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Towards good and effective management in a museum

- the importance to understand understanding -

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Abstract

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Title:	Towards good and effective management in a museum – the importance to understand understanding
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Summery:	<p>In order to become a high performing organisation and to certify as an ‘Investor In People’, the Museum in this study wants to develop a shared definition of good and effective management. Hence, ten senior managers were interviewed using a qualitative and semi structured approach. The management situation at the museum was analysed using four leadership paradigms; Classical, Transactional, Visionary and Organic. The Museum pushes for a Visionary approach, which according to literature would strengthen performance. In practice however, the organization prevails in the Transactional leadership paradigm, with a high degree of control of staff and with a top-down approach. The main constraints for change are rationalistic approaches to people management and the lack of arenas for critical reflection of underlying assumptions. With critical reflection and dialogue, a shared definition of good and effective management, based on a shared understanding, could potentially boost performance.</p>
Keywords:	Museum, management, leadership, effectiveness, paradigms, shared values, understanding, critical reflection

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1. Introduction

Since the end of the 20th century, many businesses and organisations have experienced how economical and social changes in society, rapid technological improvements, and an amplified global competition have made the future more ambiguous and less predictable. Hence, the need for competent and independent co-workers is growing. This, together with an increasing amount of empirical findings showing that people base their actions on how they interpret and understand their work, call for a shift away from management through detailed rules and regulations towards management through visions and ideas. A lot of organisations have already adopted this new management philosophy, with an emphasis on follower power and of leading people through visions and development. Organisations know what they wish to achieve, but do not know how to get there (Sandberg & Targama, 1998). One way to face such a challenge is to develop a shared definition of good and effective management within the organisation. However, for a shared *definition* to have the desired impact, it must be based on a shared *understanding* of what that definition means.

1.1. Background to research problem

The museum in the study is situated in the UK, is considered to be of middle size, and comprises several sites located in different buildings. The organisational structure is hierarchical and divisional with an appointed Director at the top, followed by an executive committee of Directors, followed by Heads of Departments, which in their turn might be followed by one or several additional lines of managers. One of the Museum's strategic objectives is to develop staff and become a high performing organisation. One step in this direction is to certify as an "Investors in People" organisation. The introduction of a performance management system is the first strategic step towards such an accreditation. It is a manager work process policy designed to:

- ensure alignment between individual and organisational objectives;
- improve individual and therefore, organisational performance;
- develop a performance orientated culture across the Museum. (Business Plan, 2007)

The Investors in People Standard (IIP) is a national standard in the UK, and a business improvement tool designed to advance an organisation's performance through its people. IIP was initially developed in 1990 by the UK Government in cooperation with leading businesses and national organisations. Independent research shows that working towards the IIP, and achieving an accreditation as an "Investor in People", provides business benefits to organisations of all sizes and across all sectors in terms of; increased customer satisfaction, enhanced quality, competitive advantage through improved performance, improved effectiveness of training and development activities etc. Today, over 30.000 organisations in the UK are recognized as Investors in People, and interest from overseas has given the IIP an international dimension. The IIP is based on three key principles: PLAN – developing strategies to improve the performance of the organisation; DO – taking action to improve the performance of the organisation, and; REVIEW – evaluating what impact these new strategies and actions has on the organisation performance. These three key principles are broken down into ten indicators of good practice, against which an organisation wishing to become an Investor in People is assessed. (Investors in People homepage, 2007)

The Museum decided to aim for an IIP accreditation when the Head of Human Resources discovered that the vast majority of other museums sponsored by their main sponsor were already certified. The certification was also seen as a chance to bring good work practices into the organisation and make changes to the organisation's culture. Hence, an IIP assessor was invited to assess the organisation against the requirements of the standard. The assessor carried out approximately 55 interviews with staff at all levels of the organisation. Each interview took about 30 minutes; the questions were strictly linked to the standard and were primarily open ended. The results were presented in a diagnostic report which stated that the Museum did not yet live up to all the requirements of the IIP. Among other things, the Museum still had to define a clear and consistent understanding of the qualities and skills of a good and effective manager. The following text is an excerpt from the diagnostic report:

The majority of people, including managers, are unclear of what knowledge, skills and behaviours are expected from managers in the way they lead, manage and develop staff. /.../
People based their comments on assumptions and deductions and not on objective criteria as required by the Standard. /.../ This is not meant to say that managers are not managing well, but that good and effective management (skills, knowledge and behaviours) are not defined, which is a requirement of the Standard. (Diagnostic Report, 2007, p. 11)

The excerpt above refers to indicator 4 in the IIP, which requires the organisation to "clearly define the capabilities your managers need to lead, manage and develop people and make sure everyone understands them" (Investors in People Standard, 2005, p. 83). Capabilities are defined as the skills, knowledge and behaviours the organisation's leaders and managers need, and they may relate to areas such as; leadership, team building, coaching and feedback, motivating people, recognizing and developing potential. Management effectiveness is viewed as crucial for an organisation to achieve its objectives and improve performance, but can only be achieved if managers understand what is required from them. To reach the requirement of indicator 4, IIP recommends organisations to start by setting their own standard for what constitutes an effective manager. This can, for example, be done by interviewing top managers to identify what they believe the capabilities should be or by interviewing "excellent" managers at different levels to identify the skills, knowledge, and behaviours they have (Investors in People Standard, 2005, p. 84).

Given the Museum's intention to achieve an IIP accreditation, and in consideration of the evidence presented in the diagnostic report, this research study has been designed to move the Museum closer towards achieving the requirements of indicator 4 and ultimately become an Investor in People.

1.2. Purpose

The purpose of my research is; (1) to gain insight about how management at the Museum is being experienced by senior managers, and (2) to acquire a better understanding of their perspectives on good and effective management, and, (3) by relating these findings to relevant literature and theory, discuss possible ways for the organisation to develop a shared definition of good and effective management as well as desirable management practices.

1.2.1. Demarcation

Data will be gathered through qualitative interviews with senior managers at the Museum. They will be asked to talk about their own *experiences* and *perspectives* on good and effective management since interviews tend to be more creative and dynamic when people talk about

own experiences, and self-reported behaviour tend to accumulate more useful data than opinions of unknown origin. Also, perspectives bring together attitudes, opinions, and experiences, and include not only *what* participants think about an issue, but also *how* they think about it and *why* they think the way they do (Morgan, 1988).

1.3. Educational relevance

'Management' and 'effectiveness' are concepts generally associated with positivistic research within the scientific fields of management, business and economy. However, the scientific perspective in this study is educational, and deals with issues concerning individual and organisational learning, development and change.

2. Methodology

This chapter describes the different methodological choices made regarding research design, research method, and quality concerns. The chapter ends with a critical discussion concerning the conduct and methodology of the research.

2.1. Qualitative design

A qualitative research design has been chosen to explore senior managers' perspective of good and effective management at the Museum. The purpose of qualitative research is to understand how reality is interpreted and experienced by a defined group of people. Within this field of research an inductive approach is customary, since a researcher preferably should approach the research problem without any previous knowledge or prejudices in order to completely adopt the viewpoint of the respondents (Bryman, 2001). Hence, in this study data will be collected before turning to theory. My epistemological viewpoint is interpretative, i.e. I believe that knowledge about humans, human institutions, and the social reality only can be accumulated through interpretations, and not by utilizing positivistic and rationalistic approaches associated with the natural sciences. My ontological viewpoint is constructionist, i.e. I believe that reality is something people continually construct and reconstruct by actively interacting with each other and the environment, as opposed to a positivistic worldview which emphasises the existence of one true reality.

2.2. Interview method

My aim as a researcher is not to interfere with the people's own interpretations of their social reality, but to understand reality from their viewpoint. Data will therefore be collected through qualitative interviews. This method allows interviewees to move in different directions during the interview and express and emphasize areas they themselves regard as important, leaving the researcher with rich and varied descriptions of the studied phenomenon (Bryman, 2001).

2.2.1. Interviewee selection

Managers in high positions usually work under demanding time constraints which can make them hard to gain access to, hence an interviewer may have to rely on recommendations and assistance from others in making appointments with elite individuals (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). In my case the Human Resource Manager at the Museum assisted me in carrying out a purposeful sampling. Together we defined senior managers within the organisation as Directors or Heads of Departments (Heads). However, the Directors were considered to be very busy. Hence, a decision was made to only invite Heads with at least one year of practice in the position, for the interviews. Then, the Human Resource Manager helped me to take the initial contact by sending everyone an email explaining the background and purpose of the research, and preparing them on a subsequent contact from me. When I subsequently contacted them in person to ask for interviews, the response was very positive; eleven senior managers out of twelve consented to an interview.

2.2.2. Interview guide

A semi-structured interview guide was created to facilitate me during the interviews. This type of guide is composed by relatively specific topics and questions, which make it particularly useful when the focus of the research question is fairly clear and straight forward, and the interviewer is less experienced. Its structure also allows the interviewer to jump between topics, change and invent new questions along the way (Bryman, 2001). I consider this opportunity to probe and ask interviewees to elaborate on answers as absolutely essential for my research. Kvale writes that “A good interview question should contribute thematically to knowledge production and dynamically to promote a good interview interaction” (1996, p. 129). Hence, when constructing the interview guide I started by breaking down the research question into thematic interview questions, and continued by formulating easy-going and dynamic questions to generate spontaneous and rich descriptions. To further strengthen the usefulness and quality of the guide, I discussed its form and content with several people, and carried out a couple of test interviews to get a better idea of the clarity or ambiguity of the questions. For final version of the interview guide, please view the appendix.

2.2.3. Gathering the data

All interviews were carried out within a two-week period during December 7-16, 2007. I followed the ethical guidelines for conducting research, as expressed by Bryman (2001). Accordingly, I opened each interview by telling the interviewee about the background and purpose of the research. I explained that everything they said would be treated confidentially, and that their names would not be exposed in the thesis. I also told them that their participation was voluntary, and that they were allowed to withdraw at any time during the process. Also, I asked them to confirm the findings when the presentation of the result had been completed, and explained that this would happen at the end of November. I also told them that the thesis would be finished and handed over to the organisation in February. Finally, I asked for permission to use a voice recorder. Everybody consented and each interview went on for about 1-2 hours. Eleven semi-structured interviews where carried out, but one was later excluded from the material when it turned out that the interviewee was a Director, not a Head.

2.2.4. Data coding and interpretation

In inductive qualitative research, researchers are encouraged to begin the process of transcribing, coding and interpreting data while still collecting it. This might help the researcher grasp the material and may contribute to the selection of theory (Bryman, 2001). Kvale (1996) passionately advocates that data analysis should start during the interview. The interviewer should actively listen to the interviewees descriptions and own interpretations of the situation, condensate and interpret what the interviewee says and send the meaning back for confirmation. I followed Kvale’s advice by asking questions, probing, and mirroring what people said during the interviews to make sure that I had understood them correctly. After each interview, I wrote down what I had interpreted to be major themes and important topics, and I made notes about relating theories. Next, I transcribed the material. However, since I carried out quite many interviews compared to the time available for writing my thesis; I listened through the tape, wrote down the essence of everything everybody said in Swedish, and transcribed only the parts in English that I considered as relevant according to the research question and my pre-analysis. Since I carried out all interviews within two weeks, I transcribed them all before printing and coding them.

When I had a printout of the interviews, I followed the advice given by Bryman (2001) on how to code and interpret qualitative data. Thus, I read through the material once, without making any interpretations or notes, to get an overview and to allow new thoughts regarding the content to pop up. I then read it through a second time, marking interesting parts, and identifying key words and themes. Next, I categorised my notes to find connections and overlaps and to condense the material before writing the result presentation. During the process of coding and interpretation, I found that the Director had a somewhat different perspective on the research topic than did the other interviewees. Since I did not want to run the risk of revealing the Directors through the use of quotes and opinions, I decided to exclude this interview from the research. The Director agreed that this was a good idea. Thus, the presentation of the results is based on ten interviews with Heads. After completing the presentation of results, I sent it out to all interviewees for perusal and confirmation to ensure that no misinterpretations had been made.

2.3. Quality

Trustworthiness and Authenticity are two important quality criteria in qualitative research, the counterpart concepts in quantitative research is Reliability and Validity (Bryman, 2001). These two concepts have been highly important to me when designing and conducting the research, as have ethical issues and concerns. Therefore, below I will describe what I have done to increase the quality of the research, and to ensure ethical conduct.

2.3.1. Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness comprises four quality criteria; credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Bryman, 2001). The *credibility* of the research indicates how probable or likely the results are. Hence, to increase the credibility of the results I have conducted the research in alignment with existing rules and guidelines for qualitative research. I have also asked the interviewees to read and confirm the results before analysing them, thus utilizing respondent validating. *Transferability* indicates how well the results can be generalised and applied in other contexts. To enable the reader to form an opinion of the transferability of the results, I have tried to create a thorough and thick description of the situation. *Dependability* concerns how probable it is to get the same results if the research would be carried out once again. To facilitate this, I have made a thorough description of the methodology and research process. The *conformability* criterion has to do with the researcher's control over his or hers personal values to ensure that they do not affect the result. Even though it is not possible to reach total objectivity in qualitative research, the researcher should make sure that he or she has acted in good faith. I have tried to increase the confirmability by reflecting upon and critically examining my own personal values regarding the research topic, to diminish their influence on the research design, process and result.

2.3.2. Authenticity

Authenticity includes five quality criteria; impartiality, ontological authenticity, pedagogical authenticity, catalytic authenticity, and tactic authenticity (Bryman, 2001). To fulfil the *impartiality* criterion a researcher should fairly and impartially depict all the different opinions and apprehensions that exist within the observed group of people. I tried to achieve this when analysing and presenting the results, and also by using respondent validating to enable the interviewees to confirm or dispute the findings. *Ontological authenticity* implies that interviewees should gain new insights and develop new thoughts regarding their situation

as an outcome of the research. It is hard to know whether or not my research has led the interviewees to view their situation differently. Potential evidence, however, is that many of them said things like “Interesting question, I have never thought about that before” during the interview. The *pedagogical authenticity* of the research means that the interviewees should gain a better understanding of how other people in the same environment view things. By using respondent validating as a way to confirm the results, interviewees should also have gained a better understanding of their peer’s perspectives on management. *Catalytic authenticity* implies that qualitative research should provide its participants with greater opportunity to improve their situation. I think a first important step in that direction is for interviewees to gain a better understanding of the complexity of the situation, which I hope that my research has led to. Finally, *tactic authenticity* means that the research has provided participants with better opportunities to take measures to improve their situation. I hope that I have fulfilled this criterion by discussing possible ways for the organisation to develop a shared understanding of good and effective management.

2.3.3. Ethics

There are at least four ethical rules a researcher should comply with when conducting research concerning information, consent, confidentiality, and usage. These rules state that a researcher should inform participant about the purpose and different steps of the research, and explain that their participation is voluntary and can be terminated at any time. Also, participants should be able to decide by themselves whether or not they wish to participate. Finally, collected data is confidential and should be treated, handled and stored with greatest caution, and used for the research purpose only (Bryman, 2001). I have tried to live up to all these different demands in all my contacts with the interviewees (please view headline 2.2.3). Kvale (1996), argues that *consequences* also is an ethical rule that has to be taken into consideration when conducting interviews. In other words, the researcher must try to imagine and eliminate any possible negative effects that interviewees might experience as a result of the research. This is what I have found to be the most difficult issue. I have tried to handle it in two ways. First, by using precaution when quoting people and reflecting over how a person potentially could be affected if other people would figure out that he or she has said a certain thing, and by discussing a few specific examples with my supervisor. Second, by sending the result presentation to all interviewees for comments and respondent validating, before completing the thesis and submit it to the organisation.

2.4. Methodological discussion

Interpretative approaches are always running the risk of being coloured by a researcher’s previous knowledge and prejudices. It is in the nature of the research methodology. A researcher is, just like the respondents, a subjective individual who constructs and interprets the reality based on his or her previous understanding. However, by taking methodological, ethical, and quality concerns into serious consideration and by making a thorough account for these processes, I hope that readers will be well equipped to make their own judgment considering the trustworthiness and authenticity of the research outcome.

3. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework constitutes the lens through which the empirical material will be analysed. The chapter starts with an introduction of the selection of literary sources. Then, theories and research findings will be presented and interconnected to provide the reader with a general understanding of good and effective management, as well as ideas regarding how to develop a shared understanding of good and effective management within an organisation.

3.1. Selection and critique of literary sources

Literature was selected with reference to the following criteria; relevance, scientific value, and topicality (Merriam, 1988). Relevance for the research was determined by its correlation with the research question, and its connection to the scientific field of education. Although extensive research has been made on management effectiveness, most studies have been conducted within the field of business and economy, and are influenced by a positivistic research tradition. A source's scientific value was determined by scanning its table of contents, to certify that the reasoning was built upon earlier research. Finally, topicality was considered highly important since there is extensive research going on in the management field, and new knowledge is constantly accumulating. Theoretical sources and research articles were primarily found through Lund University's search tool ELIN, and other search tools such as Emerald Insight and British Library Integrated Catalogue. Key words such as museum, leadership, management, effectiveness, competence, skill, development, understanding, reflection etc. were used in various combinations. Literary sources were also found by perusing the bibliography lists in relevant articles and books.

3.2. Good and effective management

Below this heading, an attempt is made to provide the reader with a better understanding of good and effective management. First, management will be defined. Second, a conceptual framework for understanding leaderships will be depicted. Finally, effective leadership will be described.

3.2.1. Defining management

The definition of management and leadership, and the distinction between the two concepts, have been discussed and debated by theorists for centuries. Different scholars concur that management and leadership are two separate things, although the degree of overlap is controversial. Management has traditionally been connected with coping with the present and bringing order into organisations through systems and processes, while leadership is associated with coping with change towards a desired future (Yukl, 2006; Avery, 2004). Yukl (2006) recognizes that most leadership definitions share the assumption that leadership involves *influencing people to perform a collective task*. Leadership influence can be either directly or indirectly exerted on a multitude of rational and emotional processes within groups and organisations, such as the choice of objectives and strategies to pursue; the organization and coordination of work activities; the shared beliefs and values of members; and the interpretation of external events by members. Although the terms *leadership* and *leader* are not defined in the Investors in People Standard, a manager is described as "Anyone who is responsible for managing or developing people. It includes top managers" (2005, p. 31).

Hence, in this paper the term management will be used broadly to indicate people who are expected to perform the leadership role, and the terms leader, manager, superior, and boss will be used interchangeably. The terms people, follower, subordinate and staff will likewise be used interchangeably to refer to individuals whose primary work activities are directed and evaluated by designated managers.

3.2.2. Conceptual framework for understanding leadership

Avery (2004) has made an impressive effort to connect and integrate the huge range of leadership definitions and theories into one single framework, to provide a set of concepts for understanding and discussing leadership. The framework consists of four major leadership paradigms, each one emphasised during different eras throughout history; the Classical (from antiquity to the 1970s), the Transactional (from the 1970s until the mid 1980s), the Visionary (from the end of the 1980s to the beginning of year 2000) and the Organic (beyond year 2000). The paradigms can be distinguished alongside several broad continua covering characteristics of key players, their power, their ways of making decision and being accountable. The continua also cover the management philosophy behind the paradigms, and organisational aspects such as culture, adaptability, matching structure and context. In general, moving from classical towards organic leadership means dealing with an increasingly complex and unpredictable environment. Moreover, it means shifting focus and power from appointed leaders to the entire group, letting go of top-down supervision and control in favour of follower autonomy and commitment, and moving away from uniformity towards diversity (ibid.).

The Classical leadership paradigm is founded on the assumption that leaders are the key players in an organisation, whereas followers' ideas, wishes, and needs are of low priority. Leader power stem from managers' position in the organisation, their opportunity to punish and reward followers, their expertise and experience, and their desirable traits, status or reputation. Followers' power is almost nonexistent since leaders make decisions on their own. The central task of managers is to predict the future and to create order in a small part of the organisation, to set the system's direction and to monitor it along the way. The focus is on managing day-to-day systems and processes. Consequently, there is no need to inspire followers through visions and grand ideas about the future. The culture is characterized by respect for the leaders, due to high power inequality; by uncertainty avoidance though formalized processes, rules and regulations; by focus on the collective as opposed to individuals; and by values such as assertiveness, challenge, and ambition. The organisation may adapt rapidly to change through the command of leaders, provided that the followers have the necessary new skills and knowledge. However, the paradigm is better suited for incremental change. Leaders have a high responsibility for the outcome, while followers are accountable to the leader for specific task performances. The Classical leadership paradigm matches a simple organisational structure which facilitates direct and centralized supervision, a machine bureaucracy structure where processes and systems are heavily standardized, or a professional bureaucracy structure which rely on the professional training and skills of its members. The matching context should be stable and simple. The highly directive leadership enables Classical leaders to employ unskilled followers. It does not suit *knowledge workers* very well, i.e. workers who are able to create new information and develop new skills, or who possess some kind of professional expertise. Some of these workers, however, do typically work under this paradigm. The Classical leadership is limited when it comes to replacing leaders; in situations where leaders can not command and control every action; when additional follower commitment is needed to get a job done; and when followers do not

accept leader domination. Also, the heavy reliance on “great persons” with unique knowledge and abilities may encourage workers to idealize leaders and de-skill themselves (ibid.).

The Transactional leadership paradigm also views leaders as key players. However, the followers’ significance increases as leaders take account of their skills, needs, and motives in the process of influencing them. Leaders are expected to direct, coach, support, and develop followers, who tend to be regarded as more passive players in the organisation. The Transactional paradigm circles around agreements and exchanges between leaders and followers, which suggests that the follower power is higher than under the Classical paradigm. Leader power derives from position in the hierarchy; the opportunity to punish and reward followers; interpersonal skills; and influence tactics. Leaders remain final decision makers, but consults individual followers in order to improve decisions and win support for decisions. The central tasks of managers are still to avoid uncertainties, create order, and monitor performance in a small part of the organisation. Their focus is past- or present-oriented, and visions about the future do not play any significant role. The leader-follower relationships can be either distant or close and informal. Stability and predictability are favoured conditions, often displayed in formalised processes and rules. There can either be an emphasis on values such as assertiveness, challenge, and ambition, or on cooperation and good working relationships. Individualistic identity and personal choice is valued more than a strong collective identity. Leaders’ responsibility for result is high, whereas followers are accountable to leaders for limited outcomes. Transactional organisations are slow to adapt to new conditions since followers need to be heard and influenced; required behaviour need to be clarified; and appropriate measures, rewards and sanctions to support these desired new behaviours must be put in place. The matching organisational structure would be a simple form, a machine- or professional bureaucracy, or, in a larger organisation, a divisional form with semi-autonomous managers’ heading specialized units. The paradigm fits simple and predictable conditions and followers with a low knowledge base, although some knowledge workers usually are employed under this paradigm. Transactional leadership has its limitations. People may feel constrained by leaders’ emphasis on monitoring and supervision, which may reduce their likelihood to contribute to organisational objectives. They can become reluctant to change due to their lack of emotional commitment and may become complacent and overly dependent on their leader. Transactional leaders’ focus on short-term goals may also lead to lost opportunities and missed long-term benefits (ibid.).

The Visionary paradigm is also circling around leaders as key players, but adds strong emotional aspects and a view of a desired future to motivate followers. Visionary leaders derive much of their power from pleading to followers’ emotions through an attractive vision, personal charisma and desirable traits, intellectual stimulation, and consideration for organisational members. Their power also stems from position, knowledge and experience. Visionary leaders depend on followers’ acceptance and commitment to the vision. Thus, follower power increases under this paradigm. Leaders tend to extensively involve followers in decision making by sharing problems with them in order to arrive at a consensus before making a final decision. The leaders’ main task is to inspire people to work towards a shared vision and a common strategy, rather than managing operations, systems and processes. They could either reason that rational actions determine the organisations future, and accordingly organise systems and staff to implement the vision. Or they can accept uncertainty and unpredictability and steer followers in a general course and willingly admit mistakes and change direction if necessary. The relationship between leaders and followers may either be distant and formal, or close and relaxed. Members may either prefer rules as a means to avoid uncertainty, or accept ambiguity and take greater risks. Core values may either be ambition,

challenge, and assertiveness, or cooperation and good relationships between members. The Visionary leadership paradigm inspires change and suit major organisational transformations. However, it adapts slowly to change since people need time to shift mindset and commit to a new vision, and systems and processes must be aligned with the new conditions. Leaders' responsibility is high, but followers are empowered to be held accountable to their leader for their outcomes. The organisation could either have a divisional structure or be an adhocracy; i.e. have a flexible, self-renewing, and/or networked based structure. The paradigm may be functional both in stable and predictable environments and in complex and dynamic contexts. The increased empowerment of followers makes this a suitable paradigm for workers with a medium to high knowledgebase. As any paradigm, the Visionary paradigm has its drawbacks. Followers might place unrealistic expectations on leaders, which can lead to disappointment if things do not work out. They may also become dependent on their leaders, thinking that they have everything under control when that is not always the case. Moreover, innovations and creativity might be inhibited if followers feel reluctant to question their idealized leaders. Finally, Visionary leaders typically tend to rally people behind a single vision and a set of values. Consequently, people who do not share the same vision and values usually end up leaving the organisation. The challenge of gaining commitment from followers using a single vision is intensified in an increasingly globalised world with an increasingly diversified workforce (ibid.).

The Organic leadership paradigm moves away from viewing leaders as key players. Instead it focuses on the entire group which may have a single leader, multiple leaders, or even no formal leadership beyond the one emerging from the relationships between organisational members. Authority and power reside in the collective and tend to be distributed throughout the organisation, rather than concentrated to the top. Group members may temporarily attribute leader power to an individual based on that person's knowledge, experience, desirable traits, reputation and status. Decision making is delegated to groups or individuals and decisions are based on mutual agreement which provides maximum follower acceptance and commitment, and promotes innovation and creativity. Thus, employees' power and opportunity to influence the direction of the organisation is high. Leadership is a distributed process, with organisational members being equally responsible for dealing with change and building commitment to visions and values through mutual and ongoing sense-making processes. The Organic paradigm rejects rationalistic assumptions about simple cause and effect relationships. Rather, organisations are viewed as complex, dynamic, and unpredictable social systems, which are more than the sum of its individual parts. Leader-follower relationships within this paradigm tend to be close and informal. People are comfortable with ambiguity and uncertainty, and reject rigid rules and regulations. The collective identity is emphasised and reinforced by a focus on good worker relationships and cooperation. Organic organisations can be highly agile since everyone understands the need for continuous adaptation to a changing environment; are prepared for change; and committed to helping each other make sense of chaotic circumstances. Change may however be slowed down by the need for extensive consultation and communication. Organisational members make mutual commitments to accept individual and shared responsibility for certain projects or tasks, and are expected to hold themselves and their team accountable for the outcome. This type of leadership fits well with adhocracy and networked organisations, and lends itself to more unpredictable, chaotic and dynamic environments. Despite the benefits, the Organic paradigm has its limitations. The downside of increased autonomy, freedom, discretion, and authorisation is loss of control and significantly increased uncertainty. For extensive empowerment to be effective, both managers and staff must share the same Organic view of

leadership. Otherwise, followers may reject taking on their part of the leader's role, and leaders might refuse giving up power (ibid.).

3.2.3 Effective leadership

The leadership paradigms show that a major mindshift has occurred concerning organisational effectiveness. Pfeffer (1994) points out that traditional sources of competitive advantage such as product and process technology, protected or regulated markets, access to financial resources, and economies of scale have decreased in importance, while follower knowledge and people management have become critical for organisational success. Leadership effectiveness, however, is not just a simple matter of empowering people. For a leadership paradigm to be effective, several things have to match, according to Avery (2004). First, the leadership must fit the organisational structure and context. For example, it is not eligible to use classical leadership in an adhocracy featuring highly knowledgeable staff, nor is it productive to exert organic leadership in a bureaucratic and hierarchical organisation. Second, effective leadership requires that both leaders and followers share the same view on leadership. People who expect leaders to make the decisions and give directives will not consider consultation and participative approaches as effective leadership. Conversely, employees who believe that leadership is about empowering people and leading people towards a desired future will not interpret detailed orders, supervision and coercion as leadership (ibid.).

The importance of aligning leaders' and followers' ideas and values concerning leadership is supported by Griffin and Abraham's (2000) study on effectiveness in museums. To identify what contributes to effectiveness within museums, the researchers collected quantitative and qualitative data through assessments performed by experts and museum staff. The results showed that successful museums emphasise cohesive leadership. Cohesion is defined as "working collaboratively towards common goals in the context of shared values" (p. 335) and cohesive leadership is explained as:

(...) leadership which encourages development of shared values, a commitment to agreed standards of quality and to effective communication, leadership which provides opportunities for training and rewards superior performance in terms of agreed and understood standards (p. 342).

The researchers state that effective museums are run by leaders and managers who create clear and long-term visions, who make sure that new initiatives are aligned with the organisation's strategic objectives, who challenge and stimulate employees to perform at the top of their potential, who trust and support their people, who encourage managers to question prevailing conditions, who engage and involve employees in matters that have a direct impact on them, including concerns regarding training and development, and who model appropriate behaviours. Moreover, the study shows that museum effectiveness increases when the values of the organisation matches the values of the people in it (ibid.). Thus, in order to become successful, museums should exercise leadership primarily associated with the visionary paradigm and to some extent the organic paradigm.

3.3. Towards a shared understanding

Aligning organisational members' ideas and values about leadership is not easy. Even though many leaders of today have adopted the rhetoric associated with the visionary and organic

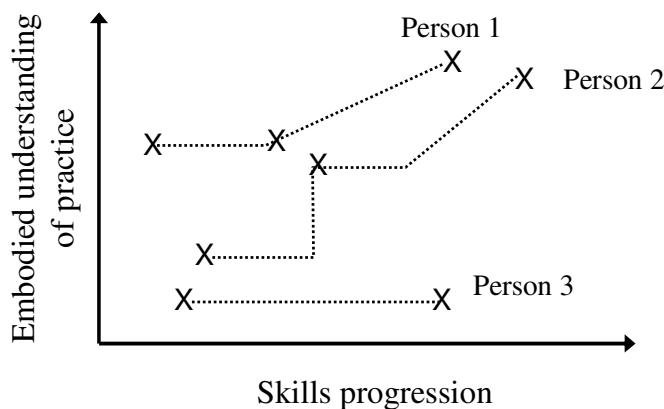
paradigm, many lavish attempts in leading people through visions and grand ideas fail. Sandberg and Targama (1998) suggest that this happen because the new leadership ideas often are introduced using rationalistic approaches associated with the classical and transactional leadership paradigm. Both research and praxis have traditionally, and for a very long time, been marked by a rationalistic perspective on management. From this viewpoint people's actions are believed to be guided by actual conditions in the environment. Thus, for organisations to attain competitive advantage, leaders decide and plan what to do and how to do it. Then they design specific instructions, rules and regulations and transmit them to workers through a hierarchy of authority and responsibility. In other words, a rationalistic approach to implement a vision would be to let top managers formulate a statement of a desired future, without input from subordinates, and then introduce processes and systems which forces people to align. The effectiveness of this rationalistic approach is questioned by a growing amount of interpretative research which shows that people's actions, in fact, are not guided by rules and regulations. Rather, people's actions are guided by how they understand and interpret these rules and regulations. Hence, to bridge the gap between organisational rhetoric and practice Sandberg and Targama (*ibid.*) advocate an interpretative, as opposed to a rationalistic, view on management. In other words, leaders who effectively wish to influence people's way of doing things can not only change conditions in the environment. They have to influence people's understanding of these new conditions. Effects may also be accomplished without making any actual changes, but merely by influencing people's interpretations of the prevailing circumstances.

3.3.1. Developing good and effective managers

In organisations, managers are guided by their mental models about management and how they understand and interpret their role. Hence, managers' inappropriate ideas about management may lead to bad decisions, undesirable outcomes and economic loss for an organisation (Boyatzis, 1982). Conversely, managers who model appropriate behaviour might enhance organisational cohesiveness and effectiveness (Abraham & Griffin, 2000). Therefore, aligning managers' mental manager models with appropriate ideas about management is essential for organisational effectiveness. The situation is however complicated by the fact that people have both an espoused theory and a theory-in-use (Argyris, 1999). This means that even if people are able to describe their view on good and effective management, and their ideas seems fine, they do not always act in accordance with them. Actually, people are more often than not unaware of the discrepancy between their espoused theories and theories-in-use (*ibid.*).

Management competence has traditionally been described as a list of individual characteristics in relation to a list of job activities. When the lists match, i.e. when a person has the right qualifications for a specific job, competent behaviour is expected to occur (Sandberg & Targama, 1998; Ellström, 1997). This theory implies that a manager can be put into a training program to learn all the important skills a manager needs to know, and then return to work and be a competent manager. It also implies that a manager becomes more competent the more training and experience he or she gets. Ellström's (1997) concept "competence-in-use" challenges this perception. From this perspective competence is neither primarily an attribute of an individual nor primarily an attribute of a job, but rather a dynamic interaction between the two. Hence, both factors related to the person and factors related to the work may either facilitate or limit the extent to which an individual uses his or her potential capacity to successfully complete a certain task in a specific job situation. This means that even if a person has the knowledge and skills required for a certain task, it does not automatically imply that he or she will exercise these capabilities in a specific work situation. Dall'Alba and

Sandberg (2006) lend their support to this notion when they criticise traditional stage models which explain skill development simply as the acquisition of training and experience. Rather, empirical research shows that skill development entails a combination of skill progression and changed embodied understanding of practice, as illustrated by person 1 and 2 in the figure below. Some professionals, however, can spend most of their working life refining an existing understanding, as illustrated by person 3 in the chart. Thus, they can make considerable skill progress without ever changing or developing the way they understand their work.



Da'll Alba and Sandberg's theory can be compared to Dixon's (1993) distinction between learning and development. *Learning* is about making sense of the world through an existing framework, and could hence be compared to 'skill progression', whereas *development* is about changing the framework itself, which may be compared to 'changed embodied understanding of practice'. Thus, development is not a change in behaviour. Rather, it is a person's redefinition of his or her relationship to the organisational environment. In an organisational setting, the environment includes, for example, co-workers, job-related tasks, organisational strategy, and top management. An example of development in this context could be a manager who redefines his or her role in relation to subordinates, perhaps from the idea of being their supervisor to that of being their coach. People understand the world through one framework at the time, and the brief transition from one framework to another is a time associated with chaos, uncertainty, and loss, but also hope and anticipation of a better future (*ibid.*).

Management development has traditionally involved sending managers away on courses outside the workplace to learn from management experts in class-room settings. This type of management development counteracts attempts to encourage managers to think for themselves and to find new answers. Managers learn to trust the solutions of experts, rather than developing solutions themselves. Another common error in management development programs is the attempt to teach managers skills and techniques for functioning in a framework that is inconsistent with their own existing framework. This leads to a "transfer problem", i.e. managers do not utilize the new techniques in his or her work situation. This problem is often blamed on lack of support from immediate supervisors, or on a culture that counteract changed behaviour. However, it is just as likely that the new behaviour does not match managers' existing frameworks, i.e. the way that they understand their role in relation to the organisational context (*ibid.*).

How then can understanding be developed, challenged and changed? Sandberg & Targama (1998) argue that a person's understanding is not a skill, it is an inextricable part of the self; the lens through which the person views and interprets the world, and the basis for how he or she relates to and reacts on different occurrences. Since understanding originates from the self, it is mainly developed and changed through critical reflection. The concept in the management literature goes beyond mere reflection as a tool for problem solving. Critical reflection focuses instead on the exploration of the social and personal framework in which a person works. Here the difference between espoused theory and the theory-in-use, as mentioned above, is important. Reflection on the espoused theory requires a deep and critical analysis. A person must be allowed to question espoused theories without being seen as the troublemaker who points out that 'the emperor is without clothes' (Woerkom, 2004). So, by questioning the 'common sense' in an organization, the underlying assumptions can be revealed, and the organisation can develop (Reynolds, 2004). However, opening up for critical reflection and development does not guarantee that people develop in a certain direction. People may discover that their values and assumptions do not match the organisation's values and assumptions. Hence, organisations that want to develop their people must be open for development themselves (Dixon, 1993). Since the process is hard to control, management should focus on creating conditions that increase receptiveness for new ideas and perspectives. When people change their understandings, it is likely the outcome of a first-hand concrete experience, an emotionally charged experience, a dialogue with others, or the result of having been presented with a colourful and symbolic representation of something new. Moreover, approaches that have shown themselves useful when developing and changing understandings have often been problem-based, experience-oriented, and extended over a long period of time (Sandberg & Targama, 1998).

4. Result

In this chapter follows a presentation of the findings from the semi-structured interviews. First, the manager context will be depicted. Second, four ways in which interviewees understand good and effective management at the museum will be described.

4.1. The manager context

As the interviewees expressed their personal ideas of good and effective management, they also described the organisational context. Work environment and specific job demands are believed to shape the manager role at the Museum. Some of the organisational features are thought to help managers do a better job, while others are believed to impede manager effectiveness.

The Museum's structure is hierarchical and divisional. At the top there is an Executive Director followed by a group of Directors, each one responsible for a set of departments. Heads of Departments appear on the third level from the top. They, in their turn, may be followed by several additional lines of managers. Since the museum has several different sites, team members may be working in different buildings. This organisational structure is perceived to obstruct communication and planning, both horizontally and vertically.

Many Heads experience a lack of direction and leadership from the top. The organisation has a vision, but it has not been developed through a collective process, and it is not shared and understood by all staff. Moreover, the organisation's strategic objectives do not completely map onto what is actually going on at the grassroots, and a lot of activities are left out of the business plan.

In order to standardize managers' work processes, the top management has introduced new policies concerning, for example, recruitment and performance management. Heads were consulted to some extent before the new procedures were implemented, but there were no real discussions regarding how people were managing already. The managers got some training to learn the new performance management procedures, but the work system is still not being used by all managers, including the directors.

A lot of managers within the organisation have never had any formal management training. Many of them came to the organisation a long time ago and have been working their way up to their current position. Recently, however, there has been quite a lot of change in the personnel, as managers from the profit sector have been recruited into the organisation. Consequently, managers are experiencing something like a cultural clash when the traditional values of the organisations are being questioned by new employees. Managers with years of experience from the museum sector emphasise the importance of understanding what a museum is and does in order to manage it effectively, while managers from the profit sector emphasise the importance of viewing the museum as a customer-oriented business.

Being a not-for-profit organisation places special demands on the museum and its managers. For one thing, the organisation is always trying to get the most out of its people to least possible cost, since there is never enough money to recruit enough people for the jobs. Consequently, everyone finds themselves to be overloaded with work. Due to limited

resources, the organisation also lacks every form of financial reward system. Nor is it very good at recognizing and celebrating achievements in other ways.

People working with the museum collections are described as incredibly passionate about what the museum does, simply because they would not put up with the low pay if they were not. They are generally considered to be specialists and experts within their professional areas, and some people are even thought to be overqualified for their jobs. In departments not directly dealing with the museum collections, people are described as proud of what they are doing and as good team members but the term “expert” is seldom used.

4.2. Understanding management

When Heads were asked to describe their own manager role in greater detail, they referred to their individual area of responsibility, their job descriptions and their performance objectives. They did not perceive the manager role to be mutually defined within the museum. Rather, everyone made their own interpretation of what the museum expected from them as managers based on their knowledge, personal experiences, attitudes, and opinions.

I don't feel the role of managers defined here at all, so I could say what I think is expected, but that's really how I am creating my role /--- I don't know, for example, what's expected by anybody else at my level. I wouldn't have an understanding of what the museum *expected* from us as managers.

The interviewees agreed that the essence of management at the museum is to effectively manage resources generally defined as time, money, and people, to achieve an end. What it means to “effectively manage” is however a moot point, based on the interviewees different understandings of management. The interview material suggests four qualitatively different ways in which a manager’s central task and, hence, required capabilities are understood. Given their diverse perspectives, interviewees interpret the manager context differently, and have different ideas concerning the best way to develop a shared understanding of good and effective management in the Museum. The four different understandings are further depicted below. The aim is not to tuck interviewees into fixed and absolute categories, but to provide a conceptual framework to help us understand how good and effective management is currently perceived by managers at the museum. The aim is also to facilitate further analyse of what impact this might have on the museum.

4.2.1 Understanding 1: Good and effective management as getting the job done.

The central manager task

A good and effective manager should plan and organise the work, he/she should clearly define what has to be done and by whom, and make sure that things are running according to plans and that the objectives are being fulfilled.

[Attributes of a good an effective manager] /--- decisiveness, fairness, knowledge of the subject and knowledge of [his/her] people. So, basically, experienced and knowledgeable in the use of resources, and applying those resources to the best benefit.

Important manager capabilities

To act effectively, a manager must be highly experienced within his or her field, good at planning and organising, and capable of allocating and managing financial resources. A manager must also be able to identify people's need for training and development to make sure that they can do their jobs and effectively solve problems along the way. Moreover, a manager must have detailed knowledge to be able to make good and swift decisions in order to get on with things. He/she must also arrange effective meetings to distribute work and solve problems that arise.

Not having the detailed knowledge and the detailed experience, that'll slow you down, because you've got to think more over than do it automatically /---/

Context impact on manager effectiveness

Many of the relatively new policies and procedures, which have been introduced to streamline management practices, are perceived to interrupt effectiveness by slowing managers down and obstructing them from doing their job. The same goes for the increased emphasis on people management. Although people are important, a manager should know his/her staff well enough to give them the support they need even without formalised meetings and development discussions.

I do realise that people are important and realise that staff are important, but if you're working with them day in day out, as a manager you should know them, and I don't quite see the need in those circumstances for /---/ the formalised and stylised /---/ [and] inflexible system of reporting and having personal development discussions and things like that /---/

Manager effectiveness is also hampered by the enormous amount of consultative meetings that take place in the organisation. What managers need in order to be effective are clear directives, appointed deadlines, and their superiors' trust to get on with things.

I don't have time for lots and lots of consultation. I need to know that I'm going to do such and such; it's going to be done by so and so; it's going to be then - and go for it.

How to develop a shared management definition

A shared definition should preferably be developed by Heads, by giving them the space and opportunity to talk with each other and share their knowledge and experience.

4.2.2. Understanding 2: Good and effective management as influencing people and running the department smoothly.

The central manager task

From this perspective, a good and effective manager should identify and decide what his or her team should do to contribute to the success of the department and the Museum, while showing consideration for people's ideas, motivations, and needs along the way.

A good and effective manager is someone who is able to get the best out of their team – enough work out of their team – to support and fulfil all the various business objectives that the organisation wants you to achieve, and is able to do that in communication and consultation with other managers, to make sure that /---/ everyone is happy and productive.

Important manager capabilities

Expertise and experience within the own field of practice is essential to effectively plan and organise the work in the department. The most important aspect is people management and the ability to get the most out of the team. People are more likely to be influenced if their manager consults them in matters that concern them. They will also be more prone to follow a manager who is friendly and fair, who treats them with respect, who shows interest in what they do and acknowledge and praise their achievements. Simple teambuilding activities, like taking everyone out for dinner, are both rewarding and motivating for staff and help to build a positive team spirit. A manager must have some basic understanding of what it is his or her staff members are doing to effectively question and challenge their viewpoints and way of doing things in order to get them on the right track. Managers must also be able to make good and informed decisions, i.e. decisions based on consultation.

/---/ if you want something to happen, if you want to change something, it's far more chance for it happening if you make the other person want to do it.

Context impact on manager effectiveness

Because directors are so busy managing at their level, and are so high up in the hierarchy, they have lost contact with the grassroots. Consequently, their overall vision and strategic objectives do not match reality. This causes Heads to spend a lot of their time communicating internally to explain what is actually going on further down the chain. Hence, the actual leadership – concerning what the museum does – devolves down to the Heads from the directors. This is not a desirable state considering the Heads level in the hierarchy.

/---/ the actual leadership /---/ the content and what we're doing with our collection, and all of that, /---/ devolves down to the Heads level. /---/ It's almost like you have to do the thinking for your senior managers, otherwise nobody will do it.

The organisation's assiduous attempts to standardise management practises impede rather than enhance management effectiveness. Although it is a good idea to formalise processes, many of the new systems are overly complex and do not fit the organisational reality or the way managers work.

It's a good idea, but it has to be transparent and straightforward, and it also has to be flexible because we do get things dumped on us, so you can't /---/ plan twelve months ahead, when I know that the Director is going to say "Oh, I want you to do this and this, and have you thought about this". So, if I have a member of staff and I say "look, you've completely failed to deliver these things that you said you were going to do in the last interview", and then they could say "well, that's because I've been asked to do these, these, and these, and they're not part of the system".

The top-down and coercive ways in which many of the systems were introduced, is interpreted as a declaration of distrust from the top management. Heads would prefer to get the freedom and the trust to manage people in their own way. Furthermore, the increased amount of paperwork associated with the emphasis on people management make managers feel like bureaucrats. However, since the organisation is very busy and department constantly are pulling in each other resources, the performance management system help Heads prevent others from disturbing their operations from running smoothly.

I do think it's helpful now in order to fight off, if I can use that, other people coming in saying "can I have [name] time /---/", and I can say "well, look according to his yearly plan /---/ he's spending twenty percent of his time on this, it's fifty percent of his time on that, so either he can't or one of these has to go".

How to develop a shared management definition

The most efficient way to develop a shared definition would be through consultation with Heads. Given their both strategic and operational role in the organisation, they are in the perfect position to formulate and implement a definition of good and effective management. Heads should therefore assemble to discuss and develop a general definition, which they should then establish within their respective departments. However, it would probably be even better to put aside time for the issue and make a real project out of it, to cut across the traditional hierarchy and consult managers at different levels in focus groups.

/---/ it would be good to break down barriers, but at the same time I don't know why I'm resisting it in a way. I suppose it's partly because /---/ we're just so *busy*. /---/ if we had it as a project for next year; let's sort out the management, and the communication, and the understanding, and we all put ten percent of our time towards it, that would be fantastic.

Mentoring would also be a good way to develop a shared understanding of good and effective management. Experienced mentors outside the organisation could function as role models and provide managers with different perspectives and ideas on how to manage people effectively.

/---/ being a decent human being, and operating well and being a good leader, they're sort of things which you have to learn from other human beings. Probably on a one-to-one basis or by example. /---

4.2.3. Understanding 3: Good and effective management as unifying people behind a vision

The ultimate purpose of management

From this perspective, a good and effective manager should unify his or her team with a clear and inspiring vision. They should further influence and motivate people to achieve on the top of their capacity by making them see how they fit into the whole, and they should set challenging individual objectives accompanied by training and development.

Being able to inspire staff with a very clear vision, make it very clear where people are going, so that they have an understanding of where they sit within an organisation or within the bigger picture, is a crucial part of management. Setting the ceiling high, in my view, is one of the fundamental elements of a good manager.

Important management capabilities

A manager must have a strategic view on things, meaning that he/she must be aware of what is going on outside the own department and the Museum to be able to constantly improve peoples' ways of working. Moreover, planning and organising has to be done in cooperation with others to identify overlaps and opportunities for resource sharing, as well as to ensure that plans are grounded in reality and realistic in relation to available resources. In other words, success is closer at hand when you get people to unite and strive in the same direction. Hence, managers must also be able to effectively communicate and align people behind a common vision and shared objectives, strategies and quality standards. For a vision to be meaningful it has to be grounded in reality and developed through a collective process involving both managers and staff. A positive side effect of mutually agreed visions and standards is that individuals who are not willing to strive in the same direction, or who can not make the grade, will quit their jobs which will leave the manager with a good group of people.

/---/ what that's enable us to do, is take the bad eggs out and the team you're left with are now willing to strive to become so much better than where they were, which is positive for overall.

It is the people at the bottom that help to drive the team and make the operation work, while a manager's job is to keep the overview to avoid getting lost in details. Hence, a manager must know how to delegate effectively. This means empowering people by trusting them with responsibilities and decision making power, as well as providing them with the knowledge and equipment they need to realise the vision of the organisation. Empowerment is also a way to secure the succession within the department. Thus, issues concerning development and result are considered equally important, and a manager should create this kind of culture by modelling desirable behaviour.

if you talk to your team about objectives, targets, deadlines, then they know that those are things they need to talk to you about /---/ if you also talk to your team about raising issues about development, about training and support, they know they can use that language back to you. They know they can come and ask for those things.

Context impact on manager effectiveness

The lack of a shared organisational vision and clear directions from the top causes the organisation to lose its overall course. Consequently, managers try to fill the leadership gap themselves and start to pull in different directions.

/---/ where there's a vacuum people will create something. So, you end up with managers within different departments, basically pulling in different directions, and /---/ also not being able to communicate the overall direction of the organisation to their staff.

The organisation's hierarchical and divisional structure impedes managers' effectiveness by obstructing communication and planning across departments. There is no harmony in the strategic planning between departments, since their planning comes from several directors. New procedures were recently introduced to facilitate planning. This appears to have solved some of the problems regarding the *initial* planning. There is however still a problem with the constant flow of new initiatives taken on by departments, which necessarily involve other departments as well. Consequently, departments are putting a lot of pressure on each other along the way, resulting in an extremely busy work environment where management seems to fight its way in, rather than being the bedrock of how managers work. Thus, consistent work procedures introduced through proper training are crucial for managers to effectively communicate, plan, organise, and manage their resources in cooperation with other managers.

/---/ I think it would help us as a museum to have more uniformed ways of doing things, so that when I'm planning I've got some understanding that other Heads are planning in a similar way, and then it's easier for us to overlap.

From this perspective, the newly introduced Performance Management and Development system (PMD) is much longed for. Even though it is admittedly a time consuming process, especially in poorly functioning teams, the benefits outshine the disadvantages. First of all, it helps managers align people behind a vision. It also help people understand how they fit into the whole. Further, it promotes fairness and objectivity by ensuring that performance is assessed in a structured and equal way, irrespectively of a manager's individual relationship with a certain staff member. Moreover, it is a tool for identifying training and development needs, and for developing staff through individual performance feedback. Finally, it enhances communication between departments by streamlining and formalising work processes. Despite all the benefits, since the PMD system was introduced without a proper training

program accompanying it, managers have not fully committed to managing performance. The same goes for other joint work processes that have been launched.

If you're really going to try to create a culture where performance is managed, then I think you need a culture of training and development that goes with it. /---

Another thing that obstructs manager effectiveness is the custom of involving a lot of people in every decision. It slows down the decision making process and creates frustration among those who feel that their presence at the meeting is unnecessary. Hence, people's roles on committees need to be much more clearly defined. The number of people who need to be involved in a decision might actually be quite small, and who those people are might change in different contexts. The purposes with meetings need to be more clearly defined as well.

/---/ it's almost like we have a meeting to discuss what we're going to discuss in the meeting, to discuss what we're going to have to discuss in the meeting.

How to develop a shared management definition

The best way to develop a shared understanding of good and effective management would be through joint training and development of managers. Training is considered to be a good way to develop a common language and to connect people by shared experience. A training program would also ensure time to be put aside.

When you train together, that's how you start to have common language and you start to have the same points of reference, because you've trained it together, you learnt the same things at the same time, which is invaluable /---

4.2.4. Understanding 4: Good and effective management as a mutual sense-making process

The ultimate purpose of management

From this perspective, a good and effective manager should involve his or her team in a mutual sense-making process in order to clarify what the team should be doing. It is still the manager who ultimately makes the formal decisions, but the decisions are based on extensive communication and involvement of staff.

If you'd ask me what sort of leadership /---/ I would want to exhibit, it would be distributed. Because they are all specialists within their own range, I won't see them building our department plan, I mean ultimately I will take the decision about what's in and what's out, but I want to see them generating some of that towards a common way forward.

Important management capabilities

Some of the capabilities a manager needs to be an effective manager are obvious, but not all. Rather, what constitutes effective management capabilities changes depending on the varying attributes of the manager, the followers, and the job. People need different things from their manager in different stages of their professional career, and what they expect from a manager is determined by their personal worldview, their current needs, their former experiences, and their own perspective on management.

I think that there are certain sets of skills that everyone needs to develop, and obviously certain procedures that you need to be taught to use, because those are the procedures [of] the museum /---/ There are softer things around management that /---/ are dependent on the kinds

of people you're managing /---/ and what they're supposed to do, that require me to have a different set of knowledge to say /---/ the Head of the [name] department.

Context impact on manager effectiveness

The PMD system is believed to enhance manager effectiveness by increasing communication and mutual understanding between managers and individual team members. It can also prevent stress by restricting managers from overloading their staff with work, and by making people focus on clearly defined objectives. It also provides a formal space where “softer discussions”, feedback, recognition and praise may take place.

/---/ a quarterly review is a formal time for them to say how they're feeling. Just to go through and say “well, how is this working, how is it not? What do you want to do differently, how might I help?”

Management effectiveness is hampered by the organisation's short notice planning cycle, the difficulty to arrange meetings with team members that are extremely busy and/or are working in different buildings. The downside of not being able to fully involve team members in planning and decision making, is the potential loss of commitment and control they might experience. There is also a very limited possibility to find time for creative “blue sky days” which is negative from a strategic and creative viewpoint.

In my ideal scenario, I would have time to /---/ take them through two or three sessions of planning for the next year and the next three years, which hasn't been possible up till now. /--/ what I lose from not being able to do it like that, is that complete buy-in and a sense of control over their own work, and their own destiny in the next year.

How to develop a shared management definition

A shared definition has to be build through consensus and a bottom-up approach. People from different levels and departments should be gathered and asked for their opinions and perspectives on management. The discussions should be based on what it is they value about the organisation.

/---/ you can't impose your vision of leadership and management without understanding what it is you value about what the organisation does.

5. Analysis

In this chapter, Avery's (2004) leadership paradigms will be used as an overall conceptual framework to analyse the Museum's environment and the managers' understandings of good and effective management. Also, the need of and the potential to align people's ideas about leadership will be analysed.

5.1. Prevailing leadership paradigm at the Museum

The interview data suggest that the prevailing leadership paradigm at the Museum is Classical-Transactional. There is plenty of evidence to support this. Most obvious is the organisation's hierarchical structure, with an elite group at the top that sets the course and decides what the organisation should do and how it should do it. Even though Heads, and possibly also managers further down the chain, are consulted to some extent before decisions, consensus and mutual understanding is not of high priority in the organisation. When decisions have been made at the directorate level, they are cascaded down through the hierarchy and implemented with the help of line managers. By formalising manager processes, the organisation increasingly intensifies its control over managers and followers. However, the consequences of not complying with standardised procedures seem to be negligible. One reason might be that even directors fail to submit to the routines they introduce. Thus, they do not live as they learn.

The museum's overall vision could be interpreted as evidence of a Visionary paradigm, but considering the limited effect it has had on unifying managers and staff, it does not appear to play a prominent part in the organisation. However, if the vision is a sign of a sincere attempt to change the prevailing leadership paradigm from Transactional to Visionary, this would probably benefit the organisation in terms of effectiveness. Even though Transactional leadership can be effective in bureaucratically structured organisations, Visionary leadership is likely to fit the Museum's context even better, considering the organisation's knowledgeable workforce (Avery, 2004). Griffin and Abraham's (2000) study shows that cohesive leadership – working collaboratively towards common goals in the context of shared values – is a main feature of effective museums. Thus, effectiveness in museums increases when leaders emphasise development of shared values, long-term visions, and agreed quality standards; when managers are encouraged to speak their mind and question prevailing conditions; when people get challenged, trusted and supported to perform on the top of their capacity; when people are involved in issues that concern themselves and their own development; and when managers model appropriate behaviour. Thus, a museum's effectiveness appears to increase when managers' theories-in-use are aligned with the Visionary leadership paradigm.

5.2. Managers' understanding of good and effective management

The interview results suggest that Heads understand good and effective management in four qualitatively different ways.

- Understanding 1 (U1): as getting the job done in the department
- Understanding 2 (U2): as influencing people and running the department smoothly

- Understanding 3 (U3): as unifying people behind a shared vision, and;
- Understanding 4 (U4): as facilitating an ongoing sense-making process.

Since actual behaviour only can be identified through observations, it is important to remember that these four ‘understandings’ represent the interviewees’ espoused theories of management and not necessarily their theories-in-use (Argyris, 1999). Nevertheless, the results imply that Heads’ understandings of their central task define what core capabilities they regard as essential for being good and effective managers. Their respective understandings also explain the way they interpret and react on their work environment. Thus, the findings are consistent with the abundance of interpretative research claiming that people base their actions on their understandings (Dall’Alba and Sandberg, 2006; Sandberg & Targama, 1998), and the notion that managers’ behaviours are guided by their mental manager models (Boyatzis, 1983). Avery’s (2004) leadership paradigms can be used to further unveil interviewees’ mental models of management. A comparison shows that U1 is based on ideas associated with the Classical and the Transactional leadership paradigms, with leader power stemming primarily from position, knowledge and experience. U2 is based on ideas related to the Transactional paradigm. From this perspective leader power stem mainly from position and interpersonal skills. U3 is associated with the Visionary paradigm, in which leader power derives mainly from a manager’s personal vision and characteristics. Finally, U4 resembles the Organic leadership paradigm to some extent by its emphasis on distributed leadership.

5.2.1. The central manager task

From the perspective of U1 and U2, the central manager task is to predict the future and influence people to do the job. Moreover, the focus is on creating order in a small part of the organisation and effectively run the daily operations. This makes visions about the future unnecessary. From the perspective of U3, a manager’s central task is to inspire people through presenting a vision of a desired future, rather than managing daily operations and systems. Although visions can be implemented through top-down approaches, U3 emphasises the importance of developing visions through collective processes to build mutual understanding and task commitment. Finally, from the perspective of U4 a manager’s central task is to facilitate an ongoing sense-making process among team members, to reach mutual agreements about what to do and how to do it.

U1’s and U2’s concern for coping with the presence and focusing on a smaller part of the organisation are values traditionally associated with management (Yukl, 2006; Avery, 2004). These two perspectives also view management in a rationalistic way, with managers defining reality for followers (Sandberg & Targama, 1998). U3’s and U4’s emphasis on coping with change towards a desired future and focusing on the organisation as a whole, are traditionally associated with leadership (Yukl, 2006; Avery, 2004). These two perspectives reveal an interpretative view on management by its emphasis on the importance of influencing people’s understandings of reality (Sandberg & Targama, 1998).

5.2.2. Important manager capabilities

Planning and organising are identified as important manager capabilities, although the terms are understood very differently. Through the lens of U1, a manager should plan and organise followers’ daily work. This demands decisiveness, detailed knowledge and experience of the job. From the perspective of U2, a manager should plan and organise the departments’ overall work. To do so, a manager must be experienced in his or her own field; he/she must have some basic understanding of the followers’ areas of expertise, and he/she must consult

managers and staff to improve planning. U3, in turn, argues that a manager should plan and organise the department's work in cooperation with other departments, in order to identify overlaps and opportunities for resource sharing, and to align the whole organisation behind a shared vision. This demands a strategic mind and co-operational skills. Finally, U4 advocates that planning and organising should be mutual processes within and between departments. Hence, a manager must be able to communicate effectively and to follow the standardised procedures of the museum. Again, U1 and U2 focus on a smaller part of the organisation, while U3 and U4 focus on the organisation as a whole.

Another important manager capability is to effectively influence people to perform in alignment with strategic plans and objectives. U1 argues that the best way to influence people is through clear directives. U2 agrees but stresses that the process of influencing people has to be done with consideration for their feelings, skills, needs and motives. U3, in turn, argues that managers should influence followers to perform by providing them with an inspiring and unifying vision, and by setting challenging and individual objectives accompanied by adequate decision making power and training. Finally, U4 stresses that influence is a reciprocal process between managers and staff which demands effective communication. Thus, perspective U1, U2 and U3 advocate a top-down approach to influence, while U4 advocates more of a bottom-up approach.

A third manager capability is the ability to identify followers' need for training and development. From the perspective of U1, this would mean providing people with the knowledge they need in order to perform their existing job. U3, on the other hand, emphasises the importance of providing followers with the knowledge and the equipment they need to realise the organisation's long-term goal and vision.

The list can go on, but what the examples given above show are that the same manager capability can be understood very differently depending on a person's idea of what management is. Thus, considering that people base their actions on their understandings (Dall'Alba and Sandberg, 2006; Sandberg & Targama, 1998; Boyatzis, 1983), it is plausible to assume that managers will exercise the same capability in very different ways.

5.2.3. Context impact on manager effectiveness

Three of the perspectives consider the organisational structure to impede effectiveness. The U2 perspective perceives Heads to be too far down the hierarchical chain, considering that they feel that the directors' leadership role devolves down to them. U3 finds that the divisional structure impedes communication and planning between departments, which obstruct people from striving in the same direction. Finally, U4 argues that having team members working in different buildings obstruct mutual sense-making processes and hinder leadership from becoming a distributed process.

The (lack of) leadership from the top is also considered to obstruct manager effectiveness. U1 asks for clear directives, appointed deadlines, and their subordinates' trust to get on with things, instead of lots and lots of consultation. U2 views the organisation's overall vision, strategic objectives, and some of its standardised work processes, as problematic since they do not match reality or fit the way managers work. Hence, Heads need to be consulted even more before decisions. Also, U2 strongly emphasises personal choice and individualism, as opposed to the building of a collective identity within the organisation. Formalised organisational processes are conceived to violate these values. U3, in turn, considers the lack

of a unifying vision and standardised work processes a problem, since managers are pulling in different directions.

The performance management system is considered both to impede and increase manager effectiveness. U1 does not regard the system as necessary to be able to effectively perform the manager role. Rather, it keeps managers from dealing with more acute issues. U2 has noticed that the performance management system can help managers prevent others from disturbing their operations from running smoothly. From the perspective of U3, the performance management system is believed to enhance people's commitment to the vision by helping them understand where they fit into the organisation. Finally, U4 thinks that the performance management system promotes communication, mutual understanding, and distribution of power within a team.

The examples above show that managers interpret their environment differently depending on their understandings of good and effective management. These findings support Ellström's (1997) theory about "competence-in-use", which suggests that competence is a dynamic interaction between the attributes of an individual and the attributes of a job. Thus, both factors related to the individual and factors related to the job determine to what extent a person uses his or her potential capacity to successfully complete a certain task in a particular situation.

5.2.4. How to develop a shared management definition

Managers' ideas concerning how to develop a shared understanding of good and effective management differ. U1 suggests a top-down approach where Heads gather to discuss and formulate a definition. U2 agrees, but also suggests time to be put aside for a real project in which you consult managers and staff at various levels. Individual mentoring is also believed to promote a shared understanding of management. U3 emphasises joint training as a way to develop a common language and to unify people. Finally, U4 believes that a shared understanding of management has to be built through consensus, it has to involve all staff, and start in people's understandings of what it is they value about the organisation.

The findings suggest once again that managers' understanding of good and effective management and as well as their interpretations of the organisational environment, guide their ideas concerning appropriate behaviour and practice. U1 and U2 show preference for rationalistic top-down practices, once again, while U3 and U4 advocate interpretative approaches.

5.3. Towards a shared understanding

The dichotomy between U1-U2 and U3-U4 seems to represent the Museum's ongoing paradigmatic shift, moving from a Classical-Transactional paradigm towards a Visionary. It is clear that U3 and U4 are the two perspectives on management that relate the most to the cohesive leadership which is presumed to have a positive effect on a museum's overall success (Griffin & Abraham, 2000). However, this does not guarantee that cohesive leadership behaviour is the most effective in each department of the Museum today. For cohesive leadership to be effective throughout the organisation, it has to be supported by the structure and context of each department, and by the alignment between the managers' and the staffs' ideas about good and effective management (Avery, 2004). Nevertheless, since a museum's effectiveness increases when the organisation's values match the values of its

people (Griffin & Abraham, 2000), developing a shared understanding of good and effective management should be of high priority to the Museum.

Research and theory agree that the Museum's inclination towards the Visionary leadership paradigm is positive (Griffin & Abraham, 2000; Pfeffer, 1994). However, Sandberg and Targama (1998) argue that attempts to lead people through visions and grand ideas often fail because leaders assume that peoples' actions are guided by instructions, rules and regulations. Hence, they use rationalistic approaches, associated with the Classical and Transactional leadership paradigms, to steer people towards visions formulated by top managers. This seems like a plausible explanation to the situation in the Museum. The top management did indeed formulate and establish the Museum's vision through a top-down approach. Also, standardised work processes were introduced in an attempt to compel managers and followers to act and behave in alignment with the overall vision and the strategic objectives. Thus, top managers at the museum seem to have embraced the Visionary leadership paradigm on a rhetoric level but not in practice. In other words, there is an inconsistency between top managers' espoused theories and their theories-in-use (Argyris, 1999).

Rationalistic approaches to influence people's behaviour have several limitations. First, a top-down implementation of a vision is only likely to succeed if the organisation has exceptionally charismatic top leaders capable of captivating people's hearts and minds (Avery, 2004). Leaders like these –inspiring enough to pull off a complete paradigmatic and cultural shift – are rare. Second, since people's actions are not guided by actual conditions in the environment, but by how they interpret and understand these conditions, the principal management issue is no longer to proclaim vigorously how something ought to be done, but to make people *understand* and embrace why this method of working is important (Sandberg & Targama, 1998). Hence, alternatives to the rationalistic ways of influencing people must be found. Sandberg and Targama (*ibid.*) suggest an interpretative approach, which reflects the values associated with the Visionary and the Organic leadership paradigm. This approach entails involving organisational members in a mutual sense-making process regarding the overall purpose and the desired future of the museum; in pursuit of the development of a common understanding, of shared values, and of an inspiring vision. This mutual sense-making process should also encourage managers and staff to reflect critically on the organisation's espoused theories of management, and to be able to do so without running the risk of being seen as troublemakers (Woerkom, 2004). Considering the fact that it is impossible to anticipate or control the outcome of critical reflection on deeper organisational values and assumptions, the organisation itself has to be open to development and change as a result of the mutual sense-making process (Dixon, 1993).

The process of developing a shared understanding of management could perhaps start with the development of managers, since managers who model appropriate behaviour are believed to enhance cohesion in organisations (Griffin & Abraham, 2000). Traditional approaches to management development are not particularly fruitful. Usually, in these cases, desirable manager capabilities are identified and managers sent away to a course outside work for a few days to learn the skills from an expert. Because managers use their current understanding of management to interpret new information, they will only use the techniques congruent with their present understanding, and utilise these techniques in a way that matches their existing understanding. For example, from the perspective of U2, feedback techniques might be used to influence people, while the same techniques may be used to facilitate reciprocal influence from the perspective of U4. Thus, managers might *learn* a lot of things within their existing framework, but will not *develop* unless they reconstruct their understanding (Dixon, 1993).

This explains why people can spend a whole life refining an existing understanding (Dall'Alba & Sandberg, 2006). It might also happen that a manager has a lot of capabilities that remain unutilized because of the way he or she defines and understands the manager role. Hence, for development to occur, a manager must redefine his or her relationship to the organisational environment (Dixon, 1993) and change his or her embodied understanding of practice (Dall'Alba & Sandberg, 2006). Hence, management development must support managers' critical reflection on their own espoused theories (Woerkom, 2004). Also, problem-based, experience-oriented approaches stretched out over a long period of time, have proven successful when the purpose is to change people's understandings (Sandberg & Targama, 1998). However, considering that competence is a dynamic interaction between individual factors and job factors (Ellström, 1997), the Museum's organisation needs to develop as well in order to facilitate managers to make use of all the capabilities they might already possess.

6. Conclusion

This thesis has sought to unveil how senior managers (1) experience management at the Museum, and (2) understand good and effective management. Finally, with this as a point of departure, it has sought to (3) discuss possible ways for the organisation to develop a shared understanding of good and effective management as well as desirable management practices.

The empirical findings suggest that senior managers perceive the prevailing leadership paradigm at the Museum as Classical-Transactional. Even though evidence of a Visionary paradigm was found in the shape of an overall vision, the organisation has failed to gain follower commitment. Presumably because the vision was implemented through a rationalistic, top-down approach incompatible with the Visionary leadership paradigm.

The ongoing paradigmatic shift in the organisation can be explained by the diverse understandings of good and effective management among the managers. Senior managers have four qualitatively different ways of understanding good and effective management; as Classical-Transactional, Transactional, Visionary, and quasi-Organic. The findings of this study imply that managers' understandings of their central task define what core capabilities they regard as essential for being good and effective managers, and explain the way they interpret and react to their work environment. These findings are consistent with interpretative research claiming that people base their actions on their understandings. The findings also support the theory that competence is a dynamic interaction between the attributes of an individual and the attributes of a job. Thus, both factors related to the individual and factors related to the job, determine to what extent a person uses his or her potential capacity to successfully complete a certain task in a particular situation.

Effectiveness in museums is believed to increase when leaders and followers share the same ideas about leadership, primarily when these ideas resemble the Visionary leadership paradigm. Hence, developing a shared understanding of good and effective management, and moving from a Classical-Transactional towards a Visionary leadership paradigm, should be of high priority to the Museum in this study. The process of developing a shared understanding of management in the organisation could start with managers modelling appropriate behaviour consistent with the Visionary leadership paradigm. However, since managers understand the world through one existing framework at the time, this is not a simple matter of identifying desirable manager capabilities and sending managers to training courses to develop desirable skills. If managers are trained to function in a framework that is inconsistent with their own existing framework, a "transfer problem" will occur. For example: skills and techniques consistent with the Visionary paradigm might not be utilized at all or used in very different ways by managers with a Classical-Transactional, Transactional, or quasi-Organic understandings of management. Empirical evidence from this study supports this notion, for example: interviewees utilize the performance management system very differently depending on their understanding of management. While *learning* implies making sense of the world through an existing framework of understanding, *development* implies moving from one framework to another. To be motivated to do so, a person's existing understanding has to be proven dysfunctional. Thus, development can be stimulated by encouraging managers to critically reflect on their own and the organisation's espoused theories of management. Since this is not a predictable or controllable process; the organisation itself must be susceptible to influence and open to change.

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Interview guide

Introduction

- Presentation of myself
- Purpose of the research project
- Structure of the interview, confirmation procedure
- Voice recording, confidentiality, and voluntary participation

Questions

Background:

1. How long have you worked at the Museum?
2. At what level of management would you class yourself?
3. For how long have you held your current role?
4. Have you held any other management positions within this organisation?
5. Have you held any management positions in other organisations?

Define management:

6. What does the term *management* mean to you?
7. What is *leadership* to you?
8. How do you view the relationship between *management* and *leadership*?

Being a manager at the museum:

9. Considering your own definition of management, do you think management at the Museum differs from management in other kinds of organisations? (is it different to be a *manager* in this organisation, in what way?)

10. What are your main responsibilities in your current position? (for example communicating goals, setting objectives, identifying the learning and development of staff, managing performance, motivating people, teambuilding, coaching and feedback etc.)
11. In relation to the responsibilities you have as a manager, what level of authority/mandate from the organisation do you feel you have in making decisions for example? (how does it affect your work? how do you know what level of authority/mandate you have?)
12. To be able to carry out your responsibilities and your role as a manager at the Museum, what have you discovered to be key capabilities for you to possess? (what do you need to know/understand theoretically?, what tangible/practical skills do you need to master?, how do you need to act/behave?, why do you think you need these capabilities, how have you discovered that they are important?)
13. What do you think others expect from you in your role as a manager? (your own manager, colleagues, subordinates? do you think their expectations are adequate, why/why not?)
14. What do you expect of your own manager? (what do you expect from other managers)
15. How do you think others experience you in your role as a manager? (why do you think so?)
16. What is your overall experience of being a manager at the Museum? (good and bad)
17. Take a moment and try to imagine how all managers at this workplace possess all the capabilities they need to work in an ideal way. Describe what you see? (what do they know, what do they do, how do they act/interact?)
18. How does your dream picture relate to how things are today? (what similarities do you see: what are managers already good at? what differences do you see: what do managers need to develop? how could their needs be provided for? how could the dream become reality?)
19. What do you think is the best way for this organisation to develop a shared understanding of what good management is?