

UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI, Department of Education

SUMMARY

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DEVELOPMENT TEAMS AS A MEANS OF CHANGE

Case Study of Concerning a Training Project at the Helsinki Telephone Company, 182+53 pages.

Data communications is considered to be one of the most hottest business areas in the world. The traditional media (press, radio and television), telephone and computer are turning into a competitive, and integrated information industry. The technical progress of data communications, the deep recession in construction in Finland at the end of the last decade, and the start of competition in the telephone business sector exerted external pressure on the restructuring of the operation of Helsinki Telephone Company's Network Technology Unit.

The management of the Network Technology Unit set the main goals for development and launched a change process involving the personnel of the organization, where the process progressed hierarchically from bottom to top instead of following top-to-bottom pattern of development. The aim of involving the personnel was to achieve commitment. Development teams carried the responsibility for the operative planning and implementation of the restructuring of operations, and almost five hundred people participated in training for change and producing proposals for change. The author of this thesis together with a trainer colleague provided outside assistance in the process-type training and overall project.

The purpose of the study is to describe the effects and experiences of an involving change process. To ascertain the experiences, people who participated in planning and implementation were interviewed. A personnel survey was carried out at the initial and final stages of the restructuring to assess the effects of the project. The interview material was analyzed by means of content analysis, and the survey material was treated factor by factor by means and difference matrices.

The organization of the Network Technology Unit was changed, as the target plan stated, from five units to three. Representatives of development teams considered the concrete changes achieved as their most positive experiences. Chain of operation became shorter, the work of the personnel became more versatile, and job descriptions became broader. Moreover, the personnel felt that an open and positive atmosphere as well as cooperation had increased, as was the case with the support received from superiors during the project. However, the restructuring process clearly caused increased disturbances and created time pressures at work. The management thought that extensive and active participation of the personnel in the restructuring work was the most positive experience. A period of confusion was experienced during the project, which is an expected and natural result of social learning in the restructuring process that takes place in organizational development when personnel are involved.

The conclusion of the study is that when developing the operation of an organization, combining strategic and human resources calls for a development approach which extensively involves the personnel. The personnel must be sufficiently independent in the planning and implementation of changes, the work for change must be demanding, and the management style of superiors must be encouraging. An efficient restructuring process calls for combining a rational planning process with a social learning process. The duration of change depends on the progress of the learning.

Key words: involving development of organization, process development, process consulting, training.