



SCHOOL OF  
ECONOMICS AND  
MANAGEMENT

# Do professions matter?

*A qualitative study of how different professions perceive the  
activity-based workplace*

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## **Abstract**

The thesis examines the concept of the activity-based workplace in relation to different professions. The activity-based workplace is a type of working environment, designed to help the employees execute their tasks in a setting dovetailed for this specific task. Presumably, different work tasks demand different prerequisites and consequently, different professions have different needs. The thesis aims to fill an empirical gap and answer the following research question: How do different professions view the activity-based workplace and does it fit some professions better than others?

The thesis is a qualitative study based on interviews with five different groups of professions (business, HR, IT, communication and management). The study shows that there are no evident distinctive differences between how the different professions perceive the activity-based workplace. Consequently, it is not possible to find that any of the five professions are better suited for it. The perceptions rather seem to be based on individual preferences. However, some tasks seem to fit the activity-based workplace better than others: administrative tasks, telephone calls, agile work, formal meetings, individual work, meetings and tasks that require help from outside of the team.

It is important to acknowledge that the sample size is too small to draw any general conclusions regarding the professions. Therefore, our study should be considered an example of how the perceptions can differ between the five chosen professions. This study can be considered valuable for the management of a company, since it shows how different employees within different professions perceive the activity-based workplace.

**Keywords:** Master in Management (MiM), Activity-based workplace, ABW, Professions

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# 1. Introduction

*This chapter will present a background to the subject of the thesis, in order to introduce the reader to some crucial concepts. The reader will be introduced to the research question and the purpose of the thesis along with the delimitations.*

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## 1.1 Background and subject

The importance of the physical office has changed dramatically in just the last 60 years (Duffy, 2000). The author claims that offices have gone from being a complement to the spots where the substantial tasks are performed, to now being the place where most of the employee's work. This trend depends on the increasing importance of *knowledge work* (Duffy, 2000), unlike before when production was the focus. To explain the concept of knowledge work, a knowledge worker is “an employee whose job involves developing and using knowledge rather than producing goods or services” (Cambridge dictionary, 2020a). Another important development is information technology, which has changed the way we work. Information technology has made it possible to work from home (Duffy, 2000). Furthermore, digitalisation has enabled new working methods not imaginable before (Engelen, Chau, Young, Mackey, Jeyapalan & Bauman, 2019). Consequently, the layout of workplaces is influenced by the social developments that shape our lives and society (Duffy, 2000).

During the past few years, many workplaces have transformed “from conventional private (or cellular) spatial configuration to modern open - plan” (Jungsoo & de Dear, 2013, p. 19). Lasse Lundström, manager of corporate workplace strategies and ABW concept manager at Tetra Pak, states that over 50 percent of the desks are empty during a normal workday at Tetra Pak, which he considers to be a complete waste of space (Interview with Lundström, 1 April, 2020). Consequently, people do not always work from the office anymore (Interview with Lundström, 1 April, 2020). In the literature, it is possible to find several arguments both for and against the concept of open workplaces. For example, some argue that open workplaces are a great way to enhance communication, others argue it rather creates complications with privacy (Kupritz, 2003). Consequently, the layout of the workplace matters; the American Society of Interior Designers

(1999, cited in Steiner, 2006) argues that there are three primary aspects that employees take into consideration when deciding whether to undertake a position or not, and the physical workplace is one of these three aspects.

To narrow it down, this thesis will focus on the concept of the *activity-based workplace* (henceforward abbreviated to ABW) which first started to appear close to 25 years ago (Parker, 2016). The ABW are often equipped with silent areas, desks intended for teamwork, separate rooms for making phone calls or having meetings, adjustable tables allowing the employee to sit or stand when preferred, break- out rooms and rooms for relaxing (Engelen et al, 2019). In the ABW, employees do not have an individual, designated seating, instead they are free to use the preferred desk/room. However, in some cases, different departments/teams have been assigned “home zones” (Engelen et al, 2019, p. 468). Lundström emphasises that the design of the ABW must be adjusted to the needs and prerequisites of the specific company and that company’s employees (Interview with Lundström, 1 April, 2020). ABW is not a concept where one size fits all, it must always be adjusted to the unique prerequisites for every specific office (Interview with Lundström, 1 April, 2020).

In practice, besides the Netherlands and Australia, Sweden has taken the lead when it comes to adopting the idea of the ABW (Falkman & Stenström, 2017). Falkman and Stenström (2017) argue that this could depend on the informal and not so hierarchical work culture that often exist at workplaces in Sweden. Several large companies in Sweden have implemented ABW in their offices during the last years, for example IKEA, Tetra Pak and Närhälsan (the public primary care of the region of Västra Götaland) (IKEA, 2020; Tetra Pak, 2017; Västra Götalandsregionen, 2020.) Lundström argues that there are three main reasons for implementing the ABW at Tetra Pak. The arguments are: to attract and retain talented people, to optimize the use of space, to enhance a sharing and collaborative mindset (Interview with Lundström, 1 April, 2020).

There are studies arguing that the physical working environment has an impact on employees both mentally and physically. Furthermore, several empirical studies discuss the benefits and drawbacks of ABW and how they affect the employees in terms of health, productivity, job satisfaction, stress, privacy and communication and interaction (Arundel et al 2018; Bodin Danielsson & Bodin 2008; Candido et al 2019; Engelen et al 2019; Haapakangas et al 2019; Hallman, Mathiassen & Jahncke,

2018; Haynes, Suckley & Nunnington, 2019; Kim et al 2016; Zamani & Gum 2019). However, presumably different work tasks demand different prerequisites and consequently, different professions have different needs. It could be the case that the ABW suits some professions or work tasks better. However, this is a fairly unresearched area and an empirical gap interesting to study. Therefore, it is relevant to study how different professions perceive ABW in order to understand when, how and under what conditions the ABW is a good option.

In order to discuss professions in relation to ABW, it is necessary to understand the definition of profession. The definition and what count as a profession may vary and are often hard to judge (Brante, 2011). There are several different lists and explanations made that should determine whether an occupation counts as a profession or not and many occupations that have not been considered a profession in the past, may be considered a profession today (Buhai, 2012). However, a common explanation is that a profession needs to have specialised education and knowledge and that he or she should always put the client in first place (Buhai, 2012). Olofsson (2011) argues that a profession can be defined as occupations with varying tasks and different social functions and therefore it can be considered that the tasks have an important role. This could imply that some tasks and consequently, some professions are better suited in a workplace with ABW.

## 1.2 Research question

The main research question is the following:

- How do different professions view ABW and in what way does an ABW fit some professions, and their tasks, better than others?

To understand this, it is beneficial to determine the following subqueries:

- How do different professions experience that ABW impacts and affects them in terms of health, productivity, job satisfaction, stress, privacy, communication and interaction? Is it possible to find a profession specific pattern in terms of these six different factors?
- What benefits and drawbacks do the different professions experience with the ABW? Are the benefits or drawbacks most highlighted?
- Which work tasks are better and worse suited for ABW?

## 1.3 Purpose

The main purpose of the thesis is to examine how the perceptions about ABW vary between different professions.

By doing this, we hope to provide knowledge to understand when, how and under what conditions the ABW is a good option in order to impact the workplace in a positive manner.

## 1.4 Delimitations

In order to find valid research to address the purpose, some delimitations have been made. Based on limited resources, the focus will lay on Swedish conditions and companies based in Sweden. The companies, where the employees interviewed work, will not be considered. For example, factors such as a company's culture, size, structure and age will not be considered and therefore delimited. The thesis only considers the perceptions of the employees, perceptions of employers have not been considered at all. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that this thesis is written from the perspective of the employees.

## 1.5 Outline

This thesis is structured into seven chapters. The first chapter, presented above, outlines a background to the subject of the thesis, in order to introduce the reader to some crucial concepts. The reader will be introduced to the research question and the purpose of the thesis along with the delimitations.

The second chapter will provide an overview of the methodological process, explain the research design of the thesis, the methods used to gather research and data for the thesis and how the data will be analysed. Furthermore, we will discuss important subjects within methodology such as ethics, validity and reliability.



The third chapter will present and define crucial concepts in the thesis and provide a literature overview. It will also explain the importance of the physical structure and the importance of professions to motivate the research question and purpose of the thesis.

In the fourth chapter, which is also a literature review, we have chosen to examine the factors commonly mentioned and discussed in the literature since it is possible to find several benefits as well as drawbacks with ABW. These are the following: impact on health, productivity, job satisfaction, stress, privacy and communication and interaction

In the fifth chapter we will present the empirical data collected from the interviews. It mainly entails data from the interviews with employees from different professions, but also relevant facts from the pilot interview with Lasse Lundström. Based on the six factors from the literature review, we constructed our questions for the interview template (see appendix 2) to examine whether these seem to be important for the employees and how the opinions differ between professions. The interview template also consists of questions regarding what benefits and drawbacks the employees have experienced and their opinions on how well ABW fits their tasks.

The sixth chapter will discuss and analyse the empirical data in relation to the subqueries to the research questions. In chapter six we will also combine the empirical data with the literature and discuss limiting circumstances that can affect our result.

In the last chapter, the seventh chapter, we will summarise the thesis and provide an answer to the initial research question: *How do different professions view ABW and in what way does an ABW fit some professions, and their tasks, better than others?* Furthermore, this chapter will also discuss the theoretical implications, the managerial implications and the need for further research in the area.

## 2. Methodology

*This chapter will provide an overview of the methodological process, explain the research design of the thesis, the methods used to gather research and data for the thesis and how the data will be analysed. Furthermore, we will discuss important subjects within methodology such as ethics, validity and reliability.*

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### 2.1 Research design

Since the study examines how the perceptions about the ABW vary between different professions, we have chosen a qualitative method to fit this purpose. A qualitative method has a lower amount of different observations but a wider range of information from the few observations (Edling & Hedström, 2003). The quantitative method, on the other hand, is based on a large amount of data but with a smaller amount of information from each study or observation (Edling & Hedström, 2003). However, there is no clear line determining when a study is quantitative or qualitative based on the amount of data (Edling & Hedström, 2003). The quantitative study is the only true scientific method (Svenning, 2003). A qualitative study rather answers ‘why do people feel a certain way’ than ‘how do they feel’, which the quantitative study often focuses on (Svenning, 2003).

The study has been carried out as follows: firstly, we conducted a pilot interview with an ABW-manager in order to orientate in the subject. Later, interviews with different employees were conducted in order to gather data on employees' perception about working in an ABW. The well-grounded theories from the literature have been further investigated by the interviews. A wide amount of research has already been conducted about the ABW and how it affects employees. However, there is not much research done upon how the perceptions about the ABW vary between different professions. Therefore, this thesis aims to fill this empirical gap. We have performed a new empirical study based on the already existing studies and empirical data found in the literature.

In order to draw conclusions from the data collected, you need to use an inductive or deductive approach (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). A deductive study is based on testing a hypothesis and then translated to something that is manageable to measure (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). On

the contrary, an inductive study is mainly concerned with studying if it is possible to draw parallels or generalisations from the data and theories (Svenning, 2003). We started our thesis work with a deductive approach. This is because we started studying the literature and from the literature, we derived six factors commonly mentioned as benefits and drawbacks with ABW. We based our interview template for the interviews with the employees on these six factors (see appendix 2). However, later we also used a more open, inductive approach to gain a holistic view of employees' different perceptions. We did not want to narrow down the data to only the six factors, because we wanted to keep an open mindset and use all of the information offered in the interviews. The findings from the interviews were later compared and approached with the already existing studies and research (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019).

## 2.2 Review of the methodological process

In order to keep track of all the methodological decisions regarding our thesis, we took notes during the process in a methodological journal. In the beginning of our thesis work, mid-January and February, we decided to perform a quantitative study. Our aim was to send out surveys to the employees at a specific company. We were in contact with several large companies within Sweden. However, it turned out to be hard to find a company willing to help us, since all the contracted companies were about to prepare for the upcoming crisis of Covid-19. In mid-March, Covid-19 started to hit companies and society hard and we realised that no company would probably have the time or resources to help us send out surveys to their employees. We changed the research question and consequently, had to change the approach to a qualitative study based on interviews. In the end of march, we started to search for interview candidates in our network and through LinkedIn and performed 15 interviews to later analyse and discuss.

## 2.3 Selection of literature

We have chosen a selection of different studies in order to provide a nuanced and reliable overview of the literature. Since ABW is a broad concept, we have looked into research in the surrounding area to receive a broad overview of the concept. Therefore, we have made the assessment that it is also relevant to look into studies concerning flex-offices, since ABW shares many characteristics with flex-offices. We have also used studies regarding the policy of free seating, since free seating

is one of the main characteristics of ABW. To substantiate this assessment, we refer to Engelen et al (2019) that have also used these types of studies to research the ABW-concept.

To narrow it down, we chose to focus on six factors which are commonly mentioned in the literature (Arundel et al 2018; Bodin Danielsson & Bodin 2008; Candido et al 2019; Engelen et al 2019; Haapakangas et al 2019; Hallman, Mathiassen & Jahncke, 2018; Haynes, Suckley & Nunnington, 2019; Kim et al 2016; Zamani & Gum 2019) and that give a holistic view of benefits and drawbacks of the ABW for the employee. However, there are several other factors that are equally important, such as organisational benefits, exhaustion and control. Due to limited space and time we had to exclude some of these. We have both individually read the literature and independently of each other prioritized the same six factors.

The studies found in the literature are not all conducted in the same way, which is something we have taken into consideration. Some studies have been performed at companies before and after a transition to ABW. Other studies have investigated companies that have had ABW for a longer time. Some studies are made with a qualitative approach and some with a quantitative approach. We are aware that these differences might have affected the test results in these studies and might further impact the literature review. For example, some of the results might be attributed to the change itself and not the introduction of ABW. However, neither the authors of the studies nor we can know if and how this has affected the study. Nonetheless, we want to acknowledge this issue for further studies.

## 2.4 Empirical choices and data collection

Besides the larger literature review, as previously mentioned, a data collection has been conducted. The data has been gathered through a deeper interview held with a manager working with an ABW. Furthermore, interviews with employees that work, or have worked, in an ABW have been conducted. We will go further into this below.

### 2.4.1 Selection of professions and interview candidates

The professions examined in this study are the following: business, HR, IT, communication and management. The reason for choosing these professions is partly because most large organisations

have these functions and partly because the work tasks differ between these professions. However, due to limited network and time, we had to use the opportunities given. Consequently, we found 14 interview candidates within these professions through LinkedIn and our personal network. Furthermore, these five different professions are all assembled at the same office and therefore the work-environment needs to be designed to fit all of these professions. To show the difference between the five professions, we will shortly describe their responsibilities and tasks: The employees working with business work with either finance or sales. The people working with HR have mainly work tasks within recruitment or different HR-issues within internal systems. All employees within IT are working with software development and programming. The employees within communication all work with internal communication. The employees working with management both have managerial tasks such as leading projects or are part of the board of directors. The interview candidates have all defined their professions themselves, they have stated which of the five categories they belong to. We have not been part of defining their professions, we have not taken a stand in the issue or questioned their choice.

#### 2.4.2 Interviews

Interviews are a way of collecting data to analyse. In order to get a more holistic view, one pilot interview has been made with Lasse Lundström, manager for corporate workplace strategies and ABW concept manager at Tetra Pak (see appendix 1). This interview served as a compliment to the research-based ground and has been used to create a valid and well-informed interview template for the interviews with the employees. The experience from Tetra Pak about ABW has orientated us in the subject and can be considered a pilot study. It has also broadened our knowledge and given us something concrete to relate the knowledge gained from the literature to.

Furthermore, interviews have been conducted with 14 different employees that are working, or have worked, in an ABW. The employees represent five different professions: business, HR, IT, communication and managers, split with at least two people from each category. All interviews have been conducted in Swedish since this is the native language of all people interviewed. All interviews have been transcribed and are available upon request.

Interviews can both be made in a structured or semi-structured way (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). However, a structured interview is preferred because “it promotes standardisation of both the asking of questions and the recording of answers” (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019, p. 208). Therefore, we decided to make a standardised interview template for all of the interviews with the employees (see appendix 2). In the end, a structured interview reduces the amount of errors that could otherwise be the result of interviews that varies and will further facilitate the actual data process when recording the interview and analysing the data (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). The interview template for the interviews with the employees can be found in appendix 2.

It is important to receive a representative sample in order to be able to generalise (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). When generalising and/or analysing data this is something to be aware of, together with other sampling errors (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). However, since this study is a qualitative empirical study with a small range of data, the results are not representative and generalisable for a larger group. Instead, our study is an empirical generalisation in the area, it is an example of what it can look like. One other sampling error that needs to be recognised is the risk of receiving uneven responses from the different groups, which might lead to receiving data from some specific groups and no answers from others (Svenning, 2003). There is also a risk that people might misunderstand the asked questions or answer in a wrong way for other reasons (Svenning, 2003). Furthermore, people might not be completely true in their answers and twist, lie or change the answers based on different factors (Svenning, 2003). One sampling error we experienced during the study was that one of the interview candidates did not answer the questions in a clear way, he rather answered the question based on other people’s views and did not tell us his personal opinions. Due to this, we chose to exclude this interview from our study.

The interviews have been held as personal interviews, face-to-face. The reason for this is that an effective interview together with a personal meeting gives us a better chance to observe the participant and have a more engaged conversation. Due to the prevailing circumstances with Covid-19, we have not been able to meet the people interviewed in person. Consequently, all interviews have been performed online through video calls where we have been able to see the person, face to face. According to Bell, Bryman and Harley (2019), a face to face interaction will give a better chance to observe different emotions during the interview.

## 2.5 Ethics

It is crucial to be aware and engage with ethics of the business while doing research. By doing so, you will be able to make the best decisions that are based on confirmed information (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2003). Act rightful and ethical is part of code of conduct, this conveys the importance of acting in good faith and not having a personal interest about the research (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Things that need to be considered are things like “how should we treat the people on whom we conduct research? [and] are there unethical activities which we should not engage in?” (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2003, p.110). For us, it was important that the participants were not obligated to answer any questions and could withdraw whenever they wanted to. The participants were given all the information regarding the process and how we were planning on keeping their information. They have been informed about the measuring, recording and purpose of the thesis and the interviews as Bell, Bryman & Harley (2003) propose. The informed consent is of high must along with that the participants have all the right to confidentiality (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, Jackson & Jaspersen, 2018). Consequently, we asked for permission before recording the interviews. We have also asked for consent to publish the names of the participants in the thesis. However, in order to avoid confusion and ensure the integrity of the participant, the employees will not be mentioned by name when presenting their opinions in the empirical data. Furthermore, most of the names of the companies have been excluded from this thesis due to requests from the participants. Instead we will mention the line of business these companies belong to.

## 2.6 Data analysis

After finishing the interviews, we transcribed all the data collected in order to create a structured document and to make the data comprehensible and easier to overlook. We thoroughly reviewed all the transcribed interview data to find and sort out the information relevant to answer our research question and purpose. As Bell, Bryman & Harley (2019, p. 518) states, “one of the main difficulties with qualitative research is that it rapidly generates a large, complex dataset because of its reliance on unstructured language in the [...]”, therefore we had to disregard some of the data in order to keep focused on our purpose which is a process called data reduction (Bell, Bryman,

Harley, 2019). Data reduction is an important and necessary step of the data analysis (Bell, Bryman & Harley, 2019). We have chosen to categorise our data based on the three subqueries derived from the research question and the data have been sorted into these three categories. To remind the reader, the three subqueries are the following:

- How do different professions experience that ABW impacts and affects them in terms of health, productivity, job satisfaction, stress, privacy, communication and interaction? Is it possible to find a profession specific pattern in terms of these six different factors?
- What benefits and drawbacks do the different professions experience with the ABW? Are the benefits or drawbacks most highlighted?
- Which work tasks are better and worse suited for ABW?

The value of literature in relation to the data is that it constitutes a solid ground for the thesis. The literature has helped us delimitate the thesis and to narrow down what factors to focus on in the data collection and analysis.

## 2.7 Validity and reliability

A valid thesis needs to capture the reality by making sure to measure what it aims to measure (Svenning, 2003). There are many factors that must tally in order to make sure a study is valid (Svenning, 2003). To ensure a high validity of our thesis, the purpose has been carefully connected to the interview template for the interviews with the employees, the analysis and the conclusion. We have ensured that the interview questions correspond to the purpose, and as mentioned earlier in connection to sampling errors, we had to exclude one interview due to lack of validity. The answers were too off topic and did not correspond to the questions in a clear way.

In order to create a reliable method or model it needs to be applicable to similar situations when testing it (Svenning, 2003). This means that our data and analysis should match the data of others using the same method (Svenning, 2003). Since our sampling is small, we are aware that the study will not give us a representative result that can be applicable in a wider sense. Therefore, we can not secure the reliability of the thesis. However, our study is rather an example of how the opinions can differ between the five chosen professions: “A qualitative study is more exemplifying than



generalisable. The requirements for a quantitative study are stricter, since it aspires to be generalisable” (Svenning, 2003, p. 68, Author translation).

### 3. Overview and the importance of the concepts

*This chapter will present and define crucial concepts in the thesis. It will also explain the importance of the physical structure and the importance of professions to motivate the research question and purpose of the thesis.*

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#### 3.1 Definition and history of ABW

To understand the layout and ideas behind an ABW, it is beneficial to first clarify the concept of activity-based working. *Activity-based working* can be defined as follows: “Activity-based working (ABW) is an emergent way of working based on a holistic approach to work style that harnesses the intersection of the people (behavioural environment), place (physical environment) and technology including knowledge sharing (virtual environment)” (Veldhoen & Company cited in Engelen et al, 2019, p.468). In other words, ABW is an approach to working, designed to help the employees execute their tasks in a setting dovetailed for this specific task. Furthermore, the purpose is to provide the best possible assistance for each task (Engelen et al, 2019).

Offices that have implemented activity-based working are generally distinguished by the fact that the employees do not have assigned seating (Falkman & Stenström, 2017). Instead, the office is organised in common areas which are divided into zones; there are different zones designed for the type of work that is supposed to be practiced (Falkman & Stenström, 2017). More specifically, as mentioned in the introduction, the ABW often have silent areas, desks intended for teamwork, separate rooms for making phone calls or having meetings, adjustable tables allowing the employee to sit or stand when preferred, break-out rooms and rooms for relaxing (Engelen et al, 2019). The employees are then free to choose the room or zone that fits best for the task he or she is performing at the moment; when the employee changes tasks, another room or zone might fit better (Arundell, Sudholz, Teychenne, Salmon, Hayward, Healy & Timperio, 2018). The employees are not just allowed to switch desks or rooms, it is advocated to switch places frequently (Arundell et al, 2018). In an ABW, employees should not leave any belongings behind; the desks are supposed to be clean after office hours (Falkman & Stenström, 2017). Furthermore, digital solutions are preferred over reliance on physical papers (Leesman review, 2017).

The concept of activity-based working is not as new as it may seem, an architect called Robert Luchetti labelled his ideas “activity settings based environments” and “multiple settings to support the variety of performance modes” already 50 years ago (Leesman review, 2017, p. 6). However, the ideas did not receive much attention in large setups before the mid -1990s, when the designer Sevil Peach implemented parts of it at Barclays Capital Holdings and Erik Veldhoen did the same at Interpolis (Leesman review, 2017). A real breakthrough of the ABW-ideas was the book “The Demise of the Office” that Veldhoen released in 1995. Consequently, Veldhoen + Company is now considered to be the creators or discoverers of the current concept of activity-based working (Leesman review, 2017).

On their website, Veldhoen + Company (2019) promotes ABW as follows:

The ABW approach recognises that people perform different activities in their day-to-day work, and therefore need a variety of work settings supported by the right technology and culture to carry out these activities effectively. By creating a work environment based on this principle, ABW creates a space that is specifically designed to meet the physical and virtual needs of individuals and teams. More importantly, ABW’s heavy emphasis on the creation of a culture of connection, inspiration, accountability and trust empowers individuals, teams and the organisation to perform to their potential. In other words, ABW transforms work into something you feel empowered to do, rather than somewhere you need to be.

Furthermore, the ABW is very similar to flex offices that was common during the 1990 and still exists to some extent today (Falkman & Stenström, 2017). Activity-based offices and flex offices share many design features, such as the principle of free seating (Falkman & Stenström, 2017). However, activity-based offices are divided into zones, which flex offices are not (Falkman & Stenström, 2017).

### 3.2 Definition of professions

In order to understand what a profession is, it is beneficial to look at a definition of the subject. According to Cambridge dictionary (2020b) a profession is “any type of work that needs special training or a particular skill, often one that is respected because it involves a high level of

education”. A profession should not be mixed up with “occupation”, which is “a person's job” (Cambridge dictionary, 2020c). Olofsson (2011) argues that the concept of professions “denotes occupations which have work tasks and social functions of a special kind” (Olofsson, 2011, p. 3, author translation).

According to Brante (2011) it may not be clear which occupations fall within the definition of professions. Consequently, what counts as a profession and what do not? To clarify what kind of occupation is counted as a profession, Abraham Flexner (cited in Buhai, 2012) stated that professions:

- (1) possess and draw upon a store of knowledge that was more than ordinarily complex;
- (2) secure a theoretical grasp of the phenomena with which it dealt;
- (3) apply its theoretical and complex knowledge to the practical solution of human and social problems;
- (4) strive to add to and improve its stock of knowledge;
- (5) pass on what it knew to novice generations not in a haphazard fashion but deliberately and formally;
- (6) establish criteria of admission, legitimate practice, and proper conduct; and
- (7) be imbued with an altruistic spirit

A number of different lists have been made throughout the years and some points have been added and some have been replaced (Brante, 2011). Many occupations that have not been considered a profession in the past, may be considered a profession today (Buhai, 2012). The author clearly states that a profession is not engaged in sale of goods but rather in provision of services. Furthermore, professions all have in common that they have a specialised education and knowledge and a judgement that is independent (Buhai, 2012). An independent judgment is something a profession uses to have the client's interest in the first place, and act from that and exclude all other kinds of influence that may interfere with their decisions (Buhai, 2012). Furthermore, the client should feel a trust to the profession, and it is something that needs to be fundamental in the relationship (Buhai, 2012). Some professions also have a duty to the bigger general public and not just their client or customer (Buhai, 2012). Based on this, the author expresses that occupations such as accounting, medicine and law are clear professions. The author

also further argues that a shoe salesman may not always put his customers first, as a doctor may do, however, this does not exclude a salesman for not being a profession (Buhai, 2012). The question is; is it required that all these mentioned attributes need to be applied to the occupation in order to be able to call it a profession? Or would it still be a profession if just some of the attributes are applicable? (Brante, 2011). The author means that an engineer and a physician are fulfilling different points on a list of what defines a profession. Instead of telling what a profession is the lists may state what are not professions (Brante, 2011).

According to Brante (2011), knowledge is also what may determine what is a profession and not. Knowledge is the only attribute that is not a social attribute, but rather cognitive. The social attributes can instead be used as a way of defining specific professions from each other (Brante, 2011).

### 3.3 The importance of the physical structure of the workplace

The physical working environment may differ depending on industry and company, but why is it important? People that are satisfied with their working environment often tend to be more productive at work and the physical environment “can have a significant effect on behaviour, perceptions and productivity of employees” (Kamarulzaman, Saleh, Hashim, Hashim & Abdul-Ghani, 2011, p. 262). This equals that satisfied employees are commonly seen as a key indicator for success in the organisation because a high satisfaction rate between employees improves morale (Kamarulzaman et al 2011). According to Aries, Veitch & Newsham (2010, cited in Kamarulzaman et al, 2011) the physical environment in the office has an impact on many things, such as social interaction. Vischer & Jacqueline (1989, through Kamarulzaman et al, 2011) however also states that the performance of the tasks depends on the physical surrounding and it may both ease the tasks and make it more efficient. Furthermore, Kamarulzaman et al (2011) states that “a comfortable working environment is important to enable employees to focus and do their job perfectly. This will ensure the quality of life at work as well as performance of office workers for better organisational performance” (Kamarulzaman et al, 2011, p. 266). With this being stated, the physical environment has a great impact and influence on the employees in many terms, including the employees behaviour, performance at work and their satisfaction (Kamarulzaman et al, 2011).

### 3.4 The importance of professions - Are some tasks better and worse suited for ABW?

According to Duffy and Powell (1997, cited in Hoendervanger, Ernst, Albers, Mobach & Van Yperen, 2018) the ABW is mostly suited for tasks that are characterised by social interaction and tasks the employee can manage by himself/herself. Furthermore Duffy and Powell (1997, cited in Hoendervanger et al, 2018, p.4) also stresses the importance of having a job that allows you to be mobile and both be able to move “freely and frequently” but also sometimes required to ease the situation. Employees that have tasks which mean they are freer to work wherever they want, whenever but also however, are more positive about ABW (Hoendervanger et al, 2018). Since Olofsson (2011) argues that a profession can be defined as occupations with varying tasks and different social functions, it can be considered that the tasks have an important role. This could imply that some tasks and consequently, some professions are better suited in a workplace with ABW.

Employees that work in a profession that has almost the same kind of tasks everyday will not benefit from the flexibility that an ABW still brings, this is because they do not need to move around based on their task for the day and will not then use the flexibility (Wohlers & Hertel, 2017). According to Wohlers and Hertel (2017) if an employee has a huge variation of tasks that will generate that he or she will move several times a day which might affect them.

## 4. Benefits and Drawbacks of ABW

*In the literature, it is possible to find several benefits as well as drawbacks with ABW. In this chapter, we have chosen to examine the factors commonly mentioned and discussed in the literature. These are the following: impact on health, productivity, job satisfaction, stress, privacy and communication and interaction.*

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### 4.1 Impact on health

There are several diseases and harmful health conditions that emerge due to a sedentary lifestyle and insufficient exercise and movement, for example cancer, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases (Lee et al 2012 & Biswas et al 2015 cited in Arundell et al, 2018). Employees that work in offices generally sit down 60–80 percent of their working hours (Hallman, Mathiassen & Jahncke, 2018). A part of the problem is that the sitting occurs in long, uninterrupted sessions, which can also affect the well-being of employees negatively (Dempsey et al 2016 & Van Uffelen et al 2010 cited in Arundell et al, 2018). How much time the employees spend sitting in the office is dependent on the physical setting of the workplace (Owen et al, 2011, cited in Arundell et al, 2018) which is why it is interesting to read existing studies concerning whether ABWs can reduce the sedentary time and consequently, contribute to better health for the employees.

Hallman, Mathiassen & Jahncke(2018) performed a study based on the hypothesis that “relocation to activity-based offices would be associated with reduced total sitting time and more interruptions in sitting, in favour of standing or walking” (p. 385). The results suggest that it is not possible to draw such a conclusion; ABW only had a minor, negligible impact on how much time the employees spend sitting. However, the study showed that employees spend more time walking in ABW in comparison with the control group that did not work in an ABW (Hallman, Mathiassen & Jahncke, 2018). Arundel et al (2018) have performed a similar study and found corresponding results: “While there were no significant changes in the sedentary time and physical activity in the workplace, the moderate effect sizes suggest that an ABW designed workplace may improve the amount of time employees spend moving around in their workplace” (Arundel et al, 2018, p. 12). Hallman, Mathiassen & Jahncke (2018) declare that there were large variations in the results

between the different workplaces studied, and therefore suggests that more studies need to be performed in order to better understand the issue. However, all studies do not point in the same direction. According to a study performed by Candido, Haddad, Thomas, Zhang, Mackey & Ye (2019), employees in an ABW spend considerably less time sitting, compared to before they moved to ABW.

A study performed by Bodin Danielsson and Bodin (2008) shows that employees working in flex- and cell-office types have better health compared to those who work in open plan office types. They also found that the percentage of employees absent because of sickness are much lower in flex office-types than open-plan office types (Bodin Danielsson & Bodin, 2008). Furthermore, the result showed that the emotional health among employees was best among employees in flex office types (Bodin Danielsson & Bodin, 2008).

Furthermore, Arundel et al (2018) argues that ABW contribute to other forms of health advantages, namely better eating behaviours. Their study demonstrates that introducing a rule preventing people from eating lunch and snacks at their desks, which is often implemented at an ABW, influences how often employees eat with their co-workers (Arundel et al, 2018). Because employees have lunch together more often, instead of alone at their desks, this study also reports enhanced social contact and by extension, enhanced relationships among the employees (Arundel et al, 2018). In addition, this rule led to healthier eating habits, since employees did not eat as much snacks and unhealthy food (Arundel et al, 2018).

To sum up, there are several credible studies investigating how ABW impacts the health of the employees. Two studies show that ABW only had a trivial impact on the employee's sitting time, while a third study showed that employees sit much less in an ABW. However, the two first studies point in the same direction when it comes to impact on walking, employees walk more in an ABW. Furthermore, one of the studies showed that employees have better eating-behaviours in an ABW. A fourth study showed that working in a flex-office type, such as ABW, is beneficial for both the general and emotional health of the employees.



## 4.2 Impact on productivity

Productivity can be defined as “how well inputs are used to achieve outputs” (Sookdeo, 2020, p.4). Several studies have been conducted on the topic of productivity in relation to ABW and the policy of free seating. In the studies mentioned below, the employees have self-assessed their productivity, in other words, they have rated how they perceived their own productivity. However, the results vary a lot between the studies. Arundell et al (2018) studied a company before and after the transition to an ABW and found that productivity declined after the move to ABW. They identified some key issues with ABW: “ABW participants in the current study felt frustrated due to lost time finding desks and colleagues, noise in the workplace, and a period of time needed to adjust to the new ways of working, all of which may have adversely influenced productivity” (Arundell et al, 2018, p.13). Arundell et al (2018) also indicate that the reason for the impoverished productivity could depend on the fact that the employees in the study experienced less interaction and linkage to colleagues working in the same team, even though they experienced more overall interaction. Kim, Candido, Thomas and de Dear (2016) have performed a study with similar results. For example, they noticed that employees rated their productivity lower when they had problems with finding and communicating with colleagues, which was the case when there was a policy of free seating (Kim et al, 2016). A lower productivity rate was also reported when the employees had less possibility to regulate or personalise their desks, which also is the case with the free- seating policy (Kim et al, 2016). Since the policy of free seating is included in the ABW-concept, these issues concern ABW.

However, a study performed by Candido et al (2019) shows the opposite result: employees rated their perceived productivity higher in an activity-based office compared to an open-space office (the study was constructed so that the employees rated the productivity before and after the move from open-plan office to ABW). Candido argues that the “results highlight the significance and impact of office layout and human-centred approach to design on occupants’ satisfaction, perceived productivity and incidental physical activity opportunities” (Candido et al, 2019, p. 275).

To sum up, the result of these three studies do not correspond completely. Two studies showed that employees perceived their productivity to be lower when working in an ABW or offices with

free seating. However, a third study showed that employees in an ABW felt more productive than others.

### 4.3 Impact on job satisfaction among the employees

To define the concept of job satisfaction, Bodin Danielsson & Bodin (2008) uses a definition provided by Locke (1976): according to Locke's definition, job satisfaction is a "pleasurable or positive emotional state, resulting from the appraisal of one's job experiences" (Locke 1976 cited in Bodin Danielsson & Bodin, 2008, p. 638). In order to create motivation among the employees and to enhance how the employees perform, job satisfaction plays a crucial role (Bodin Danielsson & Bodin, 2008). Bodin Danielsson and Bodin (2008) have performed a study to examine how and whether the design of the workplace affects job satisfaction and health. The result showed that employees in both cell- and flex office types rated their job satisfaction highly. However, employees in open plan offices were not as satisfied (Bodin Danielsson & Bodin, 2008). To be more concrete, the most satisfied employees, in terms of job satisfaction, were found among the people working in flex- and cell office types as well as workplaces with shared rooms (Bodin Danielsson & Bodin, 2008).

Bodin Danielsson and Bodin (2008) argues that it is possible to spot a correlation between job satisfaction and the autonomy both flex- and cell office types provide the employees or "their ability to meet the need for personal control" (Bodin Danielsson & Bodin, 2008, p. 657). Even though the employees cannot make their desk personal in a flex office, this office-type provides the opportunity for employees to freely select where to sit themselves (Bodin Danielsson & Bodin, 2008). Consequently, they can make this choice based on their personal opinion of what desk/area fit their current task best. They also have autonomy in the sense that they actively can choose which co-worker to sit together with (Bodin Danielsson & Bodin, 2008).

This line of thought is supported by a study performed by Arundell et al (2019). They also found that ABW had a positive impact on job satisfaction among employees: " ABW employees liked the new environment, particularly the diversity and flexibility in ways of working, and this may have contributed to the improvement in overall job satisfaction" (Arundell et al, 2019, p.13). They further stated that the employees felt more satisfied with the physical design at the ABW compared

to their previous office (Arundell et al, 2019). In addition, Candido et al (2019) argues that the flexibility offered in ABW may make up for the absence of possibilities for personalising the desks, which by extension increases satisfaction among the employees.

To sum up, the two studies examined both showed that working in an ABW or in a flex-office type had a positive impact on the employee's satisfaction. One of the arguments mentioned was the autonomy and freedom to individually choose where to sit and who to sit with, which made employees feel more satisfied. Another argument is the flexibility offered in ABW.

#### 4.4 Impact on stress

According to Haapakangas, Hallman, Mathiassen & Jahncke (2017), moving into an ABW often tends to cause stress for employees, it takes time to understand and learn how to use the ABW correctly. However, studies have shown that the stress of adjusting to the new environment changes after time (Haapakangas et al, 2017). According to Haynes, Suckley & Nunnington (2019) a noisy workplace often tends to cause a high level of stress because of lack of concentration. This may be reduced if there are certain areas where the employee can work without being interrupted, and since ABW provides these types of areas, it can reduce the stress for several people (Haynes, Suckley & Nunnington, 2019). According to Engelen et al (2019) some employees also find it stressful to arrive early to work in order to find the best suitable place for the day.

The cognitive stress has been shown to be lower when working in a cell-office compared to working in an open-plan office, while there was no difference between the open-plan office and an ABW (Engelen et al, 2019). Employees that need high concentration in general tend to favour their own room or a flexible office compared to an open-plan office (Engelen et al 2019).

To summarise, the three studies discussed have shown different sides of this matter. Along with the amount of studies there is no clear evidence stating ABW is affecting stress in one way or another, the different studies are all supporting a wide range of conclusions.

## 4.5 Impact on privacy

Haapakangas et al (2019, p.7) states that “It is important to note that, unlike open-plan offices, the ABW concept aims at addressing privacy needs”. However, according to their study, the perceived privacy was low in the ABW (Haapakangas et al, 2019). People that highly valued the ability to discuss private issues found it both frustrating and time consuming to find somewhere to talk in privacy together with the stress of finding the right people to talk to (Zamani & Gum, 2019). However, a study performed by Rolfö, Jahncke and Eklund (2017), shows that the employees felt more content with auditory privacy after shifting workplace to ABW. They state that: “The significant improvement in auditory privacy and background noise ratings was likely due to the provision of back-up rooms and the autonomy to choose workstations further away from the noisy areas“ (Rolfö, Jahncke & Eklund, 2017, p. 653).

To summarise, the results from the two studies differ. One of the studies examined showed that employees rated the privacy to be low in an ABW, while the other study showed that the employees felt more content with the auditory privacy in an ABW.

## 4.6 Impact on communication and interaction

Research done by Engelen et al (2019) shows that you could find evidence that ABW improves communication, this includes both for employees but also for visitors. Foremost the knowledge sharing, and communication was found between a wider range of employees at an activity-based workplace, due to the more open surrounding. At the same time, some research also found that the communication between the former close and direct colleagues decreased together with the ability to discuss private things (Engelen et al 2019). As previously mentioned, the reduction of privacy and the ability to discuss private issues causes frustration at the same time as it is time consuming to find somewhere to talk in privacy (Zamani & Gum, 2019). Zamani and Gum (2019) found that communication with employees that are not team-members increased while communication with team-members decreased. This brings the fact that employees that have less mobile work and are not dependent on social interaction expressed some dissatisfaction with ABW (Zamani & Gum, 2019). Together with the increase of communication, the interaction between employees increased as well in most of the cases (Engelen et al 2019)

It can be seen by this research that the amount of communication between close colleagues, often from the same team, decreased while the communication to a wider range of colleagues increased. However, the results of the research differ; some state that ABW is affecting communication and interaction in a positive way and some in a negative way.

## 4.7 Summary

Below we summarise the benefits and drawbacks in a table to help the reader gain a better overview:

*Table 1: Summary of benefits and drawbacks of ABW*

<b><u>Factor</u></b>	<b><u>Benefits</u></b>	<b><u>Drawbacks</u></b>
<b>Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Less time sitting according to some studies</li> <li>- More walking/moving around</li> <li>- Better health generally</li> <li>- Lower sick-absent</li> <li>- Better emotional health</li> <li>- Healthier eating behaviours</li> <li>- More social contact</li> </ul>	
<b>Productivity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One study shows employees felt more productive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Declined productivity in some studies</li> <li>- Frustration due to lost time finding desk, colleagues</li> <li>- Much noise</li> <li>- Less interaction with colleagues</li> <li>- No possibility to personalize desk</li> </ul>
<b>Job satisfaction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High satisfaction when working in cell and flex office type</li> <li>- Satisfaction due to autonomy. Free seating works as a kind of personalization. Chose by personal opinions</li> <li>- Can choose to sit with colleagues.</li> <li>- Diverse and flexible</li> <li>- Good physical design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Less possibility to personalization according to some studies</li> </ul>

<b>Stress</b>	- ABW provide areas to work without being interrupted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not finding the right people causes stress</li> <li>- Noise cause stress</li> <li>- Need to arrive early to find space</li> <li>- More stressful than cell-office</li> </ul>
<b>Privacy</b>	- Employees feel more content with auditory privacy after shifting to ABW according to one study.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The perceived privacy was low in the ABW according to one study</li> <li>- Frustrating and time consuming to not be able to discuss private things.</li> </ul>
<b>Communication and interaction</b>	- Better communication with colleagues that are not team-members and visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Less communication with former close and direct colleagues</li> <li>- No privacy</li> <li>- If not dependent on social interaction it will be negative and a distraction with communication.</li> </ul>

## 5. Empirical data - Presentation of the interviews

*This chapter will present the empirical data collected from the interviews. It mainly entails data from the interviews with employees from different professions, but also relevant facts from the pilot interview with Lasse Lundström. Based on the six factors from the literature review we constructed our questions for the interview template (see appendix 2) to examine whether these seem to be important for the employees and how the opinions differ between professions. The interview template also consisted of questions regarding what benefits and drawbacks the employees have experienced and their opinions on how ABW fits their tasks. The result will be presented below.*

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### 5.1 Get to know the employees

Since the purpose of the thesis is to examine how the perceptions about the ABW vary between different professions, this part will present the data collected from the interviews. The interviews have been conducted with people from the following professions: business, HR, IT, communication, management. The employees from the different professions are listed in the table below.

*Table 2: Employees listed according to their profession*

<b><u>Business</u></b>	<b><u>HR</u></b>	<b><u>IT</u></b>	<b><u>Communication</u></b>	<b><u>Management</u></b>
Nils Randerz Magdalena Stevens Philip Björklund	Tilde Lindgren Anna Kardell	Tilda Glas David Jungermann Victor Ricart	Lova Sörman Laurien Arvid Stigland Sophie Westerlund	Inga-lill Hyltander Katarina Lorenius

In order to avoid confusion and ensure their integrity, the employees will not be mentioned by name when presenting their opinions. The employees come from different backgrounds and companies. Some companies will be mentioned by name while others will only be described due

to confidential reasons. The people from the business category all work for large consulting companies in Stockholm. In the HR-category, HR employee 1 used to work at Studentconsulting while HR employee 2 works at ICA-Gruppen today. Both IT employee 1 and IT employee 2 work at Tetra Pak while IT employee 3 used to work at IBM. The employees in communication have all been part of a large international furniture manufacturer. Management employee 1, part of the management group, works at Bayer while Management employee 2 works at one of the largest banks in Sweden.

## 5.2 Benefits summarised in three words

The table below gives an overview of how employees perceive the positive aspects of the ABW-concept and to show the wide range of opinions. In the interviews, the employees were asked to mention three words that characterise what they appreciate about ABW. It is interesting to see that some words are frequently mentioned, such as communication and interaction, flexibility and openness. The result is listed in the table below.



Table 3: Benefits summarized in three words according to the employees

<b><u>Profession</u></b>	<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Word</u></b>	<b><u>Word</u></b>	<b><u>Word</u></b>
<b>Business</b>	Business employee 1	Colleagues	Modern	Motivating
<b>Business</b>	Business employee 2	Communication	Movement	Effective
<b>Business</b>	Business employee 3	Interaction	Quick processes	Gives new perspectives
<b>HR</b>	HR employee 1	Focus	Easy to prioritise	Adjustable
<b>HR</b>	HR employee 2	Freedom	Flexibility	Easy
<b>IT</b>	IT employee 1	Agile	Openness	communication
<b>IT</b>	IT employee 2	Good physical working-environment	Openness	Interaction with many people
<b>IT</b>	IT employee 3	Flexibility	Adjustable	Dynamic
<b>Communication</b>	Communication employee 1	Fun	Unique	Special
<b>Communication</b>	Communication employee 2	Variable	Flexible	Collaborative
<b>Communication</b>	Communication employee 3	Much impressions	Freedom - no limitations	-
<b>Management</b>	Management employee 1	Less clear hierarchy	Modern office - up- to- date	Enhances creativity
<b>Management</b>	Management employee 2	Flexibility	Freedom	More networking opportunities

## 5.3 Impact on health

### *Business*

Within the group that works with business, two out of three employees think that the ABW affects their health in a positive way. Business employee 3 explains that he walks more per day due to the ABW, he prefers to talk to colleagues in person and therefore walk around the office more to find the colleagues. Business employee 1 emphasises the ergonomic benefits with ABW, the height-adjustable desks for example. He states that ABW definitely affects him positively and that he stands up more per day due to ABW. Business employee 2 is neutral regarding this issue, she cannot see that ABW affects her neither positively nor negatively.

### *HR*

The HR employees are consistent in their views regarding how ABW affects their health. HR employee 1 believes that she moves around more due to many possibilities offered by ABW. In addition, sitting still at the same desk a whole day gives her a headache. HR employee 2 also states that ABW affects her health positively, she states that she moves around the office much more. She emphasises the ergonomic benefits of the office, that there are both exercise bikes and treadmills to use while working. Comparing between working at the office versus at home, she sees a big difference. When working at home, she barely walks or moves at all.

### *IT*

The three people within IT agree that ABW do not have an effect, or only a small, negligible effect, on their health. IT employee 1 believes she walks more due to the ABW, but she says that this probably does not impact her health in any considerable way. IT employee 2 and IT employee 3 both clearly state that ABW have no impact on their health. IT employee 3 also emphasises that developers, like himself, generally spend a lot of time sedentary in front of a computer.

### *Communication*

Within the group of communicators, the opinions whether and how ABW have affected their health vary. Communication employee 2 does not believe that the ABW has affected his physical health noticeably. However, he thinks it has affected his mental health positively, due to the fact that he often changes the environment and receives new impressions. Communication employee 1 thinks

that the ABW has no impact on her health. However, she states that the office is ergonomically designed and offers all the tools needed to have an ergonomic and healthy working posture. Communication employee 3 does not agree with Communication employee 1, she believes that ABW has a positive impact on her health. She thinks she walks more per day, since she often must go around the office to look for a good place to sit or to find colleagues for example.

In the management group, one is neutral and the other positive regarding how ABW affects their health. Management employee 1 states that she does not believe that ABW affects her health, even though she mentions that she walks more and is more active during the day, due to the ABW. However, she argues that even if she is more active, it would be an exaggeration to say that ABW has affected her health positively. Management employee 2 does not agree, she believes that ABW has affected her health positively. She moves around a lot during the day to attend different meetings and considers this movement to be beneficial for her health.

*Table 4: Summary of the perceptions regarding health*

	<u>Business</u>	<u>HR</u>	<u>IT</u>	<u>Communication</u>	<u>Management</u>
<b>Health</b>	2 positive 1 neutral	2 positive	3 neutral	2 positive 1 neutral	1 positive 1 neutral

## 5.4 Impact on productivity

### *Business*

All of the employees working within business recognise that ABW has both a negative and positive effect on their productivity. Business employee 1 mentions that his productivity rises because of the stimulating micropauses that occur, due to more chances to network and the simplicity to reach out to people for help. At the same time, he also stresses the negative impact ABW has on productivity: since he constantly needs to pack his things and move around, he loses some time every day. Business employee 2, agrees that ABW affects her productivity both negatively and positively. The fact that it might be harder to concentrate due to interruptions from colleagues could affect the workflow. When working with complex tasks and there is a need to be very focused, the surrounding people often affect her productivity negatively. Many of her colleagues

do not often work from the office which means that once they are there, she talks to them much. This affects her productivity negatively. At the same time, she emphasises that this is an important social factor as well. Business employee 3 states ABW affects his productivity for the better compared to the previous working environment without ABW. Furthermore, he believes that the ABW affects his productivity positively when there is a need for quicker decisions. However, Business employee 3 mentions that ABW could create a risk for becoming more absent-minded and decrease his overview of the situation. This is because he often has a lot of tasks running at the same time which could interfere with his productivity.

### *HR*

HR employee 1 stresses that the ABW makes her more productive since she can adjust where to sit according to her task for the day and by that be more productive. HR employee 2 feels that the productivity often declines due to the ABW. She feels that it is harder to ask colleagues for help: due to ABW it is not possible to just turn to your colleague nearby, instead she has to organise a meeting. Furthermore, colleagues have to use mail or phone to reach her which is another abstraction for HR employee 2. In order to concentrate and be productive, she has to turn off notifications, which most people cannot always do. Furthermore, HR employee 2 also mentions that ABW could affect the productivity negatively before one finds, and learns, the opportunities with ABW.

### *IT*

IT employee 1 does not perceive that her productivity has changed after she started working in the ABW at Tetra Pak. IT employee 2 agrees with this, he says that it does not really affect his productivity. However, IT employee 2 states that this could be different for more senior employees within IT because they tend to be more interrupted by other employees that want to ask questions, since they all are sitting in the same environment and the threshold is lower for people to reach out to ask them for help. At the same time, IT employee 2 also mentions that this could affect productivity in a positive manner since you can easily reach out to your colleagues when you are in need for help. IT employee 3 clearly states that his productivity did change for the better because of ABW. When comparing it with an ordinary open office space, he felt that ABW had a noticeable positive effect on his productivity. When working in an open office, he often had to sit at home to

avoid being disturbed. However, when he started working in an ABW he felt that he could work more effectively and be more productive at the workplace. He could work without being disturbed in the ABW, he did not get bothered by questions anymore and it decreased the time needed to find the right focus.

*Communication*

The people working with communication did not share the same view on how ABW affected their productivity. Communication employee 3 states the ABW affects her negatively. This is due to several distractions that arise in the ABW. At the same time, she mentions that this was something positive as well. She embraces being in a surrounding where things happen. However, she believes that her productivity would have been better if she had a private room. Another communication employee, Communication employee 1, embraces the ABW and says it truly affects her productivity in a positive way; it gives her room for moving around and changing location from time to time. Communication employee 2 also thinks that ABW affects his productivity positively. In the ABW, he often must sit where others pass by and sees what he is doing, which makes him more inclined to make more of an effort and be more productive. For him, sitting next to other people makes him focus more.

*Management*

The employees working with management both have the same view on how ABW affects their productivity. Both Management employee 1 and Management employee 2 emphasise that they did not experience that ABW, compared to other working environments, have an impact on their productivity.

*Table 5: Summary of the perceptions regarding productivity*

	<u><b>Business</b></u>	<u><b>HR</b></u>	<u><b>IT</b></u>	<u><b>Communication</b></u>	<u><b>Management</b></u>
<b>Productivity</b>	3 Neutral	1 Positive 1 Negative	1 Positive 2 Neutral	2 Positive 1 Negative	2 Neutral

## 5.5 Job satisfaction among the employees

### *Business*

Within the group of people working with business, all three states that they are satisfied with ABW. Business employee 2 emphasises that the ABW improves communication, which influences her satisfaction with the ABW. Business employee 3 says that he works better in an ABW and due to ABW he “gets more done in a shorter period of time” (Interview with Business employee 3, 6 April 2020, Author translation).

### *HR*

Both HR employee 1 and HR employee 2 state that their job satisfaction, when working in an ABW, is generally positive. HR employee 2 means that adapting to ABW was a large readjustment in the beginning. However, this has changed over time, today she feels satisfied with the ABW. Furthermore, HR employee 1 motivates that something that influences why she is satisfied, is the adaptability with the ABW. She likes that she can choose to sit where she is most effective.

### *IT*

Within the group of people working with IT, all three say that they are satisfied with the ABW IT employee 1 clearly states that she prefers the ABW over a traditional office landscape. IT employee 3 emphasises that he likes ABW much better than an open landscape. When asked how he would design the office if he could choose freely, he says that he liked the ABW at IBM and would like to keep that layout.

### *Communication*

Communication employee 1, Communication employee 2 and Communication employee 2 all state that they are satisfied with the ABW. All of them mainly see benefits with working in an ABW, they can only find a few, small disadvantages. Communication employee 3 embraces the freedom and openness which the ABW brings.

### *Management*

The two managers interviewed are both positive regarding how ABW impacted their job satisfaction. However, Management employee 2 states that she did not rate the ABW to be ten out

of ten, but rather seven out of ten. She argues that there are some things that can be improved, but overall, she likes ABW.

*Table 6: Summary of the perceptions regarding job satisfaction*

	<u>Business</u>	<u>HR</u>	<u>IT</u>	<u>Communication</u>	<u>Management</u>
<b>Job satisfaction</b>	3 positive	2 positive	3 positive	3 positive	2 positive

## 5.6 Impact on stress

### *Business*

Business employee 1 mentions how working in an open area can affect the stress because a lot of people can see him working. This can create stress for him, since he feels a need to perform at his best ability the whole time. Business employee 2 mentions both positive and negative aspects. She stresses the fact that it is up to the individual to find the right work situation in order to avoid the stress. Consequently, when she feels stressed, she makes sure to find a suitable workspace to minimise the stress level. Business employee 3 states that the ABW does not cause any extra stress for him, ABW has nothing to do with the stress level.

### *HR*

The employees working in HR both mention that the ABW affects their stress in a positive and negative way. HR employee 1 mentions that being able to focus on her tasks without being disturbed makes her less stressed. However, not having a safe place with a personal desk can increase her stress level. HR employee 2 thinks the ABW affected her stress negatively initially because it was harder to feel a sense of belonging, it was harder to get to know her colleagues. However, this changed over time.

### *IT*

Employees working with IT all agree that the ABW can cause extra stress since they do not have a safe place when arriving in the morning, instead they have to arrive early to find the workstation best suited which can cause extra stress. IT employee 2 states that feeling supervised in an open workspace can cause him extra stress. One example of this; in the start of a project IT employee 2

often spends a lot of time watching tutorials online to learn. When doing this in an open space, where a lot of people walked by and could see, it can stress him that others can see that he is not producing anything at the moment.

*Communication*

All people working with communication answer the same on how the ABW impacts stress. They all agree that the ABW does not affect their stress neither positively nor negatively.

*Management*

The employees working with management can not see any impact on their stress due to ABW.

*Table 7: Summary of the perceptions regarding stress*

	<u><b>Business</b></u>	<u><b>HR</b></u>	<u><b>IT</b></u>	<u><b>Communication</b></u>	<u><b>Management</b></u>
<b>Stress</b>	2 neutral 1 negative	1 neutral 1 negative	3 negative	3 neutral	2 neutral

## 5.7 Impact on privacy

*Business*

All the employees working with business agree that privacy is positively affected by the ABW and they all feel they can use the separate rooms when there is a need for privacy.

*HR*

HR employee 2 mentions the importance of having privacy when working with HR; they all are in charge of sensitive information. Since there is a large need for privacy, HR employee 2 thinks it is beneficial that the ABW offer private rooms for example. According to HR employee 1, the ABW is not very different from other work structures regarding privacy.

*IT*

The IT-employees, as well as previous employees, mention that the small rooms are useful when they must take a phone call or have a discussion. However, IT employee 1 does not think the ABW



has an impact on privacy, she feels neutral in this issue. IT employee 2 is more negative, he feels there is a lack of spaces for private conversations. Lastly, IT employee 3 was very positive, he found his workplace was well suited for private conversations.

*Communication*

The communication employees all agree that the ABW affects privacy positively since they all can use separate rooms. However, one thing that can affect privacy negatively is if all the separate rooms are occupied.

*Management*

The employees working with management can not see any impact on their privacy due to ABW.

*Table 8: Summary of the perceptions regarding privacy*

	<u><b>Business</b></u>	<u><b>HR</b></u>	<u><b>IT</b></u>	<u><b>Communication</b></u>	<u><b>Management</b></u>
<b>Privacy</b>	3 positive	1 positive 1 neutral	1 positive 1 neutral 1 negative	3 positive	2 neutral

## 5.8 Impact on communication and interaction

*Business*

Within the group of people working with business, the answers all point in the same direction: all three think ABW affect the communication and interaction positively. Business employee 1 means that one of the benefits with ABW is that he meets different colleagues every day and gets to know them better. He also emphasises that ABW has made the office less hierarchical, it is easier to talk to the managers. Business employee 2 states the same thing, she thinks it is easier and more natural to say hi to people. Business employee 3 mentions that he talks more today with colleagues, due to ABW. It feels like the office “is built to make it easier to talk to people” (Interview with Business employee 3, 6 April 2020, Author translation).

## *HR*

Both employees working with HR believe that ABW affects communication and interaction negatively. Due to ABW, HR employee 1 meets more people outside of the team. However, she thinks that the interaction decreases, and it feels less social in an ABW because it is harder to ask questions to colleagues outside of the team, people that she is not acquainted with. She states that it feels safer to ask for help from colleagues in her own team, which is more difficult in an ABW where she has to rely more on digital tools. HR employee 2 considers ABW to be an obstacle in relation to communication and interaction, there are not so many spontaneous meetings. She emphasises that it is very hard to get to know your colleagues and to become a part of the group as a new employee. Most often, she only contacts her employees if she has an errand, not just to ask how they are doing, which impairs the interaction and communication.

## *IT*

Within the group of people working with IT, all believe ABW affects communication and interaction in a positive way. IT employee 1 states that “it might be easier to contact and talk with people when they sit wherever and not in their small office” (Interview with IT employee 1, 6 April 2020, Author translation). She also emphasises that ABW opens up for opportunities to talk to people outside of her team. IT employee 2 thinks the simplicity in contacting other people is a benefit with ABW but sometimes he has a hard time finding the people he needs to talk to. However, this is not a big problem for him: “we, humans, are creatures of habit, which means that people almost always sit at the same desk everyday” (Interview with IT employee 2, 7 April 2020, Author translation). He also argues that it is easy to get hold of people through the intranet provided by Tetra Pak. IT employee 3 states that ABW makes communication more complicated. However, he considers this to be a benefit, he thinks it is too much communication generally.

## *Communication*

Within the group of communicators, one believes that ABW affects communication and interaction negatively, while two believes the opposite. Communication employee 2 means that he has a hard time figuring out where his colleagues are. He believes that it is easier to communicate with colleagues if he can just tap on their shoulder when needed, instead of texting them which he must do in an ABW. Communication employee 1 clearly states that she thinks ABW leads to enhanced communication and interaction. She believes that ABW even promotes interaction, since

employees and managers sit together, mixed in the office. It sends out other signals if the manager has their own offices, she thinks that that creates a barrier to communication. She appreciates that there are “no territories” (Interview with Communication employee 1, 6 April 2020, Author translation), she can sit next to a senior manager without that being strange. Communication employee 3 describes that one of the benefits with ABW is that it is easy to get hold of people as they pass by. However, she states that much of the communication happened via the computer due to ABW.

*Management*

Within the group of managers, one is positive and the other negative. Management employee 1 believes that it comes more naturally in an ABW to talk to people outside of the team, people in support functions for example. She states that she has more contact with people all over the company now, “we are given more opportunities to socialise with people over the borders now, in comparison with before” (Interview with Management employee 1, 6 April 2020, Author translation). Management employee 2 believes that ABW affects her negatively, since she thinks it is beneficial to sit together with colleagues while working.

*Table 9: Summary of the perceptions regarding communication and interaction*

	<u><b>Business</b></u>	<u><b>HR</b></u>	<u><b>IT</b></u>	<u><b>Communication</b></u>	<u><b>Management</b></u>
<b>Communication</b>	3 positive	2 negative	3 positive	2 positive	1 positive
<b>Interaction</b>				1 negative	1 negative

## 5.9 Summary of the six factors

The opinions regarding how ABW affects the different professions in terms of the six factors are summarised in the table below.

*Table 10: Summary of the perceptions regarding all six factors*

	<u>Business</u>	<u>HR</u>	<u>IT</u>	<u>Communication</u>	<u>Management</u>
<b>Health</b>	2 positive 1 neutral	2 positive	3 neutral	2 positive 1 neutral	1 positive 1 neutral
<b>Productivity</b>	3 neutral	1 positive 1 negative	1 positive 2 neutral	2 positive 1 negative	2 neutral
<b>Job satisfaction</b>	3 positive	2 positive	3 positive	3 positive	2 positive
<b>Stress</b>	2 neutral 1 negative	1 neutral 1 negative	3 negative	3 neutral	2 neutral
<b>Privacy</b>	3 positive	1 positive 1 neutral	1 positive 1 neutral 1 negative	3 positive	2 neutral
<b>Communication Interaction</b>	3 positive	2 negative	3 positive	2 positive 1 negative	1 positive 1 negative

## 5.10 Benefits and drawbacks

*Lundström, ABW concept manager at Tetra Pak*

To begin with, Lundström emphasises personal freedom as an important benefit with ABW: “It is me who decides where, when and with whom I want to perform my work tasks” (Interview with Lundström, 1 April 2020, Author translation). Furthermore, he says the way we work today involves a lot of interaction with colleagues and customers for example. He argues that it is a benefit that ABW supports this way of working, it supports interaction and communication. Generally, employees at Tetra Pak express “the collaboration has increased, it has led to increased transparency and comprehension of the work others perform and a greater exchange of experiences” (Interview with Lundström, 1 April 2020, Author translation).

When it comes to drawbacks, Lundström mentions that ABW is a large change project and that the process of change usually takes a lot of time. People are very different: some people adapt to changes quickly and consider change to be something positive, some are resistant to change and adapt slowly to changes and others never adapt to changes. In other words, changing to ABW requires preparatory training for resistant people to understand the benefits of it and how they can make use of it. Another drawback is that due to ABW, there is a risk that the employees lose sense of belonging both in their team and in the company as a whole.

### *Business*

Both Business employee 1 and Business employee 2, state that the benefits of working in an ABW is that you meet more people than in other office-environments and it encourages you to talk to new people. It also promotes equality since all employees have access to all the rooms whenever they need it. One day you might sit next to someone who has worked at the company for 35 years and the next you sit next to someone who is working their first day there. According to both of them, it is also a solution for unused office space to save money. This is common in consultancy firms since not all employees are present at the office at the same time. “It would not have been sustainable if everyone had their own place” (Interview with Business employee 2, 6 April, Author translation). Business employee 3 emphasises the flexibility and the ease of adapting the environment to the tasks. Furthermore, Business employee 3 stresses the fact that the process of decision making often shortens.

According to Business employee 1 and Business employee 2 the downside of working in an ABW is that it is logistically complicated. If you have tasks that require papers or binders, it can be annoying to drag this along all day. According to Business employee 1, if working in a team that needs to sit next to each other, it might be hard to find room for this as well. Furthermore he states that ABW can be negative for employees that need a private office because he or she handles sensitive data, easily feels disturbed or are not used to the ABW: “[..]it is a lot about people’s flexibility and security. Some want to sit on the same chair, at the same screen, at the same computer” (Interview with Business employee 1, 14 April, Author translation). Business employee 2 mentions that the ABW can sometimes become a bit too noisy for her. If employees do not respect each other, it is easy for the noise to increase, especially in the afternoon or Friday

evenings. According to Business employee 3, a drawback of the ABW is mainly that he often switches contexts and that it is easy to be interrupted and miss out on the flow in working.

### *HR*

When asked to describe the benefits of ABW, HR employee 1, states that she values that she can freely choose a place to work where she can focus, without interference from noise or colleagues. That helps her to focus better on the tasks. HR employee 2 also enjoys the freedom to switch between different zones and rooms, that she can choose the environment that fits the current task best. She appreciates that she can use the quiet zone when she needs to focus.

When it comes to the drawbacks with ABW, HR employee 1 mentions that ABW affects the sense of belonging negatively. Having her own desk, surrounded by the same colleagues around her everyday creates a sense of safety, which she miss in an ABW: “The fact that you have to sit at a new spot everyday creates a feeling of being new at work, especially if the organisations is too big for you to know everyone, or maybe don’t have the opportunity to get to know everyone “ (Interview with HR employee 1, 7 April 2020, Author translation). She considers it important to feel safe and comfortable at work, which she believes is a product of having her own desk. HR employee 2 has similar opinions, she thought it was hard to feel like a part of the organisation and thought it was hard to feel a sense of belonging to her colleagues. For example, she explains that it can be hard to find someone to have lunch with since there are “ 2000 people working in the office, there are 7 floors and the whole office is activity-based” (Interview with HR employee 1, 7 April 2020, Author translation).

### *IT*

IT employee 1, working with software development, emphasises that the greatest benefit of ABW is the flexibility. She values that it is so easy to move around in accordance with her needs. For example, if she must work with a colleague, it is easy to find a place to sit together. The second developer, IT employee 2, stresses the fact that ABW makes it easy to contact and interact with others at the company. The third developer, IT employee 3, considers the possibility to sit alone in a quiet area to be very beneficial. Silence is something he really needs as a developer, in order to be able to concentrate and focus on the task at hand: “It may take some time before I start

producing. Sometimes it takes an hour for me to understand what I am supposed to do, and if people constantly interrupt me, I must start all over again. It is like when you try to fall asleep, if someone constantly asks you if you are sleeping, you can never fall asleep” (Interview with IT employee 3, 7 April 2020, Author translation). He states that programming does not work so well in open areas, where he must sit together with people from other departments working with completely different things, talking out loud and disturbing his focus.

When asked to describe the drawbacks, IT employee 1 mentions that it can be hard to find somewhere to sit since there is not one desk for each person. There is not room for everyone to be at the office at the same time, which means that she sometimes must walk around for some time to find a free desk. IT employee 2 states that one disadvantage is that it can be hard to find his colleagues or people he needs to talk to, since he does not know where they are. Another drawback he points out is that he sometimes is disturbed by the people next to him. For example, he finds it annoying when people talk loudly in their phone when they are working with something completely different.

### *Communication*

According to Communication employee 1, the ABW allows her to vary her position throughout the day to avoid working too monotonously, this also something that benefits her focus. Communication employee 2 appreciates the flexibility provided by ABW, that it allows for variety and that it is possible to “find your own working space within the flexible way of working” (Interview with Communication employee 2, 6 April 2020, Author translation). According to Communication employee 3, the ABW also allows you to talk to people as they pass by.

Communication employee 1 points out that the only drawback is the risk of too much noise in the ABW. Communication employee 2 stresses the drawback of working together with someone and trying to find somewhere to sit together, since it is hard to know whether the secluded private rooms are booked or not. This means they often have to walk around much before they find a private room not occupied. Communication employee 3 emphasises that the ABW often can be disorderly, especially when you can not find a place that is suited for you.

### *Management*

The main benefit of the ABW according to Management employee 1 is the fact that you become more active throughout the day since you have to rotate your position. Furthermore, Management employee 1 embraces the fact that the ABW affects the hierarchy in a positive way since no one, including HR or their CEO, has their own rooms. Management employee 2 finds the ABW flexible which allows for adaptability to the different tasks performed during the day. Furthermore, the ABW impacts who you talk to and how you build your network when you rotate.

Neither Management employee 1 nor Management employee 2 could find any drawbacks of working in an ABW.

## 5.11 Which work tasks are better and worse suited for ABW

### *Lundström, ABW concept manager at Tetra Pak*

Lundström means that there is one important factor that determines how different people perceive the ABW, if they feel satisfied working in ABW or not. He believes this factor to be: how many activities the employee performs per day. Lundström believes that employees that only perform a few different activities per day, for example controllers of different types (finance work), often do not enjoy working in an ABW and do not see the benefits with it. Their work consists of a few repetitive activities that they just need a desk for. Consequently, having a personal desk works perfectly for them. Lundström argues that people that perform few activities per day also perceive their productivity to be lower in an ABW. However, people that perform many activities every day benefit more from the ABW. Lundström also mentions that some people feel dissatisfied with ABW even though they perform many activities but conduct all these activities at the same desk.

### *Business*

Business employee 1 stresses that ABW is not well supported for handling confidential information, which is often part of his job, or when having meetings throughout the whole day. Except for that, he believes that all his tasks are well supported by the ABW. Business employee 2 mentions the fact when working with finance for companies that do not have all their papers digitally, it could be frustrating to drag them along every time she changes her seating. Furthermore, she emphasises that having meetings in the open space can be affected negatively by



the surrounding noise. In general Business employee 2 thinks the ABW supports her tasks well. Business employee 3 agrees with Business employee 2 that the ABW works well with his tasks because it is flexible which is often demanded for his tasks. Being able to change his working situation makes his tasks easier.

### *HR*

HR employee 1 states that ABW fits her administrative task well, she states that it is important to be able to choose location depending on how focused she needs to be while carrying out these tasks. It is beneficial that she can sit in a quiet area when she really needs to concentrate on her administrative tasks. Furthermore, she says that ABW is well adjusted to telephone calls - she can just use one of the separate rooms in order to not be bothered. HR employee 2 argues that ABW generally fits her work tasks nicely, she never sits at the same chair for more than one to two hours in a row. However, she thinks that it sometimes can be hard to really concentrate and focus on a specific task in an ABW.

### *IT*

IT employee 1, working in an agile software development team, states that the ABW supports this agile way of working well. Generally, ABW fits all of her tasks since it is more open, and it is easier to contact people outside of her team. IT employee 2 shares IT employee 1 opinions, the ABW does work for all of his tasks. The frequent meetings work well for both of them because they have a lot of meeting rooms in the ABW. IT employee 2 emphasises that the developing and coding part of his work are well supported by the ABW, while the more casual-unplanned meetings often turn into more formal meetings which is not always a benefit. Furthermore, he stresses that the stand-up-meetings, which is common in his work, often do not work well since they need to have meetings in the open areas where people work next to them. IT employee 3, who mainly worked with software development and coding, mentioned the fact that the ABW did not suit working tasks when working in big teams. However, since he mainly worked by himself, this was not often an issue for him. He stresses the fact that he mainly worked by himself and had the same workspace every day, for him the tasks would not be affected if there was an ABW or just an ordinary office where you had your own seat.

### *Communication*

Communication employee 2 is of the opinion that ABW supports all his daily tasks. For example, he often needs high focus and concentration while producing texts or statements as a communicator and therefore appreciates the quiet areas where he can sit in silence. He argues that you just have to learn to navigate in the ABW, to use it correctly. Once you understand how it works, it should not affect any of the tasks negatively. Communication employee 1 shares Communication employee 2's opinion, she thinks ABW fit all of her tasks well. She emphasises that it is important that she can talk on the phone without being interrupted, since she often is in contact with people outside of the office. Sometimes, these calls are confidential and therefore she appreciates the separate rooms intended for individual calls in the ABW. Furthermore, the ABW supports formal meetings well - there are several rooms that she can book for these meetings. Communication employee 3 is also mainly positive, she thinks it is beneficial that she can choose an environment based on the task she performs. However, sometimes she has difficulties to proofread texts in the ABW due to the surrounding noise.

### *Management*

Management employee 1 spends almost all her time in the creative zone, which she thinks supports most of her tasks well. She emphasises that the quiet area serves its purpose well, nothing disturbs her when she needs to focus in this area. Consequently, she believes all of her tasks are well supported by the ABW. Management employee 2 states that, from a management perspective, it can sometimes be difficult to know where your co-workers are and it can be a challenge to keep the group together. Consequently, the ABW sometimes makes her management and coordination tasks difficult.

## 6. Analysis of the empirical material

*This chapter will discuss and analyse the empirical data in relation to the subqueries to the research questions. The first part, 6.1, will answer the first subquery: How do different professions experience that ABW impacts and affects them in terms of health, productivity, job satisfaction, stress, privacy, communication and interaction? Is it possible to find a profession specific pattern in terms of these six different factors? The second part, 6.2, will answer the second subquery: What benefits and drawbacks do the different professions experience with the ABW? Are the benefits or drawbacks most highlighted? The third part, 6.3, will answer the third subquery: Which work tasks are better and worse suited for ABW? In chapter 6 we will also combine the empirical data with the literature and discuss limiting circumstances that can affect the result.*

*We believe the answers to these three subqueries will lead to an answer to the overall research question which is: How do different professions view ABW and in what way does an ABW fit some professions, and their tasks, better than others? This will be answered in chapter 7.*

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### 6.1 Impact and pattern of the six factors

To provide the reader with a better overview of the empirical data, a summary is presented in the table below. This table will be further discussed and explained in the following analysis and can be considered a helpful visual aid. When all interviewed employees within the same profession shared the same attitude towards the factor, this box is marked with grey colour in the table.

Table 11: summary and patterns of the perceptions regarding the six factors

	<u>Business</u>	<u>HR</u>	<u>IT</u>	<u>Communication</u>	<u>Management</u>	<u>Summary</u>
<b>Health</b>	2 positive 1 neutral	2 positive	3 neutral	2 positive 1 neutral	1 positive 1 neutral	Split - mainly positive
<b>Productivity</b>	3 neutral	1 positive 1 negative	1 positive 2 neutral	2 positive 1 negative	2 neutral	Split - mainly neutral
<b>Job satisfaction</b>	3 positive	2 positive	3 positive	3 positive	2 positive	Distinct - all positive
<b>Stress</b>	2 neutral 1 negative	1 neutral 1 negative	3 negative	3 neutral	2 neutral	Split - mainly neutral
<b>Privacy</b>	3 positive	1 positive 1 neutral	1 positive 1 neutral 1 negative	3 positive	2 neutral	Split - mainly positive
<b>Communication Interaction</b>	3 positive	2 negative	3 positive	2 positive 1 negative	1 positive 1 negative	Split - mainly positive

The analysis will start by presenting and analysing how the employees' perceptions about the six factors relate within the profession and between the different professions. We are interested in examining if the employees within the same professions share the same perceptions and if so, in what way. Is it possible to find a profession specific pattern and how the different professions relate to each other? We will compare the perceptions with the arguments found in the literature. We will further compare how the employees value the six factors and critically review the chosen factors if other factors are higher valued and beneficial to investigate in further research. Lastly, we will analyse the patterns, are they profession specific or only related to individual perceptions?

### 6.1.1 How do ABW impact the six factors?

#### *Health*

The business, communication and management employees are not unanimous regarding how ABW impacts their health. Consequently, it is not possible to see any correlation between these professions and the health factor in the ABW. The employees do not share the same perceptions regarding this issue, consequently the individual preferences do not correspond within the

profession. For example, in the group of communication, there are three different explanations for how ABW affects their health; one believes it affects his mental health positively, the second has no opinion (is neutral), the third claims that she walks more due to the ABW.

However, the HR and IT employees are unanimous within the groups. Within HR, all think ABW affects them positively since they move around more. This argument is supported by Hallman, Mathiassen & Jahncke(2018) and Arundel et al (2018), both studies have shown that the employees move around more due to the ABW. Within IT, all are neutral in the issue, the ABW has no impact on their health compared to another work environment. An interesting issue to mention is that only one of the interviewed employees mentions that they sit less due to the ABW, which also corresponds to the results in the studies performed by both Hallman, Mathiassen & Jahncke (2018) and Arundel et al (2018).

### *Productivity*

The HR, IT and Communication employees are not unanimous regarding how ABW impacts their productivity. Consequently, it is not possible to see any correlation between these professions and the health factor in the ABW. The employees do not share the same perceptions regarding this issue, consequently the individual preferences do not correspond within the profession. The varying results from the interviews (some persons are positive and some are negative) goes in line with the varying results shown in the reviewed studies: Arundel et al (2018) and Candido et al (2019) shows that ABW affects the employees productivity positively, while Kim et al (2016) means that the free seating policy have a negative impact on the productivity.

Furthermore, it is interesting that some of the personal opinions correspond to what the literature says, for example one of the HR employees thinks that it is harder to ask colleagues for help: due to ABW it is not possible to just turn to your colleague nearby, instead she has to organise a meeting. This reduces her productivity, which corresponds to what the literature states: Arundel et al (2018) indicates that the reason for the impoverished productivity could depend on the fact that the employees in the study experience less interaction and linkage to colleagues working in the same team.

However, the business and management employees all agree that the ABW does not affect their productivity in any way, they are neutral in the issue. Within the business group, all of the employees could see how ABW impacts their productivity both negatively and positively.

### *Job satisfaction*

The job satisfaction factor stands out from the other five factors, since the perceptions are consistent; the employees from all the professions are satisfied with the ABW. They all rate their job satisfaction higher due to the ABW, which corresponds to the two studies performed by Arundel et al, (2019) and Bodin Danielsson and Bodin (2008). The studies both showed that working in an ABW or in a flex-office has a positive impact on the employee's satisfaction. For example, the same argument that was found in the literature is mentioned in the interviews: One of the HR employees mentions that she appreciates that she can choose to sit where she is most effective. Bodin Danielsson and Bodin (2008) argues that it is possible to spot a correlation between job satisfaction and the autonomy both flex- and cell office types provide the employees or "their ability to meet the need for personal control" (Bodin Danielsson & Bodin, 2008, p. 657).

Since all of the employees answered that they feel satisfied with ABW, job satisfaction in an ABW does not seem to be correlated to any specific profession.

### *Stress*

The Business and HR employees are not unanimous regarding how ABW impacts their stress. Consequently, it is not possible to see any correlation between these professions and the stress factor in the ABW. The employees do not share the same perceptions regarding this issue, consequently the individual preferences do not correspond within the profession. However, even though there is no profession specific correlation here, the personal opinions mentioned by the employees sometimes correspond to what the literature says. For example, one of the HR employees mentions that being able to focus on her tasks without being disturbed makes her less stressed. This corresponds to what Haynes, Suckley and Nunnington (2019) have stated, according to them there are certain areas where the employee can work without being interrupted, and since ABW provides these types of areas, it can reduce the stress for several people.

The employees working within IT all believe the ABW affects their stress level negatively. They all agree that the ABW can cause extra stress since you do not have a safe place when arriving in the morning, instead they have to arrive early to find the workstation best suited and this can cause extra stress. This argument is supported by the literature, according to Engelen et al (2019) some employees find it stressful to arrive early to work in order to find the best suitable place for the day. Consequently, it is possible to see a pattern between the IT-profession and the stress factor.

The employees working with communication and management are unanimous in their answers, the ABW does not affect their stress neither positively nor negatively. They are neutral in the issue.

### *Privacy*

The HR and IT employees are not unanimous regarding how ABW impacts their privacy. Consequently, it is not possible to see any correlation between these professions and the privacy factor in the ABW. The employees do not share the same perceptions regarding this issue, consequently the individual preferences do not correspond within the profession. According to one of the HR employees, it is important to have privacy when working with HR; they all are in charge of sensitive information. She thinks it is beneficial that the ABW offer private rooms. However, it is interesting that the other HR employee, also working with sensitive information, does not have any specific opinion about the issue. One of the IT-employees feels that there is a lack of spaces for private conversations, which is an issue mentioned in the literature as well. People that highly valued the ability to discuss private issues found it both frustrating and time consuming to find somewhere to talk in privacy (Zamani & Gum, 2019).

The employees working with business, communication and management are unanimous in their answers within their groups. The business and communication employees all see that ABW has a positive effect on their privacy, they highly value the separate rooms when in need for privacy. However, the management employees are all neutral.

### *Communication and interaction*

The communication and management employees are not unanimous regarding how ABW impacts their privacy. Consequently, it is not possible to see any correlation between these professions and

the communication and interaction factor in the ABW. The employees do not share the same perceptions regarding this issue, consequently the individual preferences do not correspond within the profession.

The employees working with business, HR and IT are unanimous in their answers within their groups. Business and IT all feel that the ABW affect their communication and interaction positively. One argument mentioned by two IT-employees is that it opens up opportunities to talk to people outside of their team. This is also supported by the literature, according to Zamani and Gum (2019) communication with employees that are not team-members increased. However, the HR employees feel that the ABW affects their communication and interaction negatively. One HR employee states that it feels safer to ask for help from colleagues in her own team, which is more difficult in an ABW where she has to rely more on digital tools. This is also supported by Zamani and Gum (2019) who states that communication with employees that are not team-members increased while communication with team-members decreased.

### 6.1.2 Patterns and critical review of the six factors

The most distinct pattern we could find is that all professions rate the job satisfaction highly in an ABW. This could imply that there is not a clear correlation between a distinct profession and job satisfaction, there is no profession specificity. Generally, the business employees have the most positive attitude towards the ABW of the five professions. The business employees' rate that the ABW impacts three out of the six factors positively. Generally, the management employees have a neutral attitude toward the ABW compared to other working environments. When trying to find profession specific patterns, we could see that Business, IT and Management have the most similar perceptions (they have the same perceptions regarding four out of six factors).

Furthermore, an interesting issue to mention is that there is no pattern showing that one profession is more negative than another to the impact of the ABW, the negative preferences seems to be related to individual preferences rather than profession. Generally, this seems to be the case overall. In order to strengthen our belief that the preferences seem to be individual rather than profession specific, we have examined each individual's perceptions to see if it is possible to find individual patterns. For example, we found that Communication employee 3 is positive to almost



all factors (all but one), overall, she really appreciates ABW. However, the other employees within her profession do not share this positive attitude in general.

Furthermore, from the empirical data it is possible to see that the employees seem to think that the ABW affects health, job satisfaction, privacy and communication & interaction mainly positively. However, the employees seem to have a neutral attitude towards how ABWs impact productivity and stress. Consequently, ABW seems to create good conditions for employees in terms of health, job satisfaction, privacy and communication & interaction. Employees that value these four factors highly, will probably benefit and prosper in an ABW.

However, even if the employees seem to be more positive about these four factors, it is not possible to draw a conclusion that the employees believe these four factors to be more important than others at the workplace. To exemplify this, when asked to mention the three most important benefits of the ABW many employees mention words related to communication & interaction which is one of the four factors (see 5.2). Words mentioned in this context were for example networking, interaction with many people and collaboration. However, none of the other five factors were mentioned and therefore did not seem to be one of the three most important benefits according to the employees. Another interesting thing was that most employees said that their health was positively or neutral affected by the ABW. However, during the interviews the employees did not seem to think that the factor health affected their general perception of the ABW Health does not seem to be an important factor at work in general.

## 6.2 What are the benefits and drawbacks and which is most highlighted?

Factors that are commonly mentioned as a benefit with ABW is for example flexibility and openness (see 5.2). These two factors have not been considered in more detail in this thesis but seem to be expressed as great benefits of the ABW. From this analysis it is possible to draw the conclusion that openness and flexibility should have been added to the list of factors and investigated in more detail.

Furthermore, both benefits and drawbacks seem to be equally highlighted and therefore it is not possible to see that the benefits outweigh the drawbacks or the other way around. Since the general

impression from the employees seems to be positive regarding ABW, they all express job satisfaction with the ABW-, it seems like the employees value the benefits higher than the drawbacks. However, the only profession that stands out is the management profession, the management employees could only find benefits with the ABW. This is something that can be questioned. If the management employees actually believed that there were no drawbacks with the ABW, they should be positive regarding all six factors. This is not the case. For example, one management employee is negative regarding how ABW affects communication and interaction.

An interesting issue we have examined further is if the benefits mentioned by Lundström (ABW-manager) and in the literature is also experienced by the employees. For example, one benefit commonly mentioned by the employees is that ABW encourages interaction, which corresponds to what Lundström says: that ABW supports interaction and communication. This is also supported by the literature, according to Zamani and Gum (2019) communication with employees that are not team-members increased. Furthermore, several employees also mention the benefit of moving around in accordance with personal needs. Lundström as well as the literature (Bodin Danielsson & Bodin, 2008) (see 4.3), also emphasises this, personal freedom is a great benefit of ABW. He also says that ABW leads to a greater exchange of experiences. Many employees stress this fact, they think it is beneficial that ABW leads to less hierarchy. It is easier to talk to people with more experience that differs from your own. When it comes to drawbacks, the employees' perceptions often correspond with Lundström arguments. One HR employee mentions that she had a hard time to get to know her colleagues and feel a sense of belonging. Lundström emphasises that this is a risk with ABW and as a manager, you actively must work with. Consequently, the benefits and drawbacks mentioned by Lundström are also experienced by the employees. This implicates that these specific benefits and drawbacks can be traced to the ABW as such, it has nothing to do with professions or the circumstances at a specific company.

### 6.3 Which work tasks are better and worse suited for ABW?

#### *Business*

The business employees think most of their tasks are well supported by the ABW. One business employee mentions that the ABW is flexible, which is often demanded for his tasks. This is supported by the literature, employees that have tasks which mean they are freer to work wherever

they want, whenever but also however, are more positive about ABW (Hoendervanger et al, 2018). However, the business employees stress that the ABW is not as well suited for tasks such as handling confidential information, when having a lot of meetings, when the documents are not digitised or when having meetings in open spaces, due to noise.

When asked to describe the three most important positive aspects about ABW, the business employees all mentioned words connected to interaction. The three words mentioned was: colleagues, communication and interaction. It is interesting that all three choose to highlight words connected to interaction and therefore interaction seems to be a vital part of their work.

### *HR*

The HR employees think most of their tasks are well supported by the ABW. The HR employees emphasise that ABW supports both administrative tasks and telephone calls well. The ABW offers areas/rooms suitable for these tasks. However, the ABW sometimes impacts tasks that require high focus and concentration negatively.

When asked to describe the three most important positive aspects about ABW, the HR employees all mentioned words connected to flexibility. The two words mentioned were: adjustable and flexibility. It is interesting that both choose to highlight words connected to flexibility and therefore this seems to be an important prerequisite for them to do a good job.

### *IT*

The IT employees think most of their tasks are well supported by the ABW. The IT employees mention that the ABW supports agile work, coding and developing, individual work, meetings and tasks that require help from outside of the team. The literature states that ABW supports both working individually and in teams: according to Duffy and Powell (1997, cited in Hoendervanger et al, 2018) the ABW is mostly suited for tasks that are characterised by social interaction and tasks the employee can manage by him/herself. However, the ABW does not support unplanned meetings, stand-up meetings or tasks carried out together in a big team.

### *Communication*

The communication employees think most of their tasks are well supported by the ABW. The communication employees mention that the ABW supports telephone calls, tasks involving confidential information and formal meetings. There are several areas/rooms suitable for these tasks, such as meeting rooms or telephone rooms. However, the opinions are divided when it comes to tasks that require high focus such as producing text and proofreading. One employee means that he appreciates the quiet areas where he can sit in silence, while another employee often feels that she is disturbed by surrounding noise.

### *Management*

The management employees think most of their tasks are well supported by the ABW. One example of this is that the ABW supports tasks requiring quiet areas in order not to be disturbed. However, some of the managerial tasks can be hard to carry out in the ABW such as supporting and keeping your co-workers together and coordinating.

### *Summary and critical review*

Generally, all professions examined think that ABW fit their work tasks well. From the interviews we have summarised which tasks are considered well suited by the ABW and which tasks are not as well suited by the ABW.

Table 12: Summary of the tasks that fit ABW better and worse

<b><u>ABW are well suited for</u></b>	<b><u>ABW are not well suited for</u></b>
Administrative tasks	A lot of meetings
Telephone calls	When the documents are not digitised
Agile work	Meetings in open spaces, due to noise
Formal meetings	Tasks requiring high focus and concentration.
Individual work	Unplanned meetings
Meetings	Stand-up meetings
Tasks that require help from outside of the team	Tasks carried out together in a big team
*Handling confidential information	Tasks requiring high focus such as producing text and proofreading, according to some
*Task that requires high focus and concentration	Some of the managerial tasks, such as supporting and keeping your co-workers together and coordinating
	*Handling confidential information
	*Task that requires high focus and concentration

From this list, it is possible to determine which tasks are better and worse suited by the ABW. Consequently, professions that perform the tasks listed as well suited by the ABW could be considered to fit the ABW better than others. However, since this list is based on very general tasks that many different professions perform, it is hard to determine which specific profession is best suited. For example, both HR and communication perform tasks such as formal meetings and administrative work.

It is important to mention that tasks that involve handling confidential information was by some considered well supported by the ABW, while some have the opposite opinion. The same is true for tasks requiring high focus and concentration. Some considered this to be well supported by the

ABW while some had the opposite opinion. To mark this contradiction, we have added an asterisk to these tasks in the table. This is an interesting contradiction, why is this the case? This needs to be scrutinized in further detail. To begin with, as mentioned before, these perceptions seem to be related to individual preferences rather than being profession specific. For example, one employee within communication feels that the ABW is not well suited for tasks that require high focus and concentration, while another communication employee has the opposite perception. Furthermore, Lundström mentions something that could explain these contradictions. He states that some people feel dissatisfied with ABW because they conduct all of their activities at the same desk even though they would benefit more by using different areas (see 5.11). This could explain why some people feel that ABW fits well for tasks that require high focus and concentration, they use the quiet areas provided for this. However, some feel dissatisfied because they do not use the opportunities given by the ABW, they sit in an area where talking is allowed and therefore feel disturbed by the surrounding noise.

## 6.4 Limiting circumstances

There are some limiting circumstances worth mentioning that can affect the analysis and the result. Due to the small sample, there are only two- three employees within each profession, these employees can not represent their profession in general. Therefore, the patterns found are not completely reliable, our study is rather an example of how the perceptions can differ between the five chosen professions. If you ask other employees, you might receive different answers and different patterns. Another limitation could be that the employees have all defined their professions themselves, they have stated which of the five categories they belong to. We have not been part of defining their professions, we have not taken a stand in the issue or questioned their choice. This could imply that the different tasks performed by the employees within the same profession can vary a lot, they might be in charge of very different things even though they belong to the same profession. As discussed in the literature review (see 3.2), the definition of a profession varies much depending on who you ask. There are several different ways of classifying a profession, it is a very broad concept. Consequently, the answers could possibly have been more unified within the professions if the employees within the same profession performed the exact same work tasks. Furthermore, by extension, more unified answers would have made it easier for us to see more

specific patterns, and possibly more profession specific patterns. Consequently, both these limiting circumstances affect the credibility of our results negatively.

## 7. Discussion and conclusion

*In this chapter we will summarise the thesis and provide an answer to the initial research question: How do different professions view ABW and in what way does an ABW fit some professions, and their tasks, better than others? Furthermore, this chapter will also discuss theoretical implications, managerial implications and the need for further research in the area.*

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### 7.1 Concluding answers to the subqueries

*How do different professions experience that ABW impacts and affects them in terms of health, productivity, job satisfaction, stress, privacy, communication and interaction? Is it possible to find a profession specific pattern in terms of these six different factors?*

ABW seems to create good conditions for employees in terms of health, job satisfaction, privacy and communication & interaction. Employees that value these four factors highly, will probably benefit and prosper in an ABW. When trying to find profession specific patterns, we could see that Business, IT and Management had the most similar perceptions (they had the same perceptions regarding four out of six factors). Furthermore, the most distinct pattern we could find is that all professions rate the job satisfaction highly in an ABW. This could imply that there is not a clear correlation between a distinct profession and job satisfaction, there is no profession specificity. However, we believe that the perceptions overall are too mixed to conclude that there are any profession specific patterns regarding ABW. The perceptions about ABW rather seem to be related to individual preferences.

*What benefits and drawbacks do the different professions experience with the ABW? Are the benefits or drawbacks most highlighted?*

Two benefits that are commonly mentioned with the ABW, in addition to the six factors, is flexibility and openness (see 5.2). However, both benefits and drawbacks seem to be equally highlighted, it is not possible to see that the benefits outweigh the drawbacks or the other way around. Since the general impression from the employees seems to be positive regarding ABW,



they all express job satisfaction with the ABW, it seems like the employees value the benefits higher than the drawbacks. Furthermore, we have compared the benefits and drawbacks mentioned by Lundström (ABW-manager) and the literature to what the employees have said. Many of the benefits and drawbacks mentioned by Lundström and in the literature are also experienced by the employees. This implicates that these specific benefits and drawbacks can be traced to the ABW as such, it has nothing to do with professions or the circumstances at a specific company.

*Which work tasks are better and worse suited for ABW?*

Generally, all professions examined think that ABW fit their work tasks well. In the analysis we concluded a list (see 6.3) of what tasks fit ABW better and worse according to the employees. For example, administrative tasks and formal meetings are well suited for the ABW according to this list. Tasks that are worse suited are for example tasks that are carried out in a big team and when the documents are not digitised. For a complete list, see 6.3. Consequently, professions that perform the tasks listed as well suited by the ABW could be considered to fit the ABW better than others. However, since this list is based on very general tasks that many different professions perform, it is hard to determine which specific profession is best suited. For example, both HR and communication perform tasks such as formal meetings and administrative work.

## 7.2 Concluding answer to the research question

To remind the reader, the main research question for the thesis is as follows: *How do different professions view ABW and in what way does an ABW fit some professions, and their tasks, better than others?*

Overall, it seems that all the professions have a positive attitude towards the ABW. All of the interviewed employees rated their job satisfaction to be high in an ABW (see 5.5). For example, some were so satisfied with the ABW that this is the layout they would choose for their future workplace. However, the employees were not equally positive towards the other five examined factors, the result varied a lot between and within the professions (see 6.1). Generally, the business employees have the most positive attitude towards the ABW of the five professions.

Based on the empirical material, it is hard to find distinct profession specific patterns. There are no evident distinctive differences between how the different professions perceive the ABW, there is no clear systematic between the perceptions. Consequently, from this study, it is not possible to find that any of the five professions are better suited for an ABW. We can not find a profession specific pattern; the perceptions rather seem to be based on individual preferences. However, some tasks seem to fit the ABW better than others (see 6.3). Professions that perform the tasks listed as well suited by the ABW could be considered to fit the ABW better than others. However, since this list is based on very general tasks that many different professions perform, it is hard to determine which specific profession is best suited.

It is important to acknowledge the limiting circumstances that affect our result and to critically value the result. For example, the sample size is too small to draw any general conclusions regarding the professions (see 6.4). Two or three employees can not represent a profession as a whole. Therefore, our study should be considered an example of how the perceptions can differ between the five chosen professions.

### 7.3 Theoretical implications

Our study has contributed mainly by acknowledging an empirical gap in the literature, ABW in relation to professions, that should be further investigated. We have performed a first study in this unresearched area and our results show an example of how the perceptions can vary between the professions. However, due to the small sample size our result only has a limited impact. Therefore, our study can be considered a pilot study in the area to use as a guide when performing a more extensive qualitative or quantitative study in this area.

### 7.4 Managerial implications

This study can be considered valuable for the management of a company, since it shows how different employees within different professions perceive the ABW. Because our study shows that all interview employees generally have a positive attitude towards the ABW and feel high job satisfaction when working in an ABW, ABW is something that management should consider when restructuring their work environment. However, it is important to acknowledge that one size does not fit all, management must acquire thorough knowledge about the ABW in order to decide

whether the ABW is the best available option for their particular circumstances. Furthermore, it is vital that management show the employees how to make use of the ABW in the right way, in order to use all of its potential. This is due to the fact that our study has shown that employees are dissatisfied with things that could easily be prevented if the ABW was used correctly. For example, some employees mentioned that tasks involving handling confidential information were considered well supported by the ABW, while some have the opposite opinion (see 6.3). Another argument that supports the importance of guiding the employees in how to use the ABW was mentioned by one of the communication employees. He argues that once you understand how ABW works, it should not affect any of the work tasks negatively. In addition, a risk that needs to be acknowledged with ABW, according to Lundström (ABW-manager), is the risk of losing the sense of belonging within the team and as a manager, you actively have to work with this.

## 7.5 Further research

We believe there is a need for further research in this area. Due to the small sample, there are only two- three employees within each profession, these employees can not represent their profession in general. In order to gain more reliability, it would therefore be beneficial to investigate the subject through a quantitative study. A quantitative study could work as a complement to this thesis and could be a possibility to find clearer patterns. Furthermore, it could be interesting to study other factors and other professions, to see how or if the result differs. For example, factors that are commonly mentioned as a benefit with ABW is for example flexibility and openness (see 5.2). These two factors have not been considered in more detail in this thesis but seem to be expressed as great benefits of the ABW. Therefore, both openness and flexibility should be considered and examined in further research. Other things that have been delimited from our thesis are the companies, where the employees interviewed work and factors such as a company's culture, size, structure and age. These factors could also be interesting to include in further studies to see if these have an impact. Furthermore, since we realised that the preferences seem to be related to individual preferences, rather than profession specific, this is something that should be examined in further detail.

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# Appendix (1)

## Interview template for interview with Lasse Lundström (ABW- Manager):

Vi skriver, som tidigare nämnt, vår masteruppsats inom management just nu. Baserat på främst vår bakgrund inom HR och ett intresse har vi då valt att titta närmare på aktivitetsbaserade kontor och vad anställda både tycker och påverkas av detta.

- Först vill vi bara kolla att det är okej att vi spelar in den här intervjun? Är det okej att vi nämner ditt namn och arbetsplats i vår uppsats?
- Vad har du för roll på företaget?
  - Jobbar du med arbetsmiljön?
  - Kontakt med anställda?
  - Kontakt med ledningen?
- Hur länge har du varit i den rollen?
- Vad har du haft för tidigare roller?
- Hur är ert aktivitetsbaserade kontor utformat på Tetra Pak?
- Hur länge har ni haft ABW?
- Har alla ABW på kontoret?
- Vad är anledningen till att ni har infört ABW på Tetra Pak?
  - Finns det någon studie som beslutet grundar sig i? Är det är genomarbetat beslut?
  - Vilka var med i beslutsprocessen?
  - Vad är huvudargumenten för ABW?
- Vad ser du för fördelar med ABW?
- Vad ser du för nackdelar med ABW?
- Tycker du att det finns något bra alternativ till ABW som funkar bättre?
- Har du jobbat på andra arbetsplatser där man använder ABW?
- Hur upplever du att de anställda ser på ABW?
- Hur upplever du att ABW påverkar de anställdas arbetsmiljö?
  - Hur påverkar det produktiviteten ?
  - Hur påverkar det hälsan?
  - Hur påverkar det den generella stressen?
  - Hur påverkar det kommunikation/interaktion?
  - Hur påverkar det möjlighet till avskildhet och ha privata samtal?

Vi är intresserade av att undersöka om det finns någon skillnad mellan hur olika professioner ser på ABW, tex om det finns någon skillnad mellan HR och Ekonomi. Därför kommer vi genomföra intervjuer med folk som jobbar i olika professioner för att se om det går att hitta ett mönster

- Tror du att olika grupper inom Tetra Pak upplever ABW på olika sätt? Att det finns ett mönster mellan åsikterna?
- Olika professioner? Ex ekonomi vs IT?



## Appendix (2)

### Interview template for interviews with employees

Vi skriver, som tidigare nämnt, vår masteruppsats inom management just nu. Baserat på främst vår bakgrund inom HR och ett intresse har vi då valt att titta närmare på aktivitetsbaserade kontor och vad anställda både tycker och påverkas av detta.

Ett aktivitetsbaserat kontor kan se väldigt olika ut men kort och gott kan man säga att det innebär att man inte har sitt egna skrivbord eller specifik plats utan att man istället väljer att sätta sig och jobba där det passar för de arbetsuppgifter man har för dagen. Detta innebär att man kanske sätter sig vid en tystare avdelning när det behövs eller ett mer kreativt område när man är i behov av det, helt enkelt är det upp till individen själv.

1. Först vill vi bara kolla att det är okej att vi spelar in den här intervjun? Är det okej att vi nämner ditt namn och arbetsplats i vår uppsats?
2. Jobbar du aktivitetsbaserat idag?
  - a. Hur länge har företaget haft ABW?
  - b. Varför tror/vet du att man införde ABW?
3. Har du tidigare jobbat aktivitetsbaserat?
4. Vad har du för arbetsuppgifter/vad jobbar du på för avdelning?
  - a. Vad kräver ditt yrke för typ av arbetsmiljö?
    - i. Tex behöver du sitta nära dina kollegor?
    - ii. Självständigt?
  - b. Vad gör du för specifika arbetsuppgifter som kräver en viss typ av arbetsmiljö?
5. Ser du några uppenbara fördelar eller nackdelar med ABW?
6. Vad tycker du om att jobba aktivitetsbaserat?
  - a. Hur har den påverkat din produktivitet?
  - b. Hur har den påverkat din hälsa?
  - c. Hur har den påverkat din stress?
  - d. Hur har den påverkat din kommunikation/interaktion?
  - e. Hur har den påverkat din möjlighet till avskildhet och ha privata samtal?
7. Är du nöjd med ABW?
  - a. Säg tre ord som karaktäriserar vad som är bra med din arbetsmiljö
  - b. Om du fick önska något ytterligare av arbetsmiljön, vad skulle det vara då?
8. Vad för typ av zon eller rum sitter/satt du oftast i?
9. Skulle du säga att ABW passar dina arbetsuppgifter?
  - a. Vilka arbetsuppgifter passar det bättre/sämre för?
10. Skulle du säga att det påverkar positivt eller negativt om ett jobb du söker har ABW?
11. Vilken typ av utformning av kontoret skulle du föredra om du fick välja fritt?

## Appendix (3)

This is a PowerPoint made by Tetra Pak called “ABW Introduction”, that we have received from Lasse Lundström (Manager for corporate workplace strategies and ABW concept manager at Tetra Pak). Since it is a pdf-file of 38 pages, not possible to find on the internet, we have only pasted in the pictures used in our thesis.

**Strategic enablers**

Dynamic Productive Capable

- Attract and retain talented people**
  - Attractive and engaging environment
  - Respect the individual differences
  - Happy to go to work
- Enhance a sharing and collaboration mindset**
  - Collaboration creates value
  - Collaboration leads to innovation
- Optimise the use of space**
  - Best use of resources – less empty desks
  - Cost effective
  - Environmental footprint

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General



## Most important activities and features

Strongest drivers for a high performance Workplace

From the employee's perspective, an outstanding workplace should support the experiences of:

- Doing ( getting things done )
- Seeing ( image & sustainability )
- Feeling ( pride & culture )

- ▶ Activities:
  - Planned meetings
  - Thinking/creative thinking
  - Relaxing/taking a break
  - Learning from others
  - Individual focused desk based
- ▶ Physical features:
  - Noise levels
  - General decor
  - Desk
  - Meeting rooms ( small )
  - Informal work areas/break-out zones
- ▶ Service features
  - General tidiness
  - Toilets/W.C
  - Tea, coffee & other refreshment facilities

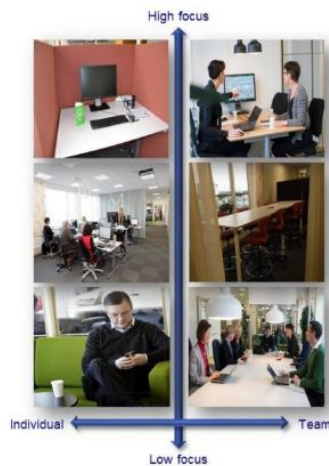
From Leesman report from 400.000 global respondents

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General

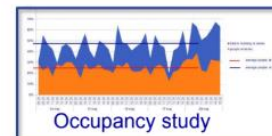


## The lay-out is designed based on activities & occupancy

Different office areas supporting different activities



Dimensioning based on:



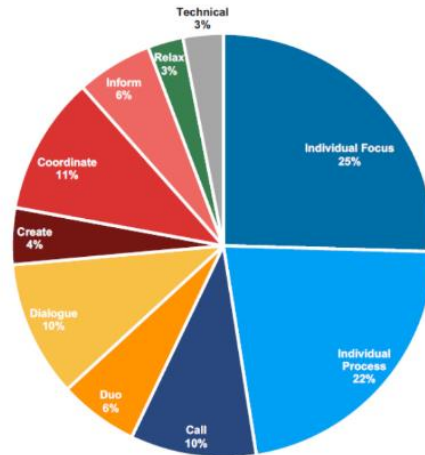
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General



## Activity Profile

Tetra Pak Lund's Activity Profile

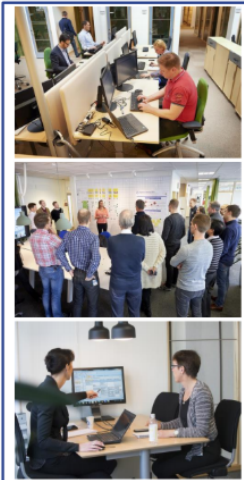
The activity profile indicates the proportion of time Tetra Pak Lund's employees believe they spend on different activities while in the office during an average working week.



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General



## Captured through interviews and surveys



- ▶ Increased collaboration between teams
- ▶ Increased transparency and understanding of other units
- ▶ Appreciated freedom to choose workplace
- ▶ Attractive and modern workplace
- ▶ Flexibility with minimum of rebuilds at organisational changes
- ▶ Majority do not want to move back to old environment
- ▶ Teams need to work on “sense of belonging”
- ▶ Less benefits for employees with few daily activities



LL/2019-11-05  
General