The effect of quick feedback on employee motivation and performance

A qualitative study on how to formulate effective feedback

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ABSTRACT

This thesis conceptualizes quick feedback as part of a performance management tool influencing and contributing to the individual’s self-motivation to work and improvement of employees’ performance. Prior research has shown that feedback is often considered to be a useful communication tool but not essential due to its time-consumption, i.e. feedback is perceived as too time-consuming to be prioritized. Thus, this thesis investigates the potential benefits of a quick feedback strategy focusing on short, specific and unambiguous performance review from the manager to the employee. Quick feedback refers to a few-minute discussion between a manager and one of his or her employees. During the discussion, the manager first reminds the employee of his or her goals. Then, the manager assesses his or her achievement and praises the employee. Finally, the manager explains to the employee what he or she did wrong and concludes by reminding how much his or her work is valued by the company. However, limited research has been done on the topic of quick feedback, and, to the authors’ knowledge, only few researchers have studied ways to mitigate the time-consumption of feedback until now.

Thus, the overall purpose of this thesis is to examine how quick feedback from the manager to the employees can affect their behavior, motivation and ultimately influence their performance. By investigating the effects of quick feedback, the authors seek to acquire greater knowledge regarding how to provide and formulate positive and constructive feedback that will lead to better performance. Therefore, this study has an inductive and qualitative approach and investigates a Swedish insurance company. The authors interviewed the sales manager and ten of his employees in order to discover how the current feedback strategy of the sales manager versus the quick feedback strategy affect the employees’ motivation and performance.

Findings show that the interviewed employees seek the same amount of both positive feedback and constructive criticism and that this quick feedback strategy, in turn, would shape their motivation and performance. However, this linkage has subtleties. Indeed, the employee needs to receive positive feedback, first and foremost, in order to genuinely and cleverly process and make use of the constructive criticism. The employee must feel confident and safe before he or she can listen to and accept constructive criticism. Results further show that in order to formulate accurate and impactful quick feedback, the manager needs to provide face-to-face personalized feedback in a standardized way i.e. standard form but personalized content.

Further research is needed to acquire a greater knowledge about the effectiveness and efficiency of this potentially valuable strategy. The aim is to better understand and therefore use quick feedback to improve employee self-awareness, self-confidence, motivation and performance.

Keywords: Feedback, Quick feedback, Motivation, Performance, Management.
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TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Employee performance and performance management

Performance is defined by the potential to successfully implement actions that will reach the organization’s objective and goals (Lebas, 1995). Therefore, employees’ performance refers to the extent to which the workers’ activities and missions have been well executed. Their performance is to be reviewed by their manager e.g. line manager or project manager.

Performance management is a process that aims to increase the individuals’ performance, getting the best of each employee while also improving the organization’s performance as a whole (Dransfield, 2000).

Employee motivation

Employee motivation is defined as the inner energy that drives workers to stay committed and strive to accomplish their own and the organization’s goals. Motivation really differs from one person to another, and is therefore complex and hard to measure (Lindner, 1998).

Feedback and quick feedback

According to Ashford & Cummings (1983), feedback represents resources that inform individuals in the work environment about how well they have attained both their own and the organization’s goals and targets. It also is a way to make individuals know about the others’ (e.g. managers, colleagues) perception of their behavior, and accomplishments.

The current thesis focuses on quick feedback. It refers to around a few-minute discussion between the manager and his or her employees, done within a weekly basis and in an individual way (i.e. face-to-face meeting between the manager and one employee). The quick feedback includes a review of the employees’ goals, appraisals and constructive reprimands (Blanchard & Johnson, 2015).
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1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the concept of motivation, employee performance and quick feedback. Thereafter, the purpose is defined and the research problems are described. This chapter ends with a formulation of the delimitations and a description of the disposition of the current thesis.

1.1 BACKGROUND AND PREVIOUS RESEARCH

In today’s globalized society, organizations have to face high competition and must react quickly to every changes constantly occurring in the market place. All organizations strive for success and desire to get profits and a continuous progress. However, many have to deal with employee retention issues i.e. organizations struggle to retain their employees (Manzoor, 2012, Bhuvanaiah & Raya, 2015). According to Sandhya and Kumar (2001), this employee retention challenge could be better managed through motivating the employees by means of open communication and rewards among other aspects. Moreover, even though motivation is really different from one person to another, and performance is not only influenced by motivation; the motivation to well execute a job represents one of the most important factors affecting performance (Van Knippenberg, 2000). Therefore, learning how to motivate employees will most likely help the manager to better manage his or her team and lead the employees to achieve better performance. However, only a small number of organizations recognize the employees as their main assets (Manzoor, 2012). Furthermore, the authors believe that, although certain companies do recognize their employees as the heart of their business, they do not always care or understand what motivates them.

Prior studies have shown that “organizations attempt to motivate employees but disregard the essential nature of human motivation” (Hansen et al., 2002, page 64). According to Hansen et al., (2002), organizations implement motivation strategies that are ineffective since they are based on the belief that motivation can only be bought by award bonuses and merit pay. This assumption considers that individuals do not pride themselves on their work nor do their work because they want to contribute to the success of the organization. However, these authors argue that people are not only motivated by financial rewards. To their opinion, motivation also differs accordingly to the person. As such, one could wonder what motivates
employees to work and how to make them execute their missions in the most efficient way.

One way to know more about the employees’ motivations is to communicate with them. Communication is defined by Fisher (1980, cited in Muda et al., 2014) as the double interaction between individuals that provides information, meaning and knowledge. Through communication, one gets a better understanding of his or her team members’ goals, wishes and motivations as well as the opportunity to establish trustworthy relationships with his or her team (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). These authors argue that communication has direct and indirect effects on organizational performance.

For the last few years, a specific type of communication, the feedback; has received great attention and interest from many researchers (e.g. London & Smither, 2002; Medvedeff et al., 2008). Prior studies as well as personal experiences have proved the ability of feedback in allowing individuals to gain valuable knowledge about their performance. Indeed, feedback ideally helps individuals to adopt a development-oriented state of mind, leading them to learn about themselves, their behavior, and ultimately enhance their performance (London & Smither, 2002). According to Saedon et al., (2012) feedback could be defined as specific information concerning the comparison between one’s observed performance and a standard. For these authors, feedback aims at improving the observed individual’s performance, and can be either outcome or process-oriented (Medvedeff et al., 2008). While outcome-oriented feedback only gives information about general success or failure, process-oriented feedback provides specific and detailed information about the strengths, weaknesses and actual performance of the recipient and how he or she could improve it (Knesek, 2015; Medvedeff et al., 2008). In most cases, employees are more interested in process feedback than in the outcome feedback since they seek information about how to perform better.

Yet, some researchers argue that feedback has highly variable effects on performance and could, instead of improving it, sometimes lead to debilitate employees’ performance (Kluger & DeNisi 1996). Indeed, employees may be afraid of receiving feedback because these specific discussions have long focused solely on employees’ mistakes and not enough on their accomplishments (Knesek, 2015). Many employees avoid feedback because being criticized is highly unpleasant. They fear these performance discussions will lead to arguments and threats (Jackman & Strober, 2003). Likewise, some managers are frightened to provide feedback since it could either hurt employees’ feelings or lead to stonewalling (Jackman & Strober, 2003).
Besides, some managers do not believe they have enough knowledge about the employees’ behavior to be able to formulate accurate feedback (Maurer, 2011). Furthermore, some individuals are not always receptive to feedback, especially when the feedback targets personal traits or behaviors that are highly related to someone’s self-perception and personality (London & Smither, 2002). Feedback is also perceived as nice but time-consuming; therefore, not essential. In that sense, individuals do not take the time to use this tool or only use it when something goes wrong (Maurer, 2011).

Although past research has found inconsistencies in the effects of feedback on employees’ performance, many literatures have stated that feedback is a necessary tool. Indeed, it gives employees vital information and knowledge about the quality of their performance (Medvedeff et al., 2008). In the current thesis, the authors argue that feedback is highly important for the employees to always progress in their work, stay motivated and enhance their performance. The feedback strategy must become a routine and everyone should perceive it as essential. The authors believe the feedback must focus on the employees’ behaviors and not personalities, and on what they can change to better reach their goals (Cowan, 2003).

However, feedback has to be specific, therefore quick and time-efficient. According to Phoel (2009, p.2) managers should “practice giving feedback often; soon it will become a habit. Praise good performance right away. When negative feedback is required, talk with the employee within 24 hours”. This author argues that feedback is more effective when it is a continual process rather than a formal discussion the manager and the employee have once or twice a year. However, it is critical to find the right balance between not enough and too frequent feedback. Indeed, Ashford & De Stobbeleir (n.d.) explain that rarely provided feedback deprives the employees of gaining relevant information about their abilities. Yet, they also argue too frequent feedback is likely to be seen as “redundant, time-consuming and distracting, resulting in lower efficiency” (Ashford & De Stobbeleir, n.d. p.60). Reflecting on the above, it is clear that managers have to find a way to formulate specific and time-efficient feedback.

Thus, this thesis investigates the concept of quick feedback i.e. a few-minute discussion between the manager and the employee. The discussion aims at informing individuals about what they did right, what they should improve and reminds them about their main missions and goals (Blanchard & Johnson, 2015). Past studies have been conducted concerning the effect of feedback in the workplace. However, to the authors’ knowledge, past research has not touched upon the effects of quick feedback on employees’ motivation and performance. The book The
New One Minute Manager by Blanchard & Johnson in 2015 represents the only reliable source the authors found. As such, a study assessing the utility and importance of quick feedback to improve employees’ motivation and performance would henceforth be of interest as it ideally provides better knowledge to the effects of quick feedback. Furthermore, every employee, manager and organization should be aware of how to improve the workers’ performance and outputs while using a free, easy and time-efficient communication tool. Hence, the current thesis would be helpful for every organization striving to attain quicker and better results by improving their employees’ performance.

1.2 STUDY PURPOSE AND RESEARCH PROBLEM

The current thesis overarching purpose is to examine how quick feedback from the manager to the employees can affect their behavior, motivation and ultimately influence their performance. In examining the effects of quick feedback, this thesis also seeks to discover whether the performance of the employees is different after having received positive versus constructive criticism (e.g. does constructive criticism have a stronger impact on the employees’ motivation and performance than positive feedback?). The ultimate goal is to discover how to give positive and constructive feedback that will lead to better performance. As such, the current thesis aims to answer:

- How does quick and daily feedback influence employees’ behavior, motivation and performance?
- How does positive feedback versus constructive criticism impact the employees’ behavior, motivation and performance? Should the manager focus on one type more than the other?
- Should the manager adapt his way of giving feedback to each personality or should the feedback be standardized?

1.3 DELIMITATIONS

The boundaries set for this current thesis are: first, only companies using feedback as a useful tool were sought. The focus was put on this type of companies because of the purpose of this thesis. Indeed, the authors believe searching for companies without any interest towards
feedback would not be relevant to investigate the effects on employees’ performance related to quick feedback.

Secondly, only one company was examined. This decision was made based on the assumption that working with only one company would allow the authors to get deep and detailed answers. Indeed, it has enabled them to put their focus and efforts discovering how the manager and the chosen employees felt about adopting a quick feedback strategy and whether or not it could enhance their motivation, thus, their performance. This thesis does not draw a comparison of diverse feedback strategies between several companies but investigates the effect of implementing a quick feedback strategy in one type of company. Furthermore, the authors assumed that the sales department would be the most relevant for this thesis since the focus is put on the performance of the employees.

Finally, this thesis has been geographically delimited to Sweden in order to mitigate the risk of misunderstandings related to the language-barrier as well as to make it possible to conduct face-to-face interviews.

1.4 DISPOSITION

Within chapter two, the theoretical framework is presented where the different types of human motivation are explained. In addition, the findings from previous studies and the theories surrounding feedback and performance are assessed. The whole provides a theoretical body for the fairly novel concept of quick feedback.

Then, follows an explanation and discussion of the methodological choices made for this thesis in chapter three. Each decision made is criticized and evaluated in order to prove their relevancy. In chapter four, empirical findings are presented. This part includes the presentation of the chosen company as well as the interviews conducted. Thereafter, these findings are analyzed and connected to the theories presented in the frame of references in chapter five. In chapter six, conclusions from this analysis are drawn. In chapter seven, a last discussion is written where future research is suggested. Finally, follows the sources and the appendix including the implementation strategy and interview questions.
2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter describes the concepts of motivation, employee performance and quick feedback by explaining how they have been defined in the past and through a presentation of the existing related theories. Thereafter, follows a connection between the three concepts to emphasize their interdependence.

2.1 KEY CONCEPTS

2.1.1 Feedback

Even though the outcome of feedback might be very individual depending on the culture, personality and life experiences of the feedback receiver, the overall thought of getting feedback is strongly valuable (Bechtel, McGee, Huijema & Dickinson, 2015). Morrison & Bies (1991) defined the feedback as a way to inform the employees about what they need to self-assess and how to improve their performance. Feedback can be seen as one of the most prevalent intervention in the field of organizational behavior management and is a highly popular invention in the domain of applied behavior analysis. This is due to the many benefits feedback provides such as its low cost, flexibility, ease of use and simplicity (Prue & Fairbank, 1981). Although feedback is broadly used to improve performance, the feedback outcome highly varies along numbers of dimensions (Prue & Fairbank, 1981). For instance, the result of feedback can differ according to the feedback mechanism used such as verbal or written feedback i.e. whether the feedback is given orally or provided by text. The second dimension is the recipient of feedback i.e. whether the feedback is given individually or in a group. The third level is the temporal characteristics of feedback such as when the feedback is given and the duration of feedback i.e. how much time it takes to give or receive the feedback (Prue & Fairbank 1981).

There are several ways to provide feedback but not every way leads to the desired result. As mentioned above, the overall outcome of feedback is often perceived as beneficial but according to prior research, feedback can also have some drawbacks. Indeed, Castellaneta et al. (2015) state that completeness is also a dimension that can strongly hamper the outcome of feedback. The authors argue that, when feedback is incomplete i.e. delayed, interrupted or indirect; the receiver might get an inaccurate assessment of his or her abilities. This confusion
may prevent the employee to progress. Furthermore, according to past research (Chappelow, 1998), specific feedback strategies such as the 360-degree feedback technique have some notable disadvantages. The 360-degree feedback is a multisource assessment, where several actors including managers, subordinates, colleagues and customers provide feedback. The authors state that both the one who gives and the one who receives the feedback have a great influence on the feedback’s result. Although this technique is used to help the employees to understand whether more people than only the manager perceives their performance as consistent and right; there is a risk the feedback could be filtered and might be dishonest. Besides, according to Chappelow (1998), there are many reasons for the receiver to reject the feedback such as a bad communication between the giver and the receiver, misunderstandings, and the disinterest or indifference of the receiver. Therefore, there are many aspects that need to be taken into account when developing feedback strategies to avoid getting the sought opposite results (Chappelow, 1998).

The immediacy of feedback, i.e. how soon the feedback is given, has also a strong impact on the effect the feedback may provide (Daniels & Daniels, 2004). According to Daniels & Daniels (2004), a general rule is that the sooner the feedback is given, the better the outcome will be. Furthermore, by giving immediate and intense feedback, the manager provides a larger amount of feedback in comparison to delayed feedback. Finally, according to Anett (1969), the effect of feedback before one’s action is as important as when the feedback is given after one’s action i.e. it is essential to give continuous feedback, and not only when something wrong happens. The effect of pre-action feedback and post-action feedback is similar and gives an equal result. This statement can be directly linked to the theory of Blanchard and Johnson (2015). The pre-action feedback can be related to the one-minute goal where the manager in an early stage of the process sets up the employees’ goals and explain what is expected from them while giving them guideline on how they should do to achieve their goals. The post-action feedback can be directly linked to the one-minute praising and re-directs where the manager immediately praises or re-directs the employee.
2.1.2 Quick feedback

Since limited research has been done about the effect of quick feedback, the book “The New One Minute Manager” written by Blanchard and Johnson (2015) is used as the main “theory” in this thesis.

According to Blanchard and Johnson (2015) “people who feel good about themselves are the ones who produce good results” (p.13) and good results are an outcome of people’s performance. The manager is responsible for developing people’s skills, to provide them with specific feedback so they can produce the best possible result. In today's changing world, top down management is too slow. To attain the greatest possible outcome, immediate, quick and clear feedback from the manager is the winning ingredient. To become a manager who gives this kind of feedback, there are three secrets the manager needs to understand and follow when supporting the people to achieve better performance. Once the manager has understood these secrets, “feedback is the breakfast of champions” (Blanchard & Johnson, 2015, p.62). The three secrets are the one-minute goal, the one-minute praising and the one-minute re-direct. (Blanchard & Johnson, 2015).

The one-minute goal: the first secret to be an effective manager is to make everybody within the team aware about the goals and what good performance looks like. According to Blanchard and Johnson (2015), it is unachievable to reach the goals unless everybody is aware of the goals and know what good performance is. In this phase, the manager and the employee have to write down the one-minute goals together. The goals focus on what is important. They have to be clear, individual and easy to understand to guide the person to work in the right direction. The one-minute goal works best when the person clearly writes and puts deadlines on his or her goals. Furthermore, it is necessary to review the goals each day and look at them to make sure the employee is working in the right direction when the manager encourages him or her to do so. (Blanchard & Johnson, 2015).

The one-minute praising: the second secret to be an effective manager is to build confidence and help the employees to reach their full potential by catching them doing something good. The outcome of the one-minute praising is that people who strongly believe in themselves are more likely to make their own decisions. In this phase, the manager precisely tells the employee when he or she did something right and how the manager feels about it. The best effect of this feedback is to give it directly when the person deserves it. The one-minute
praising works the best when the manager strictly observes the people so the manager can give the praising within the shortest time possible. The manager should, for the first half-minute, praise the person, tell he or she what he or she did well and show the employee how the manager feels about it. Then, there should be a few seconds of break to let the person feel good about what he or she achieved. For the last half-minute, the manager should encourage the person to keep on doing the good work and clarify the trust the manager has in the person. (Blanchard & Johnson, 2015).

The one-minute re-directs: the third and last secret to be an effective manager is to quickly and precisely re-direct the person when he or she did something wrong. The outcome of the one-minute re-direct is to make the person think twice, address his or her mistakes and get he or she back on the right track. The one-minute re-directs works in the same way as the one-minute praise and strictly observations from the manager are needed. The manager should, for the first half-minute, re-direct the person i.e. tell the person what he or she did wrong and how the manager feels about it. Then, there should be a few seconds of break to let the person feel concerned about what he or she has done. For the last half-minute, the manager should tell the person that he or she is better than the mistake and that the manager still trusts and believes in the person. Additionally, the manager has to make it clear that: once the re-direct is over; it is over and that the manager will support the employee. Once the employees have been working with the manager for a while and have constantly received these “one-minutes” feedback; they are able to set their own one-minute goals and only review them with the manager. Usually, from a certain moment forward, the employees also praise themselves and sometimes ask for praising or get praised by the manager. (Blanchard & Johnson, 2015).

The philosophy of this feedback technique is that managers do not solely have people working for them. They have to manage their team so they can reach better performance. The manager is, in the beginning, the most supportive possible. He or she must help his or her team by giving feedback and creating conditions that allow them to improve their performance in a way so they, in the end, can work for themselves. The one-minute manager's aim is to make the employees feel confident so they can improve their own performance as well as the overall company's performance. (Blanchard & Johnson 2015).
2.1.3 Employee motivation and its relation to employee performance

Employee motivation has long attracted psychologists and behavioral researchers and has been deeply discussed since the nineteenth century (Hiwarale et al., n.d.). For many years, employees were only perceived as “another input into the production of goods and services” (Linder, 1998, p.1). Thereby, traditional assumptions stated that individuals first and foremost act for their self-interest and employees were believed to only be motivated by wages (Hanna et al., 2015). In the early twentieth century, psychologists’ work turned around the measurement of the employees’ aptitudes and abilities to fit to a certain job (Wiley, 1995). What is believed to have changed the traditional perception of workers are The Hawthorne Studies, conducted between 1924 and 1932 by Harvard University professors and employees of the Hawthorne Works of the Western Electric Manufacturing Company in Cicero, Illinois. These three set of experiments have completely altered the practice of management by refuting the traditional believes and assumptions that employees are only motivated by money (Linder, 1998; Hanna et al., 2015). The first experiment investigated whether improving the lighting in a group’s work area would enhance the efficiency of the experimental group. The result was contrary to all expectations. Even though the efficiency of the first group did increase when the lighting was improved, when the opposite hypothesis was tested i.e. implying that a diminution of the lighting in the workplace would reduce the efficiency of a group work; efficiency continued to improve while workers could hardly see what they were doing. Researchers concluded that there were several other factors that might influence the workers’ output. This first result is now referred as the “Hawthorne effect” which is a reaction for which individuals modify their behavior when they are aware that they are being observed or treated differently from others. The two other experiments enlighten the importance of human relations and the influence of social aspects on workers’ behavior (Hanna et al., 2015).

In today’s society, motivation is seen as one of the most important factors to create the right environment and conditions to make people feel happy and satisfied about their work (Teik Toe et al., 2013). “What is motivation?”, “what motivates people to behave a certain way?” and “what motivates employees to work?” can be difficult to figure out and are somehow rarely asked (Wiley, 1995). According to Vroom (1995 cited by Wiley, 1995), individuals are more likely to wonder why people would climb mountains or commit suicide than to search the motivational factors behind their work. Indeed, Wiley (1995) argues that everyone is likely to
work at some point of his or her life. Working is so common that “what motivates us to work” is rarely asked and people do not even think about it when they seek for a job.

Past studies on the topic have enabled researchers to define employee motivation and develop similar and contradictory theories. The term “motivation” can be defined as the energy driving individuals to progress and work in order to achieve their goals (Teik Toe et al., 2013). To this first part, dealing with the energy behind individuals’ actions, Greenberg and Baron (2000, cited by Ajang, 2007), have also added two other main aspects. The second aspect refers to the decision people make alongside with the direction their behavior takes while the last part is about the workload and effort-time required for people to meet their goals. Kreitner (1995, cited in Lindner, 1998) defines the motivation as a psychological process that provides behavior aim and direction. Motivation has also been defined as the participation and commitment of individuals to achieve results (Hapoleta, 2005). As for this thesis, employee motivation is defined as the inner energy that drives workers to stay committed and strive to accomplish their own and the organization’s goals.

“Why motivate your employees?” Answering this question is vital since no organization can survive without motivated employees (Smith, 1994, cited by Lindner, 1998). According to Lindner (1998), motivated employees are essential to any organizations in the sense that motivation drives employees to be more productive. Thus, motivated people help organizations to survive. Following the Hawthorne Study results, many researchers developed theories to figure out by what and how employees are motivated (Lindner, 1998). While some early theories such as Frederick W. Taylor’s Scientific Management Theory implied that financial rewards impel motivation (Wiley, 1995), other researchers argue that the more important the employee’s income is, the less motivational money becomes (Kovach, 1987). According to Pink (2009), motivation is largely intrinsic and can be divided between purpose, mastery and autonomy. He also argues against the old models stating that people are driven by reward and fear of punishment.

The Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory (Maslow, 1943) describes five levels of needs from the lowest to the highest: physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualizing. The author argues that people are motivated to achieve certain needs and explains that we have to meet our lowest needs before the following level of needs can be fulfilled. The basic needs (e.g. physiological, safety, social, and esteem) are perceived as motivational when they are not satisfied. Furthermore, the longer these needs are unmet, the stronger the need to
fulfill them is. For instance, the longer people do not drink, the thirstier they become. It is only when one has satisfied his or her basic needs that he or she may reach the highest level of need, called the growth needs (e.g. self-actualization). According to Maslow (1943), everyone seeks to attain the highest level of the hierarchy but, because progress is often disrupted (e.g. divorce, unemployment etc.), it is not that easy to become fully self-actualized. In 1969, Alderfer developed a model explaining the simultaneous nature of Maslow’s five needs by compressing them from five to three. The first level is called existence, mapping to Maslow’s physiological and safety needs. The second level is relation, i.e. people experience existence but also relations needs such as our need to satisfy interpersonal relationships. It relates to Maslow’s social needs and the external part of self-esteem need. Finally, the last need is the need for development, i.e. personal growth and development by doing high quality work, equating to the internal part of self-esteem and to Maslow’s self-actualization needs. Alderfer, contrary to Maslow’s theory, claims this order is not fixed. Even though existence needs generally have a higher priority than relations and growth needs, priorities can change, depending on the person and the situation (Tonnquist, 2008). Following Maslow and Alderfer’s work, McClelland (1961) identified three motivators that everyone is supposed to have. His socially Acquired Needs Theory is based on the belief that people, regardless of age, gender, culture or race, are driven by a need for achievement, power or affiliation (Wiley, 2005). Although people have these three needs, only one is our dominant motivator driver. This dominant motivator derives from peoples’ life experiences and culture. People who have a high need for achievement will seek challenging but not impossible missions and projects. They thrive to excel and overcome any difficulties. Thus, they tend to avoid both low-risk and high-risk situations. When receiving feedback, they usually want to know both what they did right and what they did wrong to be able to improve later on. People motivated by affiliation need harmonious relationships, need to feel accepted and loved by other people and work best in a group environment. They also do not like uncertainty and risk. Just like the achievement-oriented employees, it is important to provide the affiliation-oriented employees a balanced feedback. However, the manager should start by reminding the person about how much he or she appreciates working with the employee before starting the real feedback session. Finally, the employees with a high need for power seek responsibilities. They usually love competition and are good negotiators who work best with goal-oriented projects. For this kind of employees, the feedback still needs to be balanced. The manager can be direct and has to keep them motivated by reminding them about their goals (Eyre, 2016). Furthermore, in 1960, the social psychologist Douglas McGregor created two
opposite theories on human management and motivation: the theory X and the theory Y. While the theory X argues that people dislike working and must be controlled and guided, theory Y is perceived as the basis of good management practice (McGregor, 1966). Indeed, theory X assumes that people are unmotivated and dislike responsibilities. If an authoritarian style of management is not adopted, employees will be passive and even counterproductive in reaching the goals. “While theory X places exclusive reliance upon external control of human behavior […], theory Y relies heavily on self-control and self-direct” (McGregor, 1966, p.12). Theory Y assumes people get pride in doing their work and naturally seek high responsibility and strive for recognition. The management assumes that workers are an asset for the company and try to align the company’s and the individual’s goals.

All the above theories provide information about what drives individuals. Once managers understand what drives employees to work, they will be able to stimulate them to perform well (Kovach, 1987). According to Wiley (1995), in most of the cases, employee performance is determined by three variables: (1) ability, (2) the work environment and (3) motivation. Indeed, the employee must have the right skills, knowledge and ability to execute the work properly. If the employee has not the right ability; appropriate training can solve the problem. If the work environment does not stimulate employee performance, altering it will overcome the issue. However, it is not that easy to deal with human motivation since individuals are complex and cannot simply be “fixed”.

The relationship between employee motivation and employee performance has been subject of broad interest since human relations theories have been developed after the publication of the Hawthorne Studies. Miles (1965), explains that these theories have challenged the traditional philosophy of management assuming that employees only seek financial rewards. By arguing that employees are an important part of the organization and that managers “were urged to create a ‘sense of satisfaction’ among their subordinates by showing interest in the employees’ personal success and welfare” (Miles, 1965, p.43), human relations theories have underlined the effect of motivation on performance. However, some researchers argue that no direct relationship exists between employee motivation and performance e.g. Vroom (1964), Brayfield & Crokett (1955) cited by Petty et al., in 1984. These authors have later reviewed the 15 studies Vroom has conducted and used others reviews (e.g. Baird 1976, Inkson 1978, Lopez 1982 etc.) to prove that employee motivation is related to job performance through arguing that there is a strong and consistent relationship between job performance,
individual and overall job satisfaction.

2.2 CONNECTION BETWEEN THEORIES

In 1981, Brass argues that certain specific job characteristics are essential to demonstrate the relationship between employee motivation and performance. According to this author, the presence of these particular characteristics will enhance the employee motivation that will lead to an increase in their performance. Taken from the five Hackman and Oldham (1976) job characteristics: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback; these are supposed to bring the employee to three “psychological states” that are: (1) experienced meaningfulness of the work, (2) experienced responsibility for outcome of the work and (3) knowledge of the actual results of the work activities. As shown on the figure below, these three states will lead to better motivation, performance and satisfaction with the work.

![Hackman and Oldham job characteristics model of work motivation](image)

Fig. 1: Hackman and Oldham job characteristics model of work motivation

(Hackman & Oldham, 1976, p.256)
According to this model, feedback is one of the five job characteristics that can enhance the employee motivation leading to better performance. In the book *The New One Minute Manager*, Blanchard & Johnson (2015) argue that quick feedback through one-minute goals, one-minute praises and one-minute re-directs highly contributes to the success of organizations. Through allowing employees to gain better knowledge about how well they performed, what they should improve, and how their manager feels about it; workers feel better about themselves, and therefore, produce better results. By intertwining these three concepts together, the authors believe that quick feedback is likely to stimulate the employee motivation assuming that many employees are happy to work, get pride in doing their work and seek progress (Theory Y, McGregor, 1960s). The authors believe the more motivated the employee is, the better performance he or she is likely to reach. While reaching better performance, the employee will feel satisfied about his or her work and is likely to stay within the organization.

Blanchard & Johnson (2015) developed a “game plan” to make it easier for people to become One Minute Managers. As shown in figure 2, the quick feedback strategy allows the employee to be acknowledged about his or her performance, thus gain self-awareness. By giving feedback to one person at a time, the feedback is likely to be perceived by the employee as fair and honest. He or she will therefore feel understood and a relationship based on trust is likely to develop between the employee and his or her manager. If the manager-employee relationship is trustworthy, the employee is likely to feel safe and be willing to do his or her best to achieve the goals they set together. As said earlier, “people who feel good about themselves produce good results” (Blanchard & Johnson, 2015, p.13). Therefore, by being satisfied with their work and work environment, the employee will be stimulated and motivated to reach better performance and contribute to the success of the whole organization. Thus, this performance discussion will be viewed by the employee as an objective, reliable and essential experience for him or her to gain self-awareness and progress in his or her work.
A very brief summary of THE ONE MINUTE MANAGER’S “GAME PLAN”
How to give yourself & others the gift of getting greater results in less time.
SET GOALS; PRAISE & REPRIMAND BEHAVIOURS; ENCOURAGE PEOPLE;
SPEAK THE TRUTH; LAUGH; WORK; ENJOY
and encourage the people you work with to do the same as you do!

Start

Set New Goals

ONE MINUTE GOALS
(on 1 sheet & read in 1 minute)

Goals Achieved (or any part of the goals)

You Win!

Proceed to

ONE MINUTE PRAISING
• praise the behaviour (with true feelings)
• do it soon
• be specific
• tell the person what they did right,
• and how you feel about it
• encourage the person (with true feelings)
• shake hands, and

Proceed With Success

Goals Not Achieved

You Lose

Go Back To Goals once
Then Proceed To

ONE MINUTE REPRIMANDS
• reprimand the behaviour (with true feelings)
• do it soon
• be specific
• tell the person what they did wrong,
• and how you feel about it
• encourage the person (with true feelings)
• shake hands, and

Return To Start

Fig. 2: The One Minute Manager Game Plan
(Blanchard & Johnson, 2015, p.57)
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the approach and methodological choices are explained and criticized. Thereafter, the credibility, reliability and ethical aspects are discussed.

3.1 SCIENTIFIC APPROACH AND RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1.1 Qualitative research

Because this thesis investigates the deep underlying factors and effects of quick feedback provided by the manager to the employees, a qualitative study is the most suitable choice. A qualitative method rather focuses on words than numbers and collects less but more detailed answers to get a deeper understanding in comparison to the quantitative method (Bryman and Bell 2011). According to Bryman & Bell (2011), the ontological position, also described as constructionist, implies that social skills rather come from the interactions between individuals than the “phenomena out there”. Besides, ontology often deals with questions concerning the nature of reality, what units exist and how these units needs to be perceived or grouped, related within a hierarchy and subdivided according to similarities and differences. Furthermore, this ontological position can directly be linked with some theories used in this thesis, thus seemed to be a suitable choice. Amaratunga & Baldry (2002) for instance argue that feedback rather than performance measurement provided by the manager has a stronger impact on the employees’ development and efficiency. Moreover, according to these authors, people are more motivated and affected by direct contact such as feedback rather than numerous measurement e.g. how well one performed one week in sales numbers in comparison to the previous week.

3.1.2 Inductive approach

Since limited research about how quick feedback provided by the manager can affect the employee’s performance has been done, an inductive approach seems to be the most relevant for this thesis. An inductive approach is mainly used in qualitative methods when theory is the outcome of the research and when no exact former theory will guide the research nor any hypothesis will be proved or disproved. An inductive approach emphasizes the consideration between theory and research, when the emphasis is placed on the used theories
(Bryman & Bell 2011). However, in this thesis, several theories about performance, motivation and feedback are used as the building block to help the authors throughout their research.

3.2 CHOICE OF COMPANY

The company that participated in this thesis is a Swedish bank and insurance company called Länsförsäkringar. Länsförsäkringar is a customer owned regional company that has 23 regional separated insurance offices. The strength of this company is, according to Länsföräkringar, their ability to adapt to the customer with the power of a large company. However, although they are a large company, they develop close relationships with the customer thanks to the strong local base. The company is owned by its customers and has no owner interest. Basically everything developed in Länsförsäkringar is supported exclusively on customer needs (Länsförsäkringar, 2016). Since this thesis seeks to deeply investigate how quick feedback affects the employees’ performance; using a company that focuses on employees’ performance, uses feedback and strives to understand how to motivate the employees was needed. In addition, to find a reachable company that is easy to collaborate with, due to the location and the language, was seen as a strong benefit. Since one of the Länsförsäkringar’s offices is located in Linköping and that one of the authors had contact with one of the managers in the company, the authors found the company suitable and in line with the purpose of the thesis.

After talking to one of the managers in the Linköping office, the decision to use Länsförsäkringar was made. According to this manager, Länsförsäkringar is a company that strongly focuses on customer relations i.e. the relationship between the employees and the customers is very important. The behavior and actions of the employees strongly influence the relationship the company develops with the customers as well as the reputation of the brand. Because Länsförsäkringar is owned by its customers, the main goal is to keep them satisfied since they have the power. However, the best way to get satisfied owners is, according to the company, to create a good working environment where the people feel confident and motivated to do a great work. In other words, the focus is to help the employees and satisfy the company's customers. To create that condition, the managers have a strong impact and hold the responsibility to continuously motivate their employees by giving feedback and having workshops.
3.3 QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

There are several types of qualitative researches: the ethnography/participant observation, qualitative interviewing, focus groups, language-based approaches to the collection of data, and the collection and qualitative analysis of texts and documents (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The most suitable method for this thesis is the qualitative interviewing, where the authors hold individual face-to-face interviews with the participants and focus on the personal and subjective perceptions to collect the information from the interviewees. This choice of method allows to get a deep understanding of how feedback from the manager affects the employees’ motivation to perform better and the ability to draw conclusions from the answers (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The interviews provide answers about how the employees currently perceive the feedback in the company and to what extent the “quick feedback” implementation affects the employees’ performance and motivation. Furthermore, the qualitative interviewing method is preferable when the goal is to get a deep understanding of the answers (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Thus, since the authors want to understand the underlying factors behind quick feedback, this method was chosen. Besides, to comprehend what outcome the quick feedback implementation will lead to, qualitative interviews were conducted with both the manager and the employees so the answers can be analyzed from both the feedback’s giver (i.e. manager) and receiver (i.e. employee) point of views.

There are two different types of interview-structures in the qualitative interviews: the unstructured interview with unprepared questions and the semi-structured interview that provides the interviewers with prepared questions for the interviewees (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In this thesis, the semi-structured structure was chosen as the primary structure since the authors want to understand the effects provided by quick feedback. To get this understanding, several open and detailed questions are needed as well as some flexibility to have the possibility to ask unprepared additional questions and the chance to modify the questions. This might be needed to get a better understanding of the answers or if some participants misunderstand a question. However, using this semi-structured method directly reduce the risk for misunderstandings and unclear answers, which is a great advantage in comparison to the structured interviewing method that does not allow any changes nor additional questions (Bryman & Bell 2011). The interviews were guided by a semi-structured interview template since it is flexible and allows both the interviewers and the participants to speak freely during the interview session (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The template includes questions written by the authors that covers the current
topics of this thesis; working environment, current feedback strategy, time and frequency of feedback, positive feedback vs. constructive criticism and the effect of feedback on the employees’ behavior, motivation and performance. Even though some of the interviews were in Swedish, both authors were present during all the interviews as well as all the interviews were recorded. The aim is to make sure all the information from the participants were saved in details in its true form. Thereby, the authors could focus on asking the questions and take notes of the participant’s observations and reactions. Furthermore, notes were taken because observations of how the participant answers and reacts has a strong impact on the answers and should be included when analyzing the collected data (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

3.4 MEASUREMENT

To measure how quick feedback from the manager influences the employees’ performance and how to formulate this quick feedback for the best outcome result; having participants from a company that strongly focuses on the relationship between the managers and the employees was necessary. The aim is to figure out whether the feedback should be mostly positive, constructive or a mix and whether the feedback should be individual or standardized. To measure this, the authors held interviews with both the manager and some employees two times with one week in between. During this week, the manager was asked to implement a specific quick feedback technique inspired by the authors of the New One Minute Manager book, 2015 (see appendix A). The technique implemented was the three step method: the one-minute goal, the one-minute praising and the one-minute re-direct. The manager was told how to implement the new strategy. In addition, he received a detailed implementation plan. The plan included how, when and what kind of feedback he would give his employee for the best possible outcome e.g. “people who feel good about themselves produce good results” (Blanchard & Johnson, 2015 p.13) and “feedback is the breakfast of champions” (Blanchard & Johnson, 2015 p.62). During the first interview session, the participants had to answer how the feedback system currently worked, how they felt about it and what currently motivated them. During the second session, the participants had to answer questions regarding how they felt after implementing the new “quick feedback” strategy. Other questions regarding how the strategy affected and motivated them were asked as well as their personal opinion was about this type of feedback system i.e. if they wanted it to be more often, individual, constructive…
3.5 PRIMARY DATA

Primary data has been collected through the semi-structured interviews with both the manager and ten of his employees. Five of the employees were female and five were males. Eight of them were students and part-time workers working four hours twice a week. The other two were full-time salesmen.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face with both the authors. Six of the interviews were held in English and five were held in Swedish. The participants decided themselves whether they wanted to have the interview in Swedish or in English. Moreover, they were informed they had the possibility to change language or ask questions in Swedish at any time during the session if something was unclear. The Swedish interviews were conducted by the Swedish author only since the second author is French. Although, the French author was in the interview room during the Swedish interviews to observe how the behavior of the participant. Using Swedish instead of English, for those who did not feel totally confident with English, helped to get broader and deeper answers. Indeed, it helped to reduce the risk for twisted answers from the participants due to the language barrier considering there already is a great risk for misunderstandings. Furthermore, all the interviews were transcribed not only to minimize the risk for missing out any information but also to understand how they answered the questions (Bryman & Bell, 2011). As mentioned before, two interview sessions were held with one week in between. The same participants participated during both the sessions and the interviews were conducted individually.

Moreover, the interviews were held in a private room in the office to make the participants feel comfortable. The authors chose the manager and the employees that participated accordingly to their availability for the first interview session. To choose the employees, the non-probability snowball sampling was used. Indeed, for this thesis, the first employee was chosen by the manager, the second employee was chosen by the first employee etcetera. This method is in no sense random since the authors contacted the first person who later on contacted with others (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Besides, there is always a risk by using samples. The risk within this case was that the answers from the participants were few and very individual. Since the snowball sampling method was used, it is very unlikely that the answers from the participants would be representative of the population (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The authors tried to avoid as many risks as possible taking into accounts variables such as the age, gender and the time they had been working for the company. Unfortunately, most of the
employees were in the same age range and had worked for approximately the same amount of time. However, the authors held interviews with the same amount of the different sexes to reduce the potential risk due to gender.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis of the empirical data was made in several steps after both interview sessions. The data was analyzed by the popular and far most used framework for analyzing data; the grounded theory (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The grounded theory is defined as a set of inductive methods used to conduct qualitative research in order to develop theories. This method is preferably used when the authors collect the data by qualitative interviews and observations, and is suitable when the analyzing process starts soon after the data is collected (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The grounded theory is preferably used in management research, including leadership and organizational change where the aim is to build a theory. Besides, the grounded theory focuses on “how” questions but also on “why” questions and can include a deep focus on actions to solve problems or develop strategies, e.g. how to manage a company for instance (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

After the first interview session, the Swedish interviews had to be translated from Swedish to English by the Swedish author to make it possible for both the authors to analyze and understand the collected data. Thereafter, the analyzing process began.

After the first interview session, all answers were individually written down and deeply analyzed by developing the collected data by each author. The authors individually wrote down their reflections, searched for similar patterns, relationships and differences, and connected the answers to theories. Thereafter, each author explained their individual thoughts before the authors discussed and developed concepts from the data together. Due to the reason the grounded theory has a coding approach, the answers and observations from the interviews were treated as indicators of a phenomenon and were given a “code”, also called a “conceptual label”. After giving all the answers and observations a code, the coded concepts could be putted into “blocks” and similar patterns from the answers could be drawn. Patterns such as; how the employee is affected and motivated by feedback, what kind of feedback motivate them the most, how much and often the feedback was provided and if that was enough according to the employees were found in the collected data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).
After the second interview session, the same process as after the first session was repeated once again with the new collected data. After that process, each author analyzed and compared the data from the first and second interview session individually before they presented what they thought and discussed the answers together. Similar patterns in the answers such as the thoughts of the implementation strategy, to what extent the new quick feedback strategy would affect the employees’ motivation, behavior and performance and how the implementation would impact the working environment were found and the authors concluded the outcome of the implementation from both the employees and the managers’ point of views.

3.7 QUALITY OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Although the qualitative research seems to be the most suitable for the purpose of this thesis, there are several risks with the qualitative interviewing method that can affect the conformability, the dependability, the transferability and the credibility. It is important that the authors and interviewers are aware of these risks. Thus, it is essential to take them into account when conducting the interviews and analyzing the collected data (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Conformability, which parallels to objectivity, is the degree to which someone else could confirm the results. Dependability, which parallels reliability, is the judging tool, which produces a result that is stable and consistent. Dependability gives proof that the outcome result of the survey is not random i.e. that the outcome would be the same if the survey was conducted again. The credibility of the result, which parallels to internal validity, is the tool that shows that the results are believable. Lastly, the transferability, which parallels to external validity, shows that the results can be generalized or transferred to other contexts (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

One potential risk in this thesis was that the interviewers influenced and led the participants in some direction or asked questions that were hard to understand correctly, which may affect the outcome of the answers. To minimize this risk, the semi-structured interviewing method was used since it allows additional questions. The second risk was to miss some information or details in the answers. Therefore, all the interviews were transcribed so the authors had the possibility to deeply understand the answers afterwards. The third risk was that the authors would wrongly analyze the data collected. To reduce this risk, the authors analyzed the data individually before analyzing it together. In conclusion, all the risks mentioned may lead to a less valid and reliable result. In other words, the outcome of the survey may be different.
whether the authors or the participants were different (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Because the quick feedback strategy was implemented for a very short period of time, the result of the research may be different whether it was implemented again e.g. in a longer period of time or in another company. Furthermore, since the answers from the participants were mostly homogenous, the authors believe the results to be transferred, i.e. that the results can be generalized and transferred to other contexts. However, further research within this area has to be done before any conclusions can be drawn. To maximize the chance for a valid and reliable result, everybody involved in this thesis was informed and aware of these risks.

3.8 ETHICAL ASPECT

The ethical aspect has been seriously considered in all parts of this thesis. It revolves around harm to participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy and deception (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Making all the participants aware of the ethical aspects is very important according to Bryman & Bell (2011). Because of that reason, all the participants involved in this study have been informed about the ethical aspects: all the collected information is anonymous, the participation is voluntary and they have the opportunity to cancel the participation any time. Having anonymous participation enables to make the interviewees feel confident and increases the chance to get honest answers (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The participants were also informed they, at any time, could refuse to answer questions they perceived to be an invasion of their privacy. With the aim to fulfill the ethical aspect as good as possible, all the participants were informed about the thesis and no information was hidden. The objective was to fulfill the requirement “lack of informed consent” to give the participants as much information as possible about the process and to make it easier for them to make the decision whether they wanted to participate or not (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

However, the participants were asked not to talk about their involvement in this thesis with the other participants in order to minimize the risk for less individual answers and that they influenced each other. The authors took the ethical aspects very seriously and made the participants deeply aware of all the ethical aspects. Indeed, the authors believe the more carefully informed the respondents are about the thesis purpose and ethical aspects, the better chance the authors will get honest answers, thus obtain valid and reliable results.
3.9 SOURCE CRITICISM

Source criticism has been carefully taken into consideration throughout this research. Being source critical, according to Bryman & Bell (2011), refers to a careful review and questioning of all the sources before using them. The data needs to show several qualities such as independency, authenticity, concurrency and tendency, i.e. that the authors have been critical of the quality of the data collected. Source criticism is essential to get a high degree of reliability and validity when collecting the data either from the observed company, books, articles or websites. For this thesis, all collected information comes from academic articles available on Google Scholar, the LIU library or from academic books that the authors believe trustworthy. There is always a risk when collecting information from a company because companies always try to look as good as possible. Therefore, all the information about Länsförsäkringar comes from the interviews held by the authors or was taken from the latest annual report that is reviewed by accountants and seems therefore trustworthy.

Due to the reason the authors have been source critical during the whole process of this thesis, the results of this research are considered to be credible and trustworthy.

3.10 LIMITATION

It is important to note both the methodological limitations of this study and the limitations of the researchers involved in this thesis.

First, an important limitation of this research is the reliance of the study on a sample containing mainly part-time employees. The use of ten sales employees, with differences in terms of gender and language used during the interviews i.e. both English and Swedish, made it possible to examine the employees’ perception and feelings towards the current feedback strategy of their manager. However, the results of this thesis can be limited in the sense that the generalizability to all kinds of employees may be questioned. Indeed, eight employees out of ten only work eight hours per week, which may lessen their sense of belonging to the company and their interest and involvement in the feedback process. Furthermore, all of them are Swedish, thus are culturally tied to each other, and belong to the same age range, from 19 to 30 years old. These factors limited the ability to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of quick feedback for all kinds of employees working in different industries and in distinct countries.
Another important limitation of this study is the time available to investigate the research problem and effectively implement the quick feedback strategy. Indeed, due to the high workload of the manager of the sales department and the assignment’s due date, the quick feedback strategy was only implemented for five days. As mentioned earlier, since the majority of the employees work eight hours a week, and due to the important amount of work the manager had to deal with during this week, the implementation could not be implemented in an effective and impactful way. Indeed, the manager did not have enough time to use this strategy and implement any change. The employees did not work enough time to perceive any change and be affected by the quick-feedback strategy. Consequently, further research could benefit from the use of a wider sample of participants in terms of age, cultural background and company’s industry as well as a greater time available i.e. several months would be necessary to measure change over time.

Lastly, a final limitation is represented by the researchers’ ability to write a completely objective research. Indeed, due to the age of the authors, none of them have worked more than one year for the same company. Thus, their appreciation and comprehension of the working environment might not be complete and accurate. In parallel, the employees’ answers might have been biased by the authors’ subjectivity. However, to counter this potential issue, all the interview questions have been reviewed by both professionals and external employees (i.e. not involved in this thesis) and external students. Furthermore, the different cultural backgrounds of the authors, i.e. Swedish and French, might have led them to comprehend the employees’ answers differently according to their own past experiences. Yet, this issue is also a strength in the sense that it allowed to draw a nuanced analysis of the employees’ answers. Indeed, having two interviewers from different countries enabled the development of a more balanced analysis.
4. RESULTS

This chapter includes an overview of the company Länsförsäkringar and the results from the interviews are presented. It gives the reader a better understanding of how Länsföräkringar currently works with feedback and reveals the outcome of the implementation of the quick feedback strategy.

4.1 EMPIRICAL FRAMEWORK

4.1.1 Introduction to Länsförsäkringar

Länsförsäkringar AB is one of the biggest insurance companies in Sweden. It is wholly owned by its customer and consists of 23 regional based insurance companies around the country. Länsförsäkringar is more than just an insurance company. Alongside with the insurance offer, its customers are also provided with a complete solution with banking, real-estate broker-age services and pension. It has no external stakeholders and its main task is to satisfy the customers’ needs and requirements. Länsförsäkringar focuses on long-term relationships and has currently more than 3.7 million customers and approximately 6,000 employees. The overall company believes and cares about long-term solutions through focus on sustainability, to have a stable ground for future challenges and believes in employee commitment. (Länsförsäkringar, 2015).

Länsförsäkringar is a company that strongly focuses on development. According to the annual report of 2015, the year was exceptional but turbulent in many aspects due to the movement of people caused by wars around the world and some instability affecting the financial aspects. Despite the difficulties, and with a lower financial growth than expected in the beginning of the year, the company has continued to focus and believes in development. Furthermore, the company always tries to change for the better. In 2015, Länsförsäkringar established a new unit called the Customer and Channel support that “will provide the best possible support to the regional insurance companies in their customer meetings, regardless of the channel in which they take place” (Länsföräkringar, 2015, p.2).

This new thinking company that always seeks change and focuses on growth is willingly working with feedback. Therefore, Länsförsäkringar seemed to be a relevant company for this
thesis.

4.1.2 Organizational structure of the sales department of Länsförsäkringar

The company is divided into several departments. The sales department is run by M.X who has been working in Länsförsäkringar since 2009. He currently is the head of the sales department. M.Y has been working there since August 2011 and is the sales manager of the company. He is the one who has been interviewed during both sessions.

Together, they are responsible for managing the personnel, which approximately corresponds to 40 people. They take care of the people working in Länsförsäkringar and manage them by creating their schedules, keeping track of their working hours, keeping the list of clients they are calling up-to-date, giving them feedback, among other activities.

4.1.3 Data collected from the interview sessions

In this section, all the answers from both the interview sessions are written down and explained. The first part includes answers from the first interview session and the second part includes answers from the second interview session.

First interview session

Data collected from the interview with the manager of the sales department

The first interview was conducted with the manager of the sales department. He is 44 years old and had worked for the company since 2011. When he was asked what his work was; he answered that he works as a sales coach. According to the manager, his job is to motivate, coach and support the employees as well as keeping everybody happy and creating a good working environment.

According to the manager, there is no real feedback strategy used in this company. He is supposed to listen to one or two calls every night but due to the lack of time, this is not possible since he perceives feedback as being too time-consuming. However, he sometimes
tries to listen to the employees’ conversations with an extra headphone when they are calling clients. Then, he gives them some feedback with tips about how to improve their sales talk in the phone. “Because people work short hours and due to lack of time, we have to focus on coaching them more about the products, i.e. how the insurance work so they know how to answer that to the clients […] We mainly focus on technical feedback. The feedback we give is not so much about the sales technique but we really try to provide the employees with positive feedback such as good work and nicely done. Since the employees are working so short time, only some nights every week, our philosophy is to encourage them to do the best of themselves and tell them it will be good enough”.

According to the manager’s personal thoughts about feedback, he believes that feedback is really important especially when the employees are working for a long period. “We can give much more feedback about sales technique when people work for around one year and a half since we believe it will be worth it and they have the time to learn and progress due to the feedback”.

Regarding the exclusiveness of the feedback, it is always given individually. “The feedback is always individual but since everybody are working in the same room, everybody can hear and we believe it is good […] My thought of this open office is it will lead to more motivated employees when they hear that someone else is performing well and receive feedback”. “As mentioned before, I really believe in feedback but due to the lack of time, the feedback is very quick, from some seconds up to a few minutes. I do not have the time to sit down and talk to everybody but I try to, at least, give all the employees some feedback every day. However, since most of the employees are students and part time workers who will not work here for a long time or come back, my thought is to keep the work as simple as possible. For that purpose, quick and positive feedback is enough to keep them happy and alert”.

According to the manager, in this workplace, constructive criticisms have less importance. “I always give feedback when they do something good but if I have to give them some constructive criticisms, I always try to say it in a nice way. I begin to tell them something they did well, and then I continue with the constructive criticism and thereafter ends with some nice words, good work for instance. Since they are working here for so short time, I do not think constructive criticism as something really necessary”. Furthermore, giving constructive criticism to the full time workers as well as longer feedback seemed more important for the company. Overall, the manager prefers to give the employees positive feedback. “People don’t
care enough about their work here because it is an extra job. I could give them more constructive criticism but I think they would not enjoy the job to the same extent then and maybe quit or not come back. In this department, the employees get promotion if they sell. The salary from the beginning is very low so we think it is better that people develop by themselves and get motivated to sell more due to the promotion. Even if they do not sell, it is not a loss for the company since the margin is so high.

The key to be a successful manager, according to this manager, is to adapt the way of giving feedback to each personality and make everyone feel comfortable. For certain people, a more standardized way of giving feedback is used while some receive more personal ones.

**Data collected from the interviews conducted with ten employees**

*The employees’ answers from this first interview session have been transcribed, examined and divided by theme. The aim is to find patterns and ultimately answer the research questions.*

**Working environment**

During the interview, a series of questions related to the current feedback strategy of the manager has led the respondents to talk about the working environment of Länsförsäkringar company. According to each employee interviewed, working for this company is a real pleasure in the sense that the manager “really tries to keep everybody happy and create a familiar environment”. From respondent F’s point of view, the manager really strives to “keep up the good spirit”. Yet, according to another part-time employee; respondent D “sometimes it is a bit too nice here at work and you can be a little lazy and too relaxed”. For this respondent, this is mainly due to the fact that the manager wants to “make everybody positive and happy in their working position […] so the employees sound happy in the phone and can make good calls”.

Overall, this relaxed and happiness-oriented working environment makes the employees of Länsförsäkringar satisfy about their work. Besides, this environment helps them to gain self-confidence and thanks to the “good spirit here, [they] can really speak freely” (respondent G). Finally, for respondent I “it’s great here; there’s a good working environment. I think it’s a fun place to go to when you wake up in the morning”.


Current feedback strategy

For the majority of the population interviewed, the manager has no specific feedback strategy. According to respondent B, feedback is simply not part of the manager’s priorities. “[The manager] very quickly tells me when I did something good. Actually, I don’t think he thinks so much about it and that is the reason why no strategy is used”. For respondent E, the reason behind this no-feedback-strategy phenomenon is that “the work is so easy”. This employee just “[does not] know how [he] can develop the feedback”. Usually, the manager “just says good work, nothing more [he] just shout out or just say good job or whatever”.

Yet, four participants do believe the manager adopts a strategy while giving his feedback. According to respondent F, his strategy is to keep the feedback quick. For him, “why [the manager] keeps it so quick is that [he] wants people to be on top”. The employee has “never heard him saying something negative so it is about keeping up the good spirit so I guess it is some kind of strategy”. Respondent G believes the manager has based his strategy according to his personality. For him, his manager and M.X (i.e. head of the sales department) play the “good cop / bad cop [game] unintentionally”. Indeed, “[the manager] is the relaxed one; while [M.X] is the one who always say you can do better to make me go even harder […] [The manager] wants to be the loved one because that makes him feels good while [M.X] does not really care what people think”.

Finally, respondent E informed the authors about the goal strategy that is related to the feedback strategy in the sense that “when [the employee] completes [his] goals, [he] gets direct feedback”. This employee explains that every employee’s goals of the night are written down on a board that everyone has access to. “I think this board with all the employees’ goals is a strategy to make and keep the employees motivated”.

Privacy and personalization of the feedback

Usually, according to the employees, the manager provides feedback in an individual way, telling good job to a specific employee. However, the manager does not give his feedback privately but in front of everyone. Respondent H explained that “when it is positive feedback [she] does not mind getting it in front of everybody but if it is something [she] could improve, [she] would prefer having it privately”.

Many employees believe that the manager “adapts his way of giving feedback” to each person. “It is different [according to] how loud, social, outgoing you are, it depends on
personalities” (respondent J). By doing it this way, respondent B explained that she “feels that he means what he says, it feels real and that makes [her] feel satisfied”. Overall, the employees think the way of providing the feedback is standardized, i.e. is the same from one person to another, yet personalized. “It is mostly standard. I think it is mostly the same, but it is not because they are not interested in us as individuals, they do know us very good. They do care about what we do, how we feel, but mostly the positive feedback is the same for everyone” (respondent F). “I remember once when I had fever and I was super tired. My goal for the night was to sell four insurances but, in the end, I only sold two. I was so disappointed but then my manager really supported me and said that I did a really good job, so I really like that he adapts to each person and situation” (respondent C).

**Time and frequency of feedback**

Even though every employee does not agree on whether the manager uses a specific strategy or not, each respondent agrees that the manager only provides quick feedback. “Just some sentences”, “it is very short and quick”, “just a few seconds”, “very short, two minutes perhaps” (respectively respondent A; D; F; G). While some employees “can’t see any reasons why the feedback should be longer” (respondent D), and “do not feel that [the employee] need more” (respondent F), others “absolutely believe that [he/she] could have gotten some more” and “would prefer if [they] had a longer discussion sometimes, a chance to talk and discuss” (respondent G). An employee has however underlined the fact that the manager would likely “be willing to have a longer talk if [the employee] asked for it” (respondent C).

Concerning the frequency of the feedback, the majority of the participants believes that the manager provides feedback in a daily basis and sometimes several times a day. Others argue that they receive feedback every week, sometimes a couple of times per week.

**Positive feedback versus constructive criticism**

Only one employee out of ten answered he received more constructive criticism than positive feedback (respondent G). This employee is a full-time salesman who receives constructive feedback from the head of the sales department (M.X). However, he does not often receive this kind of feedback from the manager of this department. Thus, every employee agrees that the manager of the sales department focuses on positive feedback.
When the interviewers asked the participants how they thought their manager provides them with feedback, numerous answered that the feedback was either quick, positive or both. “It is very good, [the manager] is always so positive […] He gives me a lot of responses, that makes me happy” (respondent A). “I receive a lot of positive feedback when I perform well. The feedback is most of the time directly when I do something good” (respondent J). According to respondent B, “the positive feedback makes [him feel] happy and [push him] to keep up [his] good work”. For another employee, getting positive feedback motivates her to be better. “Every time I complete my goals, or get closer to my goals, I receive positive feedback and that motivates me” (respondent C).

Overall, many respondents expressed a desire for more constructive feedback because “when [one] receives constructive feedback, it is always good to know; to be able to do something better later on” (respondent H). This employee explained that she “would appreciate if they get a little more constructive feedback”. Another added that if “[she] would get constructive criticism, [she] thinks [she] would push herself harder and that would be very good but [she] has never received any, so [she] would appreciate that” (respondent A). For respondent H, “[receiving] constructive feedback [is] always good to be able to do something better later on”. A full-time employee argued, “sometimes one has to hear something bad or just something to wake up and do better. Not necessarily something absolutely negative”. He concluded by saying that “feedback is great to become a better worker”. However, respondent J reminded, “it is important to have a good balance, because you can’t have too much [of feedback]. If you feel or noticed that they are forcing themselves to say so because they know it would be good for their statistics, then it is not honest”.

The effect of feedback on the employees’ behavior, motivation and performance

Each employee interviewed believes that receiving feedback from their manager motivates them. Indeed, most of the participants answered that receiving positive feedback increased their motivation and satisfaction of their work. “Yes, I get motivated, especially when I get positive feedback; it makes me feel that I did something good” (respondent D). “Yes I get motivated by feedback. It is important because it makes me feel good, and I become more motivated of competing with my colleagues since I always try to be the best” (respondent E). Regarding constructive criticism, every employee agrees that learning something new about how one could change the way he or she does something is valuable. Indeed, an employee
explained that “yes it motivates [her]. Especially when [she] learns something new because, then, [she] can get feedback about how to do [something] and learn from the feedback. That makes [her] go from uncomfortable to comfortable” (respondent B).

When the employees receive feedback, their behavior is most likely to change according to what they have heard and how the feedback made them feel. Interestingly, all the employees interviewed do not share the same point of view concerning how feedback affects their behavior. While some employees agree that they “become more confident and happier” (respondent B), are “in a better mood” (respondent H) that leads them to “feel good and […] push [themselves] to sell more and make more phone calls” (respondent I); others argue that “it does not affect [them] so much” (respondent E). For respondent F, “the kind of feedback [he] gets here is not really enough to overthink it, so [he] just act normal as [he] always does. [He] would behave differently if [they], i.e. the manager and him, actually sat down and talked about [his] behavior and working situation. But since it is so quick, [he] just take it in and, of course, if [the manager] says something important, like do not do this again, [he] would not but since [the manager] just comes by, [he] only answers thank you”.

Finally, many employees have related the fact that feedback makes them become more motivated to improve their performance. One employee strongly believes that “since it affects [her] motivation, […] it affects [her] performance as well” (respondent D). Another student explained “if I receive feedback, which is when I do something good, I become motivated to work and that directly affects my performance since I want to make more calls and push myself. If I receive less feedback, which means that I did not perform (i.e. sell) that well, it affects my performance in a bad way. Then I maybe rather stay at home the next day or focus on school instead of going to work” (respondent A). Another employee agreed that “[she] performed better when [she] receives positive responses. Since [she] mostly only receives feedback when [she] performs well, and [she] likes feedback, [she] needs to sell more to get feedback” (respondent C). However not every respondent thought the same way. Indeed, respondent F answered that “it would affect [his] performance if the feedback came in a bigger way”. Another told the interviewers that feedback does not really affect his performance.
The effect of positive feedback versus constructive criticism on the employees’ performance

Concerning the effect of positive feedback versus constructive criticism on the employees’ performance, the participants have really divergent opinions. One employee believes that “if [she] would get constructive criticism, [she] would push herself harder” (respondent A). Another agreed and stated “my performance always increases the most after getting constructive criticism” (respondent D). For another participant, “constructive criticism affects [him] better because [he] knows that [he] is not perfect and constructive feedback develops [him]. Constructive criticism gives [him] a kick in the ass while the positive is just nice to hear” (respondent E). Some others argued that “positive is better because then you reach for the bosses’ comments as well, also to know that they appreciate what you do” (respondent I). Yet, even though some participants believe that positive feedback gives a boost, respondent H explained that “maybe it is a bit better when [she] gets positive feedback but [she] thinks that if the constructive feedback makes [her] feel that [she] knows what [she] is supposed to do, then [she] will get really motivated and [her] performance will improve. It needs to be specific, clear and also combined with the positive ones”.

Second interview session

The second interview session was conducted one week after the first session. During this week, the manager was told to implement a quick feedback strategy for the participants of the first interview session. The manager received a guide explaining in details each step of the quick feedback process i.e. why, how and what to say during the one-minute goal, the one-minute praise and the one-minute re-direct. Furthermore, the authors and the manager discussed the guide in the end of the first interview session to avoid any misunderstandings. Indeed, the manager had to implement this strategy without letting the employees know about it. This due to the reason the authors wanted to ask the employees if they had noticed any changes during the last week (see interview questions in appendix B).

Unfortunately, because of various reasons (e.g. the fact that the manager had a lot to do during this week, the lack of time i.e. one week to implement such a strategy is not enough; the limited presence of the part-time workers, etc.) this quick feedback implementation has not been noticed by any participant interviewed. To still get an understanding of the potential
effectiveness of this strategy, the authors have asked a series of back-up questions to the participants (see appendix D). Through this second interview session, eight respondents out of the ten interviewed during the first session gave their point of views concerning the quick feedback strategy although they did not experience it.

**Data collected from the interview with the manager of the sales department**

According to the manager, he has tried to implement the new quick feedback strategy as much as he could, but due to the lack of time and the short period of time i.e. eight days, it has not gone as successful as he hoped. “It has been crazy much to do this week. I have worked a bit alone here but I have tried to implement the strategy [...] I have read through the implementation plan and it is excellent to have this strategy. I am totally sure this is the way to work because it is the way my boss and I really want to do it. To see it printed, it is really good, but as I said, it has been too much to do this week”. Furthermore, due to the lack of time during the upcoming months, the manager will try to implement this strategy after the summer. “I can see the benefits of doing it, because it is the way I would want to be coached [...] When the winter comes back we will hopefully have it implemented. I know this is the way to coach these people. So even if I did not really have the time to do the implementation, I think I managed a little more and put some effort by putting down the goals and coach them.”

“I cannot see any real difficulties with this strategy but in this workplace, where most of the employees are working four hours twice a week, I think it can take a bit longer to implement. Also, since this strategy is about really short feedback, I believe it is time-efficient and I am a fan of it.” The manager also explained that he would prefer to give feedback by using this strategy instead of the current way. “Now we listen to the employees and observe them with an extra headphone and thereafter we have a personal meeting in a private room [...] It is time-consuming and I do not think they learn or improve so much from this current technique [...] I think the outcome result of the quick feedback strategy would be both easier and better.”

According to the manager, the working environment was as positive as usual, but since the implementation was not successfully implemented, it is hard to say if the working environment was affected to some extent. “If we had it going a little more, I think it would have a great influence on the group [...] I think they would become more motivated in the long-run of this strategy by just giving some tips about how and what to do [...] they would sell better
but also feel better of getting immediate feedback [...] so I am sure the whole group would benefit on it.”

According to the first interview session, the manager almost only provided the employees with positive feedback. After he had read the quick feedback strategy, he tried to give the employees some more constructive criticism and remind them about their working goals. “I tried to tell them not to overthink what they do and keep it simple [...] when they have worked here for a while they start to talk too much and inform the customers with unnecessary information [...] when I heard them doing that I told them to stop [...] I like to be specific and tell them immediately when they need or deserves some feedback or criticism, it is much more effective [...] I actually think I should focus on giving the employees more constructive feedback since I can see the good outcome of it [...] but it depends on situation and on the time of the year; sometimes I should focus to just keep them happy, when no customers are answering in the phone for instance.”

According to how the manager thought this feedback strategy could affect the employees’ behavior, he answered it could have an impact. “I think it will have an impact if you adopt this strategy and do it frequently. If you do it all the time, then they will be much more aware of why they are here. I think they will stay more focused if they are aware that me and my boss know what they are doing and if they know when they are doing something good as well as not so good [...] I think it will have a positive impact if they know that we will give them feedback right away, then they will feel that they have a little more help to achieve their goals and feel more pushed”.

Regarding the strategy’s effect on motivation, the manager was positive. “I think it will have a positive impact on the motivation because they will be more aware of why they are here. Sometimes they do not feel that they belong to the company in general [...] so if we can tell them that what they do makes a difference for the company [...] then they will feel more motivated.”

Regarding the employees’ performance, the manager was positive as well. He believes the employees could stay more focused and make more calls and keep the quality the same or a bit better. “I do not think anybody would feel stressed by this technique [...] actually I think they would feel relieved and feel that we care”.

The manager had no true answer regarding what kind of feedback should be provided the most due to the impact of performance and motivation. “I think most people here, the short
time workers, are more impacted by the one-minute praise than the one-minute re-direct [...] but the full-time workers, or those who seek to obtain full time or want to stay here for a while, succeed much more when I give them constructive criticism but it differs from person to person. My thought is that the short time workers get instantly happy with the praise, it is not necessarily their goal to be super salesmen in here [...] but I think it is really important to remind them about their goals, why they are here. Then I remind them that if they are not making any calls, they will not get any extra money. I think that reminding of the goals is really important, especially for the young people, everything is about their studies in daytime and they find it very interesting to interact with people they do not meet usually and sometimes forgot that they are here to work. If I had to rank the one-minute goal, the one-minute praise and the one-minute re-direct, I would say that the goal is the most important thing in this workplace due to the reason they need to be motivated and reminded of their work [...] but for me, the one-minute praise is the most important since many of the employees seek mostly for praise. Thereafter the one-minute goal and lastly the one-minute re-direct.”

Regarding the manager’s own motivation of using this strategy, he believes he would feel more motivated. “I have already felt more motivated and if we decide to go this way, it will definitely have an impact on me because that is the way I want to work. I do not want to write down every month what my employees have done. I want to do it when they are working, constantly. So if we can implement this, my motivation will be impacted. I would gladly work like that. Our current strategy is a bit awkward [...] sitting and listening to the employees does not feel natural. It is much more natural with this quick and immediate feedback strategy. It really fits with who I am. If it is possible and if the head of the company accepts it, I would like to work with this strategy.”

Data collected from the interview with the employees

The quick feedback strategy perceived by the employees of Länsförsäkringar

After being explained what the quick feedback strategy is, all the participants gave their personal opinion about it. Every respondent finds the strategy interesting. Four respondents answered that this strategy sounds very good. According to respondent J, the manager and the head of the department are already using this strategy but without a real structure: “I think they always have done it in some kind of level but have no real focus. If they would get a better
strategy, I think it will work better”. For two employees, this quick feedback strategy sounds really relevant to this kind of working place “since most of the employees only work part-time”. One respondent explained that “we would not like to “waste our time”; sitting with them for half an hour while we only work four hours. I think, for this place, it is a good strategy” (respondent J). Another argued “I think it would work well for this kind of job since we make so many calls; I would prefer to get feedback immediately” (respondent J). Another employee agreed “it is good to get to know what you are doing good and what you can improve to get quick feedback” thus, believe that the one-minute praise and one-minute redirect are relevant to improve their performance (respondent K). Other participants believe that the one-minute goal “can motivate you”, and therefore “sounds really good” (respondent Y). Finally, according to another part-time employee, this strategy “would have a better impact on [his or her] performance because [he or she] would feel important and seen by [his or her] superiors” (respondent I).

From what have been said during this interview session, all the employees agree on the fact that “this quick feedback would be better than the one [they] currently have” (respondent K).

**Believed effects of this strategy on the employees’ behavior, motivation and performance**

Most of the participants believe that this strategy would have a positive impact on their motivation. Indeed, respondent A stated “I would be more motivated if he reminded me about my goal”. Respondent B added that the quick feedback strategy “would have a great impact on [her] motivation since [she] will be more informed”. A part-time employee explained that she would appreciate to receive motivational support “I think it would be good to, every now and then be reminded of why I am sitting there; because I don’t think I ever, since I came here, heard some motivational talk or anything similar. So I think it would do good” (respondent J).

By being acknowledged in advance that they will get feedback on their performance, one respondent explains that she will get more motivated. “I think I would try to improve [my performance]. Because right now, the way it works; I don’t know if I will get feedback or not but if I knew that I would get feedback maybe I would try do even better and try to improve. It would improve my motivation. Hopefully if I try to get better I will get better. Since I would get more motivated, I think it would affect my performance because if you believe in yourself then it is easier to improve.” (respondent K). Even though performance “is strongly affected by other things as well, [for instance] how many quotes [the employee] has sent out the weeks
before and if many people are answering the phone" (respondent J), it is perceived by respondent B as “an outcome of good motivation. Therefore, [she] does believe [she] would perform better due to a higher motivation”.

**Impact and importance of the one-minute goal vs. the one-minute praise vs. the one-minute redirect**

Half of the participants believe that the one-minute praise would be the most impactful “one-minute concept” in terms of motivation and performance stimulation. Indeed, in respondent D words, positive feedback “motivates and push me. I like to hear when I do something good” while constructive criticism is less important. I would not like to hear every little mistake I make, but of course if I make the same mistake several times I would like to hear it”. For respondent J, “feeling good about yourself is the most important”, this is why the one-minute praise comes first for this employee. For another employee, positive feedback is the most important because it affects the mood of the employees, leading them to feel more confident (respondent K).

However, every employee does not think the same way. Indeed, respondent G explained, “the one-minute redirect seems really interesting [...] I believe I would really want to know if I do anything wrong so this one-minute redirect would best work for me”.

Respondent A agreed, stating that “normally [she] always receive good feedback so [she] thinks constructive critic would push [her] the most”. Finally, two employees answered that the one-minute goal is the most interesting concept. Indeed, by being reminded of their goals, these employees believe that their motivation greatly increase.

Furthermore, every interviewed employee agreed that the manager should give the same importance to the three concepts be giving “the same amount of all parts” (respondent B). For the employees, the manager “should absolutely balance them” and “divide the time between all three” (respondent J/G). Indeed, respondent G added, “it is always fun to hear when you do a good job. It is good to hear it if I close a big sale or anything, it is always fun if he approaches me and say good work. I believe this is just as much important as constructive feedback after all. So all three should have the same importance”. For another respondent, even though positive feedback is nice “everyone needs to hear some constructive criticism because if you only get positive feedback then you would lean back and in the end do not really be happy with yourself which is not good. You need to have something to work for” (respondent I). Finally,
another respondent concluded that although “you feel better with the positive feedback, you would not improve if you have not got any constructive criticism. I think the goal reminding is important to remind what you are aiming for” respondent K.

**Believed impact of the quick feedback strategy on the employees’ self-confidence and satisfaction of work**

Almost every participant strongly believes that this strategy would affect his or her self-confidence and satisfaction of work in some way. For respondent B “I would become more pushed and motivated. I think if I received more constructive critic it would affect my self-confidence in a bad way but I would perform better [...] while positive feedback would be good for my confidence but might make me become a bit lazier and affects my motivation and performance in a bad way”. On the contrary, respondent J believes that both positive feedback and constructive criticism will help his satisfaction to improve since it would help him to perform better. “When you receive positive feedback and constructive criticism it shows that the manager cares of how well you are doing and then you maybe perform better.”
5. ANALYSIS

This chapter includes an analysis of the empirical data where the answers are discussed. Furthermore, the information collected by the interviews is connected to the theories described in the theoretical framework and conclusions are drawn. The implementation of the quick feedback strategy was not as successful as the authors hoped. Therefore, in this analysis, the authors focus on the participants’ opinions about the impact of this strategy on motivation and its potential effect on the employees’ performance.

5.1 FEEDBACK ALLOWS THE EMPLOYEES TO GAIN SELF-KNOWLEDGE

The data, collected from ten employees and one manager during the interview sessions, shows that every participant believes in the importance of feedback. Feedback, especially positive feedback is perceived as a reward that leads the participants to feel good about their work performance and about themselves at a personal level. However, not every type of positive feedback leads the employees to feel that way. Prue & Fairbank (1981) argue that, although feedback has many benefits, its outcome varies along several dimensions. One of these dimensions is the temporal characteristics of feedback i.e. when the feedback is given e.g. daily, weekly, monthly and the duration of feedback e.g. few minutes or hours. Conforming to these authors’ thoughts, the participants explained that the temporal dimension of feedback strongly affects how they brook and assimilate the information. Indeed, feedback has to be time-efficient i.e. specific and quick, to be relevant in the participants’ point of view. “I can’t see any reasons why the feedback should be longer” (respondent D) and “I do not feel that [the employees] need more” (respondent F). The part-time employees further explained they did not want to “waste [their] time sitting with them [i.e. the managers] for half an hour while [they] work four hours [per night]” (respondent J). As such, the duration and relevancy of feedback influence how the employees react to feedback, affecting their motivation and performance.

Conforming Bechtel et al.’s (2015) belief that the overall though of getting feedback is strongly valuable, results of this study show that both the manager and the ten employees believe in the power of feedback. For Prue & Fairbank (1981), people value feedback because of its benefits such as its low cost, flexibility, ease of use and simplicity. In this case, the manager seems to believe in the simplicity and ease of use of feedback. However, the manager
does not use any specific feedback strategy because he does not have time to do so. “The focus is put on coaching them about the technical aspects. Feedback is too time-consuming.” Thus, the manager does not value feedback because of its low cost. In the contrary, he believes that the current feedback strategy developed by the company is too costly in terms of time wasted to be interesting. However, the manager provides quick and positive feedback to his employees in order to “keep everyone happy so they can sell well”.

By getting quick positive feedback, the majority of the participants feels supported by their manager. “It makes everybody positive and happy in their working position” (respondent D). Opposing Maurer’s point of view (2011) on the fact that individuals only use feedback when something goes wrong, the manager of Länsförsäkringar believes in the power of positive feedback. For him, feedback should not be used to assess the employee’s failure to reach a goal but rather to congratulate the employee for trying to reach his or her goals and make the employee feels good. “I am only responsible for keeping the people in here happy, and when they are happy they are selling a lot of insurances.” This manager’s support, approval and recognition make the majority of the respondents feel relaxed and secure in their work. Therefore, the employees interviewed are highly satisfied with their work environment, thus; enjoy working and contributing to the growth of Länsförsäkringar. Since they know they will get positive feedback when they perform well, the respondents’ motivation to always perform better increase, and their willingness to put efforts reaching greater goals improves. “Every time I complete my goals, or get closer to my goals, I receive positive feedback and that motivates me” (respondent C).

Drawing upon McGregor’s (1960) theory Y stating that individuals get pride in doing their work, the data collection could indicate that the employees of Länsförsäkringar seek quick feedback to satisfy their needs for achievement and self-respect. Indeed, McGregor argues that human beings work on their own accord because this is the only way for them to potentially meet these two needs. Even though the manager does not have to actively intervene to get things done, his mission is to maximize the employees’ commitment to work (McGregor, 1960). By showing his support through the formulation of positive feedback, the manager drives the employees to get motivated to perform as good as possible. The manager also helps them to stay committed to their goals and therefore satisfy their needs for achievement and self-respect.
However, the interview sessions have clearly emphasized a desire for more constructive criticism from the manager. Respondent H stated that he “would appreciate if they get a little more constructive feedback” and respondent A added that “[she] would get more constructive criticism [she] thinks [she] would push herself harder. And that would be very good but [she] has never received any, so [she] would appreciate that”. Although the majority of the respondents showed their will for positive feedback since it affects their mood in a favorable way, they also feel that it is not sufficient to gain a genuine knowledge about their abilities and performance. In that sense, for the majority of the respondents, constructive criticism is noteworthy. Through getting a specific and clear review about what and how to improve certain aspects of their work and daily-tasks, they will be able to improve their expertise and performance; once again satisfying their needs for achievement and self-respect.

To further support this, applying Blanchard and Johnson (2015) thoughts that “people who feel good about themselves produce good results” (p.13) on the results gained from the data collection, one could assume that feedback has a “virtuous circle” power on the employees. Indeed, it first helps people to gain self-knowledge. This knowledge then leads them to know what they have to do and how they should do it. Thereafter, this empowerment stimulates their motivation to achieve a better performance. “Since it affects my motivation, [...] it affects my performance as well” (respondent D). By improving their performance, individuals feel good about themselves and are likely to satisfy their achievement and self-respect needs.

Reflecting on the above, a first conclusion linked to the first research question i.e. how does quick and daily feedback influence employees’ behavior, motivation and performance? can be drawn. The data collected shows that quick feedback affects the motivation and performance of the employees in the sense they feel supported by their manager. By being compassionate and helpful, the manager enables the employees to feel secure and happy with their work. This sense of security, in turn, drives the employees to make good use of the quick feedback they got to attain better results and feel satisfied.
5.2 SELF-CONFIDENCE COMES FIRST

The empirical data shows that feedback has an impact on the employees’ self-confidence and motivation. One employee said that feedback “motivates [her]. Especially when [she] learns something new because [she] can get feedback about how to do [something] and learn from the feedback. That makes [her] go from uncomfortable to comfortable” (respondent B). Furthermore, all the participants answered that, to some extent, all kind of quick feedback i.e. either positive feedback, goals’ reminding or constructive criticism had an impact on how confident they feel with their work, thus affecting their motivation. However, almost all the employees said they would prefer to get more constructive feedback. Eight out of ten indeed stated constructive feedback could help them progress in their work and would therefore be more motivated.

However, as mentioned earlier, the results of feedback vary along numbers of dimensions. The data collected reveals that another dimension should be added to the three dimensions mentioned by Prue & Fairbank (1981) i.e. the feedback mechanism, the recipient of feedback and the temporal characteristics of feedback. Indeed, the structure of feedback i.e. whether positive feedback is given before or after the constructive criticism impacts the feedback outcome. The majority of the participants agreed that they would prefer receiving positive feedback at the beginning of the feedback session. Indeed, the employees’ answers show that the employees need to feel confident about themselves and their work (thanks to the positive feedback they received) before they can make use and grow from the constructive criticism. One employee stated “I need to feel confident in the phone before I can make use of the constructive criticism. I would feel really uncomfortable and a bit afraid in the phone if I received constructive criticism immediately. In that sense, constructive criticism could make more harm than good for the employee” respondent B.

Referring to Maslow’s (1943) and Alderfer’s (1969) theories of motivation and according to the empirical data, the authors believe in the influence of the hierarchy of needs on the employees’ motivation. According to Maslow (1943), the lower steps in the hierarchy need to be fulfilled before a person can step up to the next level. Alderfer (1969), contrary to Maslow, claims the order of the steps is not fixed. However, as mentioned in the theoretical chapter, existence needs i.e. physiological and safety needs generally have a higher priority than relations and growth needs; and priorities can change, depending on the person and the situation. These theories are concomitant with the answers received from the participants and the quick
feedback implementation’s supposed outcome. Indeed, the data collected demonstrates that the employees have to fulfill their need for safety before they can get motivated by constructive criticism. As Alderfer (1969) reminded, individuals are different and might have distinct reactions to a same situation. However, people are likely to share the same thoughts when it comes to basic needs and might value safety similarly. Indeed, the majority of the participants believe that, by receiving positive feedback first, they would be more willing to cleverly accept critics. As such, the existence needs of the employees have to be met before they can satisfy higher needs in the hierarchy i.e. growth needs and get motivated. Furthermore, Blanchard and Johnson (2015) believe that the one-minute praise and the one-minute goal should always be provided to the employees before the manager starts to provide the employees with the one-minute re-direct. According to these authors, the employee needs to feel that he or she belongs to the company and has to feel confident before he or she can learn from the re-directs. Consequently, conforming Blanchard and Johnson’s (2015) perception of the right order to give feedback, the data collection shows that positive feedback i.e. one-minute praise should be given before constructive criticism i.e. one-minute re-direct.

Reflecting on the results from the empirical data, the theories and thoughts of the authors, a second conclusion can be drawn. This second finding contributes to reach the ultimate goal of this thesis i.e. to discover how to give positive and constructive feedback that will lead to better performance. There is no one and only way of giving feedback that fits all personalities due to the singularity of each individual. However, people generally need to feel good about themselves and fulfill their needs for safety and belonging before they can make use of criticism. Thus, the manager should give positive feedback before constructive criticism. Thereby, the manager has to make the employee feels comfortable and self-confident before the employee can use the critic to progress and reach better performance.

5.3 WHAT MOTIVATES THE MANAGER DOES NOT NECESSARILY MOTIVATE THE EMPLOYEES

David McClelland’s theory (1961) states that regardless of our age, gender, nationality or culture, all individuals are driven by three motivators: a need for affiliation, a need for achievement and a need for power. However, only one of these needs is our dominant motivator. This dominant motivator affects people’s characteristics and is based on our past
experiences, personalities and culture. Conforming to McClelland’s thoughts, the manager interviewed in this thesis seems to have a strong need for affiliation. Indeed, his life experiences and cultural background has made him become someone valuing relationships above everything else. “I mostly give positive feedback; I prefer to tell people what they did good. That is just the way I am [...] I think, in here, giving positive feedback has more impact. If I say too much constructive criticism it will be a mess in their heads [...] the key is to have a good climate so they enjoy coming here and then it will be good”. The manager feels satisfied by ensuring that his employees feel good, relaxed and enjoy working for him. He uses the positive feedback as a way to express his support and in order to develop friendly relationships with them.

Yet, even though the manager believes positive feedback to be more impactful, the data collected shows that the majority of the participants desires to receive more constructive criticism “I would appreciate to get more constructive feedback [...] it pushes me to work harder” (respondent A). Even though the employees really appreciate positive feedback, most of them believe constructive criticism would be even more motivational. In that sense, one key aspect to keep in mind when trying to structure a feedback is the singularity of each employee. For feedback to be effective, the manager needs to be aware that what motivates him or her does not necessarily motivate his or her employees.

Should the manager focus on positive feedback rather than constructive criticism? and should the feedback be standardized or personalized? represent two of the research questions of this thesis. First, dealing with and managing people having different personalities could be a real challenge for any manager. Because the employees have different backgrounds and personalities, the amount or type of feedback that is favored differed from one participant to another. Indeed, even though the majority of the employees seeks more constructive criticism, some answered they preferred positive feedback or want a mix of both. For employee J, “it is hard to tell [whether positive feedback versus constructive criticism would have the same impact on his performance]. [But] positive [feedback] is better because then you reach for the bosses’ comments as well, also to know that they appreciate what you do”. In the contrary, employee D argues that “[her] performance always increases the most after getting constructive criticism” while respondent B believes “it [positive feedback and constructive criticism] affects [her] in the same way”. Furthermore, understanding what motivates them, how to approach them and how they respond to feedback is far from being easy. Because employees know what they are supposed to do and have the ability to perform as expected, does not necessarily mean
they are willing to do so. Therefore, even though employees have to motivate themselves, the manager has to create the proper working environment for them to get self-motivated (McGregor, 1960).

According to the participants of this investigation, the manager should not focus on one type of feedback more than another i.e. the one-minute praise, the one-minute re-direct and the one-minute goal, but he should give them the same importance. “I think he should absolutely balance them because I like positive feedback but everyone needs to hear some constructive criticism [...] if you only get positive feedback then you would lean back and in the end do not really be happy with yourself which is not good. You need something to work for” (respondent I). In addition, although the employees’ personalities can be highly different, the structure of the feedback should generally be the same for all employees. This creates a sense of equity and fairness needed for the feedback to be perceived as reliable and credible. According to the majority of the participants, the current way of receiving feedback in Länsförsäkringar is equal but individual. Furthermore, both the participants and the manager believe it should be this way since it is important that the employees feel equally treated. “He says similar [feedback] to all of us but it is most of time personal [...] I think he adapts his way of giving feedback, I really feel that he means what he says and that makes me feel satisfied” (respondent B).

From Länsförsäkringar employees’ answers, a third conclusion directly related to the research questions of this thesis i.e. should the manager focus on positive feedback rather than constructive criticism? and should the feedback be standardized or personalized? can be drawn. First, the manager should give the same amount of positive feedback and constructive criticism in order to make the employees feel good and recognized (thanks to positive feedback) but also supported and encouraged (through constructive criticism) to reach better performance. Then, regardless of what motivates the manager, he or she, should provide personalized feedback in a standardized way. The feedback has to be specific and unique to the person, but everyone should receive it in the same way for it to be fair and right.

5.4 THE BENEFITS OF RECEIVING AND PROVIDING QUICK FEEDBACK

This thesis focuses on the quick aspect of feedback, assuming that feedback needs to be both quick and specific to be perceived as relevant from the employees. When is feedback the most effective? How to ensure that the employees will actually listen and react to the feedback?
are likely to represent questions every managers working with feedback have asked themselves at some point of their lives.

During the first interview session, the authors asked the manager to talk about his current feedback strategy. Although the managers of Länsförsäkringar are supposed to listen to the conversations of different employees every night, and discuss with the employees what they have heard; they cannot do it anymore. In fact, this way of providing feedback is way too time-consuming and, from the manager’s point of view, not efficient enough to make some real change. “We are supposed to listen to what they say on the phone every evening (choosing one or two employees) but we do not really have the time for that. It is more about […] keeping everyone happy so they can sell well”. Prior research has demonstrated that employees often felt uncomfortable not knowing when they would receive feedback and managers do not always know how they should talk to the employees. Because of those reasons, the manager and the employees can feel confused and may prefer avoiding this kind of experiences (Jackman & Strober, 2003).

Conforming Blanchard and Johnson (2015) thoughts about the importance of providing frequent but quick feedback, the data collected have clearly emphasized the desire of the employees to receive structured feedback. The employees seek a kind of feedback which actually helps them to make progress without consuming their work time. This fact supports Phoe’s (2009) thoughts that feedback is effective when it is continuously provided. This author, as well as the interviewed employees, believe that the performance, whether good or bad, should be praised or re-directed right away. When the interviewers informed the participants about the three one-minute concepts, all employees agreed that this strategy is likely to be more effective than the actual way they are providing with feedback. “I think it is a good strategy. Especially for this kind of working place since most of the employees only work part-time, so we would not like to waste our time [by] sitting with them for half an hour while we only work four hours. I think, for this place, it is a good strategy” (respondent J). The manager is also convinced this could be one of the most effective way to stimulate his employees’ motivation and drive them to perform better. “I am sure this quick feedback strategy works […] this is the way I want to work with feedback. […] Hopefully we can implement this strategy after the summer”.

Drawing upon these, the authors can support their fourth conclusion linked to the ultimate goal of this thesis i.e. to discover how to give positive and constructive feedback that
will lead to better performance. For feedback to be relevant and effective, the manager has to make sure that: first, the employees know they will be daily provided with feedback concerning their goals, their achievements and failures; second, the manager will provide them with specific and unambiguous feedback that targets the behavior and not the personality; finally, the manager will provide feedback in a fair way without favoring one employee over another.

5.5 QUICK FEEDBACK AND ITS RELATION TO EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

As mentioned earlier, Blanchard & Johnson’s (2015) state that “people who feel good about themselves produce the best results” (p.13). Along with this thought, the interviewed employees believe in the ability of the quick feedback strategy to improve their motivation and ultimately their performance. “Of course this strategy would have a better impact on my performance because I would feel important and seen by my superiors” respondent I.

However, due to the lack of time available, resulting in the impossibility to correctly implement the quick feedback strategy, no conclusion regarding its effect on the employees’ performance could be drawn. Since the employees did not feel any major changes in the way their manager provided them with feedback, the authors had to precisely describe the quick feedback concept to the employees. Several questions about what they think about this strategy were asked instead. Both the manager and all the employees agreed and believed this strategy to be useful and have a great impact on their performance. “I think this quick feedback strategy would be good, to sometimes be reminded of why I am sitting here [...] I don’t think, that I ever since I came here, heard some motivational talk or anything similar [...] so I think it would do good” (respondent I). According to the manager, as mentioned earlier, this strategy represents the way he would like to provide employees with feedback. He believes the current strategy to be less impactful as well as too time-consuming, especially because most of the employees are students and only work four hours two times a week.

When the employees were asked why they thought this quick feedback had an impact on their performance, the majority believed it was due to its relation to motivation. “I think I will try to improve more, because, the way it currently works, I do not know if I will get feedback or not [...] But if I know that I will get feedback maybe I will try do even better and try to improve. It would improve my motivation. Hopefully if I try to get better I will get better.
Since I would get more motivated, I think it would affect my performance because if you believe in yourself then it is easier to improve” (respondent K). Furthermore, according to Daniels & Daniels (2004), a general rule is that, the sooner the feedback is given, the better it affects the employees’ performance. Thus, according to these authors, the immediacy of feedback i.e. how soon the feedback is given, has a strong impact on the effect the feedback may provide. Conforming their thoughts, both the employees and the manager believe the characteristics of the quick feedback strategy i.e. its immediacy and specificity have a great impact on the employee performance and motivation. Furthermore, as Daniels & Daniels (2004) stated, the immediacy of feedback also enables the manager to provide more feedback. Thereby, the more feedback the employees will get, the better they are likely to improve their performance. The employees interviewed agreed with this statement, explaining that “it is good to get to know what you are doing good and what you can improve to get quick feedback. I think this quick feedback would be better than the one we currently have” (respondent K). However, as Ashford & De Stobbeleir (n.d.) reminded, it is essential to find the right balance between too much and not enough feedback. Too frequent feedback could be seen as time-consuming and not relevant. As such, it is the manager’s responsibility to find the right balance and give quick feedback that are neither redundant nor time-consuming.

Drawing upon this, a fifth and last conclusion can be drawn. The quick feedback strategy is believed to impact and improve the employees’ performance due to its immediacy, relevancy and positive effect on motivation. Furthermore, consistently with Morrison & Bies (1991) definition of feedback as a way to improve the employees’ performance, the data collected show that quick feedback is perceived as a great way to enhance both motivation and performance. Thereby, the authors of this thesis have further reasons to believe that the quick feedback strategy could improve the employees’ performance.
6. CONCLUSION

This section aims to answer the research questions and problem statement.

The overall aim of this thesis has been to understand how quick feedback influences employees’ behavior, motivation and performance. The authors have investigated the thoughts of Länsförsäkringar’s employees and manager regarding the most effective and efficient way to work with feedback; i.e. does the feedback necessarily need to be long and detailed to be useful and relevant? Is there one more preferable way of giving feedback the manager should use? and Should this technique be used for all personalities? Reflecting upon this, the three research questions are answered below:

1. How does quick and daily feedback influence employees’ behavior, motivation and performance?

According to the empirical data collected, all the participants stated they were influenced by quick feedback to some extent. Both the manager and the employees agreed quick feedback was the most effective and impactful way of perceiving and receiving feedback. Indeed, when the feedback is given right away when it is needed, it has a better impact on the employee’s overall behavior, motivation and performance (Phoel, 2009; Daniels & Daniels, 2004). The time efficiency of quick feedback makes the feedback highly useful and valuable for both the manager and the employees. Therefore, feedback needs to be quick, specific and unambiguous (Blanchard & Johnson, 2015).

Almost all the employees stated they would feel better and become more motivated after receiving quick feedback. Thus, most of the employees believe they would perform better due to quick feedback. Indeed, it is likely that the better you feel about yourself, the more motivated you will become and the better performance you will reach (Blanchard & Johnson, 2015).
2. Are the employees impacted the same way whether receiving positive feedback vs. constructive criticism? Should the manager focus on one type more than the other?

The data collection shows that employees are affected by both positive feedback and constructive criticism and are therefore necessary. The majority of the participants stated they feel happier and more motivated after receiving positive feedback. However, constructive criticism motivates them the most since it provides essential information about how they can improve their performance. Almost everyone wishes they could receive more constructive criticism but stated the importance of receiving positive feedback since it makes them feel good.

Furthermore, the order the feedback is provided has a great impact on how well the employees perceive and react to the feedback (Blanchard & Johnson, 2015). At the beginning, the manager should provide the employees with mostly positive feedback to make them feel self-confident and safe. To benefit from the constructive criticism, the employees need to feel good about themselves first. If the constructive criticism is provided at the very beginning, there is a great risk the employees would feel uncomfortable and be affected in a negative way. In conclusion, the importance of positive feedback and constructive criticism are equal but the order they are provided matters (Maslow, 1943).

3. Should the manager adapt his way of giving feedback to each personality or should the feedback be standardized?

Since everybody has distinct characteristics and perceive their environment in different ways, there is not one single way of giving feedback that would fit all personalities. It is important that the manager tries to understand his or her employees and build a trustworthy relationship with them. Some people love receiving praises in front of their colleagues while others would feel embarrassed and therefore be upset. While some employees do not care being provided with constructive criticism in front of the group, others may feel pretty uncomfortable and even belittled or humiliated (McClelland, 1961). Therefore, the manager should give face-to-face feedback in a private way to avoid any public embarrassment. Because the employees need to be fairly treated to trust their manager, this later should provide structured feedback to all the employees, only modifying the content to make it fit with the employees’ performance and behaviors (Blanchard & Johnson, 2015).
6.1 THE AUTHORS’ CONTRIBUTIONS

Past research has mainly investigated the power of feedback, focusing on its benefits in terms of cost, flexibility and ease of use (Prue & Fairbank, 1981). Besides, limited studies have been conducted to connect feedback to the employee motivation and performance (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). Unlike prior research, this thesis studies the effectiveness of quick feedback in enhancing people’s motivation and performance in the work place.

By focusing on a way to mitigate one of the main drawbacks of feedback which is its time-consumption, this thesis first contributes to increase the knowledge of the challenging issues of feedback’s timing and frequency (Daniels & Daniels, 2004). Indeed, the data collection shows that every interviewed employee seeks for quick and continuous feedback and believes that long feedback sessions that occur once or twice a year are irrelevant and counterproductive.

The second contribution of this thesis is the addition of information about the effects of positive feedback and constructive criticism. Past studies have stated the hazardousness of constructive feedback mainly due to human beings’ aversion and avoidance to criticism or the managers’ fear to worsen their relationship with the employees (Jackman & Strober, 2003). Contrarily, this thesis enlightens the property of constructive criticism and proves its essential nature for the whole feedback process. However, to be correctly processed by the employee, the constructive criticism has to focus on the behavior and not the personality of the employee and needs to be provided after the positive feedback.

Finally, this thesis provides a better understanding of how to formulate and provide feedback. Results of this research show that, to formulate relevant feedback, the manager has to personalize his or her review to each employee. Nonetheless, although the manager has to provide different and insightful feedback, they must be of the same type. Indeed, the structure of the feedback session should be standardized i.e. the form of the feedback needs to be the same for every employee and only the content should vary, in order to prove its fairness.

To conclude, this research would contribute to the organizational management and human relation fields in their quest for better and more efficient ways to manage people. This strategy is likely to improve the relationships between managers and employees and to develop the employees’ self-confidence and self-knowledge. Ultimately, the quick feedback strategy would improve the employees’ performance leading to the company’s success.
7. FUTURE RESEARCH

This final chapter discusses directions for future research.

This thesis has provided valuable insights about the many benefits quick feedback may provide to an organization. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, to the author’s knowledge, prior research has not touched upon the quick feedback phenomenon and limited literature have been written about the most effective and efficient way of providing feedback. Therefore, although the authors have investigated the potential advantages and drawbacks of quick feedback, more research has to be conducted within this field in order to get a deep and valuable academic knowledge.

Because of the limited available time to conduct this research, and due to the moderate availability of the participants, the quick feedback implementation has to be prolonged in order to prove the actual benefits this strategy is supposed to provide. Therefore, a suggested research could be the implementation of this quick feedback strategy or the execution of similar strategies for a longer period of time within a similar organization. Another alternative to prove or disprove the effectiveness of quick feedback could be the implementation of this kind of strategies in several organizations from different industries. The aim would be to figure out whether this strategy fits any kind of organizations/departments or is only beneficial to a certain type. Further research is also needed to discover whether the culture has an impact on the effectiveness of the quick feedback strategy. The outcome of the implementation of this strategy in Europe may be different from its implementation in another continent e.g. Asia or America.

As such, there are a lot that can be developed within this area of research. Another suggested research within this academic field would be to further develop several quick feedback guide-templates that match different kind of personalities i.e. a template precisely describing how the manager should provide each type of personality with quick feedback for the best outcome result. Finally, it may be interesting to understand whether this strategy is only applicable to the business environment or whether it could be effective within the classroom area or in the sport field. Indeed, coaches and teachers also have to manage individuals and help them to reach their best performance. In that sense, quick feedback might be useful to any relationships involving a teacher and a learner.
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9. APPENDIX

9.1 QUICK FEEDBACK STRATEGY

This “one-minute strategy” found its inspiration from the book “The New One Minute Manager” written by Ken Blanchard and Spencer Johnson (2015).

Step one – The one-minute goals

These one-minute goals will manage the employee and must therefore be clear, individual and easy to understand. Blanchard & Johnson (2015) argues that it is hard to be an effective manager unless the manager and his team are clear about the goals and what good performance looks like.

The manager’s guideline for the one-minute goals:

According to Blanchard & Johnson, 2015 the one-minute goals work well when:

- The manager and employee plan and write down the goal together. The goals are well described of the manager. The manager should show the employees what good performance looks like.

- The employee writes out the goals on single papers with deadlines on when the goals should be achieved.

- The employee reviews their most important goals for a few minutes each day.

- Encourages the employee to look at their goals each day to make sure their behavior matches their goals.

- If the goals do not match their goals, the manager should encourage the employees to re-think so they can realize their goals sooner.

Step two - The one-minute praising

This one-minute praising is to build confidence between the employee and the manager and to help the employees to reach their full potential. The one-minute praising is when the manager precisely tells the employee when he did something right or good and how the manager feels about it (Blanchard & Johnson, 2015).

The manager’s guideline for the one-minute praising:

- Pay attention to the employee´s progress and strictly observe the employee.

- Give the praising immediately when the employee deserves it.
· Be precise and consistent when giving the feedback.

· For the first half-minute: specifically tell the employee what the employee did right, how it helps and how you feel about it.

· Take a break for a few seconds to let the employee feel good for what he has done.

· For the second half minute: the manager encourages the employee to continue doing more of the same and make it clear you will support their success and have confidence in what the employee does.

**Step three – The one-minute re-direct**

These one-minutes re-directs addresses the employee’s mistakes and when the manager tells the employee when they did something wrong. It is to get the employee get back on track so they can achieve their goals and to help them understand what they can do differently. This re-directs make the employee think twice about what they have done (Blanchard & Johnson, 2015).

**The manager’s guideline for the one-minute re-directs**

- Strictly observe the employee.

- Give the re-direct feedback immediately.

- For the first half-minute: specifically focus on the employee’s mistake, tell the employee what they did wrong and how you feel about it.

- Take a short break to let the employee feel concerned about their mistake.

- For the last half-minute: Tell the employee that they are better than their mistake and that you feel trust and confidence in the employee.

**9.2 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS - First interview session**

**QUESTIONS TO THE MANAGER**

1. What is your working position?

   *(1. Vad är din arbetsuppgift?)*

2. How old are you?

   *(2. Hur gammal är du?)*
3. What is your gender?

(3. Vilket kön är du?)

When answering the following questions: Do only take the feedback provided by you -in your current manager position in this company- into consideration.

(När du svarar på följande frågor vill jag enbart att du tar hänsyn till hur du som ledare i din nuvarande postition i detta företag agerar som manager.)

4. How do you currently provide your employees with feedback?

4. Hur jobbar du som ledare i dagsläget med feedback till dina anställda?

5. Do you believe that feedback is important? Why/Why not?

(5. Anser du att feedback är viktigt? Varför/varför inte?)

6. Does you or the company have some specific feedback strategy? (Yes/No)

If YES - explain the strategy you use and the reason why you use this strategy

If NO - explain how you normally give feedback to your employees and the reason why you do not have a specific strategy

(6. Har du eller företaget någon specifik startegi för att ge feedback? (JA/NEJ)

OM JA Förklara denna startegi så detaljerat som möjligt och varför du använder dig av denna teknik.

OM NEJ Förklra hur du brukar gå tillväga och varför har du inte har någon startegi?)

7. Do you give the feedback individually or in group? Why?

(7. Ger du feedback privat eller i grupp? Varför?)

8. In general, how often do you give feedback to your employees? (daily/weekly/monthly) (8. Hur ofta ger du feedback på ett ungefär? (varje dag/vecka/månad) varför?)

9. When do you give feedback? (When they do something good, bad, wrong etcetera)
(9. I vilka sammanhang ger du feedback? (när de gör något bra, dåligt, fel, etc.) varför?)

10. In general, how many minutes do you provide your employees with feedback each time? Do you have any reason behind this timeframe?

(10. Hur många minuter är feedbacken i genomsnitt? Har du någon baktanke med längden?)

11. Do you most of time focus to give the employees positive feedback or constructive criticism? Why?

(11. Fokuserar du mestadels på positiv feedback eller konstruktiv kritik? Varför?)

12. Do you believe the outcome performance is the same after giving positive feedback as constructive criticism? Why?

(12. Anser du att de anställdas prestation påverkas till samma grad av positiv som konstruktiv kritik? Varför?)

13. Which type of these two technique do you prefer and why?

(13. Vilken typ av denna feedback anser du ge bäst resultat? Varför?)

14. Do you adapt your way of giving feedback to each personality or is it standardized? Why?


**QUESTIONS TO THE EMPLOYEES**

1. What is your working position?

(1.Vad är din arbetsuppgift?)

2. How old are you?

(2. Hur gammal är du?)

3. What is your gender?
(3.Vilket kön är du?)

When answering the following questions: do only take the feedback provided by your current manager in this company into consideration

När du svarar på följande frågor vill jag enbart att du tar hänsyn till hur du upplever feedbacken i dagsläget från din nuvarande ledare i just detta företag.

4. How do you think your manager currently provide you with feedback?

(4. Hur upplever du att din ledare jobbar dagsläget med feedback till dig som anställd?)

5. Does feedback motivate you? Why and how?

(5. Blir du motiverad av feedback? Varför och hur?)

6. How does feedback from the manager affect:
   - Your behavior?
   - Your motivation?
   - Your performance?

(6. Hur påverkar feedback från din ledare:)
   - (Ditt betende?)
   - (Motivation?)
   - (Prestation?)

7. Do you believe that your manager has a specific feedback strategy? Answer YES/NO
   - If YES - Why do you believe he uses this strategy?)
   - If NO - How does he in general provide you with feedback and why do you believe he does not have a specific strategy?

(7. Anser du att din ledare/företaget har någon specifik feedback strategi? JA/NEJ)
   - (OM JA Förklara denna startegi så detaljerat som möjligt. Varför du tror han använder denna strategi?)
   - (OM NEJ Förklara hur feedbacken brukar gå tillväga. Varför tror du han inte har någon startegi?)
8. Does the manager provide you with feedback individually or in group? Do you know why and how do you feel about it?

(8. Får du feedback privat eller i grupp? Vet du varför och hur känner du kring det?)

9. In general, how often do you get feedback? (daily/weekly/monthly)

(9. I genomsnitt hur ofta får du feedback? (varje dag/vecka/månad)

10. When do you normally get feedback? (when you do something good, bad, wrong etc.)

(10. I vilket sammanhang får du feedback? (när du gör något bra/dåligt/fel etc.)

11. In general, how many minutes is the feedback? What is your personal opinion about this amount of minutes?

(11. Hur många minuter är feedbacken i genomsnitt? Tycker du det är lagom?)

12. Does your manager focus on positive feedback or constructive criticism?

(12. Fokuserar din ledare mestadels på positiv feedback eller konstruktiv kritik?)

13. Is your performance outcome the same after getting positive feedback as constructive criticism?

(13. Påverkas din prestation till samma grad av positiv som konstruktiv kritik? Hur känner du kring det?)

14. Which kind of these 2 feedback techniques do you believe have the strongest impact of your performance?

(14. Vilken typ av denna feedback anser du ha störst påverkan på din prestation?)

15. Do you know if your manager adapts his way of giving feedback to each personality or if the way is standardized?

(15. Vet du om din ledare ger feedback på ett individuellt sätt eller om han använder du ett standardiserat tillvägagångssätt? Tycker du detta är bra?)
9.3 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS - Second interview session

QUESTIONS TO THE MANAGER

1. Have you tried to implement this new quick feedback strategy?
   
   IF YES:
   
   1a. Describe it in the most detailed way (e.g. frequency of feedback, exclusiveness, specificity, clearness, relevancy, words used …)
   
   1b. Have you succeeded to implement it the way you wanted it to be?
   
   1c. Have you encountered any problems/difficulties? If YES, what kind?
   
   1d. Did you like giving these kind of feedback? (Why/why not)
   
   1e. Do you prefer “this new way”? (Why/why not?)

2. Have you noticed any change in the working environment the last week? Is it as positive as usual? (e.g. has this new feedback strategy affected the overall atmosphere in the office to some extent?)

3. Did you give them any reminding about their goals (one-minute goal)?
   
   If YES:
   
   3a. Describe the way you did it
   
   3b. How did it feel? Did you like it? Why?

4. Did you give more or less constructive criticism this week than before? (More/less)
   
   If YES:
   
   4a. Describe the way you gave constructive feedback (in terms of timing, gestuals, words used etc.).
   
   4b. How did it feel? Did you like it? Why?

5. Did you provide more or less positive feedback this week than before? (More/less)
   
   5a. Describe the way you gave positive feedback (in terms of timing, gestuals, words used etc.). Was it any different than before?
   
   5b. How did it feel? Did you like it?
6. How do you think has this new way of getting feedback affected your employees:
   ● Motivation?
   ● Behavior?
   ● Performance?

7. Do you think you should focus on positive feedback more than constructive criticism, the opposite or should you provide the same amount of both? Why?

8. This question is about the new implemented strategy

   8a. Do you think the one-minute praise (i.e. the moment you give positive feedback) has the same impact on their motivation and performance as the one-minute re-direct (the moment you give constructive criticism)?

   8b. Do you think the one-minute goal (i.e. the moment you reminded them about their goals) has an impact on their motivation and performance?

   8c. If you had to rank the one-minute goal, the one-minute praise, and the one-minute re-direct in terms of influence/impact on their motivation and performance, how would you rank it (i.e. 1 being the most impactful, 3 being the less impactful; with a possibility to say that all impact your motivation/performance in the same way)?

9. Has this quick feedback strategy impacted your motivation?
   IF YES:

   9a. Why? To what extent?

10. What do you think about the frequency and timing of the quick feedback strategy? Is the strategy time efficient or time consuming?
   IF TIME CONSUMING:

   10a. What solution do you think could make this strategy more time-efficient?

11. If you had to rank this strategy from 1 to 10? (1 being not effective at all, 10 being extremely effective, how would you rank it)

12. From a personal perspective, do you feel that this strategy has changed the way you perceive feedback? To what extent?
13. Will you continue use this way when you provide the employees with feedback? (Why/why not?)

**QUESTIONS TO THE EMPLOYEES**

Note: gender + age + working situation, i.e. student vs. full-time employee

1. Have you felt or noticed any change in the way your manager has provided you with feedback the last week? (Yes/No)
   1a. If yes – Describe it in the most detailed way (e.g. frequency of feedback, exclusiveness, specificity, clearness, relevancy, words used …)
   1b. If yes - Did you like it? (Why/why not)
   1c. If yes – Do you prefer “this new way”? (Why/why not?)
   1d. If no - Inform the employee about the strategy and move on to the back-up questions in appendix D

1. Har du upplevt någon skillnad i sättet som din ledare har gett dig feedback den senaste veckan? (Ja/Nej)
   1a. Om ja - beskriv skillnaden så detaljerat som möjligt ( hur ofta, hur mycket, tydlighet, relevans, val av ord osv.)
   1b. Om ja - Gillar du det nya sättet? (Varför/varför inte?)
   1c. Om ja - Föredrar du det nya sättet? (Varför/varför inte?)
   1d. Om nej - informera den anställde om strategin och gå vidare till back-up frågorna i appendix D?

**BREAK: Information to the employee about the quick feedback implementation strategy.**

(2. Have you noticed any change in the working environment the last week? Is it as positive as usual or is it better/worse? (e. g. has this new feedback implementation affected the overall atmosphere in the office to some extent?)

2. Har du upplevt någon skillnad i arbetsklimatet den senaste veckan? Är stämningen lika bra som vanligt eller är den bättre/sämre? (ex. har den nya feedback}
Implementeringen påverkat a på jobbet på något sätt?))

3. Did you receive any reminding about your goals (one-minute goal)?

If YES

3a. Describe the way your manager talked to you about your goals.

3b. How did it feel? Did you like it?

(3. Har du blivit påmind om dina en minut långa arbetsmål?

Om JA

3a. Beskriv hur din ledare har pratat med dig om dina mål

3.b Hur har det känts och har du tyckt om det?)

4. Did you receive more or less constructive criticism this week than before? (More/less)

If YES

4a. Describe the way your manager gave you constructive feedback (in terms of timing, gestures, words used etc.).

4b. How did it feel? Did you like it and why/why not?

4c. Would you have preferred the manager to do it another way? If YES, how and why?

(4. Har du fått mer eller mindre konstruktiv kritik denna veckan jämfört med innan?

(Mer/mindre)

Om JA

4a. Beskriv hur din ledare gav dig konstruktiv kritik (hur ofta, hur lång feedbacken har varit, gester, användning av ord osv.)

4b. Vad tyckte du om det? Gillade du det och varför/varför inte?

4c. Hade du föredragit att din ledare hade gjort på ett annat sätt? Om ja - hur och varför?

5. Did you receive more or less positive feedback this week than before? (More/less)

5a. Describe the way your manager gave you positive feedback this week (in terms
of timing, gestuals, words used etc). Was it any different than before?

5b. How did it feel? Did you like it?

5c. Would you have preferred the manager to do it another way? If YES, how and why?

(5. Har du fått mer eller mindre positiv feedback denna vecka jämfört med tidigare? (Mer/mindre)

5a. Beskriv hur din ledare har gett dig positiv feedback denna vecka (hur mycket, hur lång feedbacken har varit, gester, val av ord osv.)

6. How has this new way of getting feedback affected your:

- Behavior?
- Motivation?
- Performance?

(6. Hur har du detta “nya sätt” påverkat ditt:

- Beteende?
- Motivation?
- Prestation?)

7. Do you think the manager should focus on positive feedback more than constructive criticism, the opposite or should he provide the same amount of both? Why?

(7. Tycker du att din ledare borde fokusera mest på konstruktiv kritik, positiv feedback eller borde han ge lika mycket av vardera? Varför?)

8. This question is about the new-implemented strategy

8a. Do you think the one-minute praise (i.e. the moment the manager gave you positive feedback) has the same impact on your motivation and performance as the one-minute re-direct (i.e. the moment the manager gave you constructive criticism)?

8b. Do you think the one-minute goal (i.e. the moment the manager reminded you about your goals) has an impact on your motivation and performance?

8c. If you had to rank the one-minute goal, the one-minute praise, and the one-minute re-direct in terms of influence/impact on your motivation and performance, how would you rank these three concepts
(i.e. 1 being the most impactful, 3 being the less impactful; with a possibility to say that all impact your motivation/performance in the same way)?

(8. Denna frågan berör den nya implementerade feedback-strategin.

8a. Anser du att “the one-minute praise” (när din ledare ger dig positiv feedback) har samma påverkan på din motivation och prestation som “the one-minute re-direct”? (när din ledare ger dig konstruktiv kritik)

8b. Anser du att “the one-minute goal” (när din ledare påminner dig om dina mål) har en påverkan på din motivation och prestation?

8c. Om du ska ranka de tre olika “the one-minute goal”, “one-minute praise” och “one-minute re-direct (i relation till hur de har påverkat din motivation och prestation) hur hade du rankat dessa tre? (ex. “the one-minute goal” har haft störst inflytande på mig etc. man får ranka dem lika.)

9. Has this strategy an influence/impact on your self-confidence and work satisfaction?

If YES

9a. How has it changed your self-confidence and satisfaction?

(9. Har denna feedback-strategin påverkat ditt självförtroende och din inställning till att jobba här?)

Om JA

9a. Hur har det påvirkat ditt självförtroende och inställning till jobbet?)

9.4 BACK UP QUESTIONS

1. What do you think about this strategy?

2. How do you think this strategy would affect your behavior, motivation, performance?

3. What do you think would be the most impactful for you; a reminding of your goals, positive feedbacks or constructive criticism? Rank them

4. Do you think that this strategy would have had an impact on your self-confidence and
satisfaction of your work overall? Why?

5. Would you like your manager to focus on one of these 3 concepts or should he give the same importance to positive feedback, constructive criticism and goal reminding? Why?