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Abstract

Meaningful work through "solidarity" managers

A study on the creation of meaningful work after an acquisition

The individuals' effort to create meaningful work and the means by which to do it is the core focus of this study. The study takes place against the backdrop of the process of integration which is initiated after a Swedish company has acquired a Danish company.

The integration process is conducted through five projects. These build the foundation for the new common discourse between the two companies. The management executives feel that it is vital that no managers participate in the five project groups, in order to prevent territorial influences when discussing future synergies in the project groups. They also feel that it is important to have roughly equal numbers of Danes and Swedes in each of the five groups.

The existing literature in the field of mergers and acquisitions (M & A) needs to be expanded in order to counteract the manager-oriented phenomena in the field. This study therefore makes a contribution by focusing on the under-represented group throughout the process of building the new common discourse. The under-represented group (10%) in the five integration groups happens to be the female employees, even though the overall proportion of men to women is 60/40 in both companies.

The data showed that the under-represented group faced numerous obstacles, with some being more related to the integration process than others. A need to understand these hindrances and to change the future prospects thus became clear. This was one of the reasons why these data was used to form the basis for a deeper understanding of how the under-represented group could experience meaningful work during the integration process between the two companies.

It is revealed that in an M & A context, the creation of meaningful work means that the manager to an employee is even more important than the employee herself. The role of the manager is to that of a "solidarity" manager with the ability to ask existentialist questions, and helping the employees in their progress towards creating meaningful work in the organisational dynamics.

Keywords: Meaningful work, M & A context, "solidarity" manager, future orientation.

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