatet av implementeringen, hur har andras bild på dig påverkats?

**Organisationens policy och bestämmelser**

7. Skulle ett lyckat införande av Lean leda till en förbättrat policy alt. andra bestämmelser i organisationen?

8. Under implementeringen, hade ni några bestämmelser om hur mycket högsta ledningen måste involvera sig? (Dvs. högsta ledningen måste delta under vissa aktiviteter). Vad kan hända för högsta ledningen personligen om de inte deltar?

9. Hur skulle en lyckad implementering påverka din position?

10. Lean ger högre effektivitet, men vilket förbättring har högsta ledningen fått ta del av? (*Till exempel lättare arbetsbelastning/högre utdelning*)

**Individuell anpassning**

11. Har du fått utbildning inom Lean? Hur har detta påverkat din involvering vid implementering?

12. Med hänsyn till all den tid du lagt ner på att lära dig Lean, hur har detta påverkat ditt arbete mot en lyckad implementering?

13. Att införa Lean medför en förändring för alla involverade, inkluderat också dig. Varför var du villig att göra denna förändring?

**Utanför Organisationen**

14. Vad är ditt nästa steg efter att du har lyckats implementera Lean?

15. Om implementeringen inte gått som förväntat, kan det uppstå konsekvenser utanför arbetstiden?

16. Vad är du mer verksam i utanför arbetstiden? Kan dessa aktiviteter påverkas beroende på resultatet av implementeringen av Lean?
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