A coalition collision

A case study on organisational alterations
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Summary

When companies go through a merger or an acquisition all involved parties within the organisations becomes affected. These changes can affect the company in many areas which could create tensions and anxiety among employees which could create strong negative forces at the end and prevent the new organisation to function at its best. In service companies this could be of great importance to overcome since they often are dependent on functional organisations to help them create a wanted quality. This study will address this problem and will do so in a case study performed on a transportation company which have gone through a number of mergers. Due to these mergers, the company has also grown in both numbers of employees and in financial conditions.

The applied thesis statement is: “How should a small expanding company manage the integration of acquired companies and at the same time maintain a sought identity within the organisation, in order to reach their main strategic objectives?”. The ambition is to be able to understand how the studied company has developed and also to analyse its organisational transition. Furthermore we also want to create proposals for organisations that are facing future organisational transitions, based from our findings in this study.

This study has been conducted with a hermeneutic scientific ideal and an abductive approach. The empirical collection was done inside the studied organisation in a qualitative manner. We conducted nine interviews, one with the manager (co-owner) and the other eight with employees inside the company. We wanted to be able to see both parties’ sides of the mergers. Therefore the interviews where conducted at two separate offices in different cities.

The theoretical framework consists of a number of theoretical areas, who together creates a holistic view over the entire research area. The theoretical parts consist of: Organisation, network, mergers, acquisitions, family firms, corporate culture, identity, social identity, service quality and Human Resources.

Our main conclusion is of the studied company shows that the biggest problem which the organisation faces today is the lack of communication between the manager and the employees. Although we claim that the merger has played a mayor impact on the company in many areas. Some of the main difficulties which we identified were the fact that the merger never was discussed thoroughly between the management and the employees. We also claim that the company when divided between the two offices have created a cultural gap between the wanted culture and the actual culture. We argue that the quality thinking permeates through the entire organisation and all of the respondents have described the importance of achieving a high quality service within the organisation.

It is our hope, that this summary has presented insightful information of our study and enticed the reader in the further reading of this thesis.
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1. Introduction

In this chapter we aim to provide the reader with an introduction concerning the research area and further present the purpose of the study in order to provide the reader with an understanding of the study.

1.1 Background

The main purpose for transportation companies is to arrange and actively move a product/merchandise from one location to another. The products could be everything from raw materials to complete products which are delivered to a distributor. The service which a transportation company offers is used in most business areas in the world. The transportation process is managed by the supplier who provides the service to the customer. The supplier utilizes the transportation service to manage the customer demand, since the customer is situated in another location, there is a need for transportation.

The suppliers appoint a logistics company to coordinate the transportation. The customer could also be the arranger of the transportation process. The transportation company might be seen as a middleman between the two parties, supplier/customer. Both of the parties relay on the company to full fill the required service. (Hertz & Alfredsson, 2003, p.145-149) This phenomenon is illustrated bellow.

Customer satisfaction within the transportation industry is attained when the carrier have accomplished the service of moving an object from position A to position B, in accordance to the orderer of the services needs and demands. The transportation ought to be reliable, flexible and must be arranged quickly in order to be satisfactory towards the orderer. (Tavasszy & Ruijgrok, 2003, p.465-466)

Changes within the logistic sector are under constant development and will be transformed even more in the upcoming decade, this in accordance to new demands in customer service. Studies concerning the increasing focus on partnership engagements, the integration of supply chains which are more connected towards the customers and an increasing number of deliveries due to inventory reduction have showed to be of great significance, in order to maintain competitiveness. (O’Sullivan, 1997, p.18–19)

Today competition is not only an issue of market share, it is also the hunt for new opportunities, which have the objective to provide the company with future benefits. The pre-eminent way to find new solutions is to be innovative or re-write the rules of an existing market and the approach of copying best performers is no longer sufficient. (Hatch, 1997, p.64)

A popular strategy for increasing the competitiveness of a company is to merge or acquire other companies. (Schraeder & Self, 2003, p. 511) Acquisitions are described as the purchasing of another company, where the buying company retain the control of the company. Merger between companies is described as the event of several companies becoming one. (Schraeder & Self, 2003, p.512)
Main purposes for using these methods are due to its benefits in areas such as diversification, synergy effects and to achieve economies of scale and growth (Cartwright and Cooper, 1993, p.57). According to (Buono Et al 1985, p.448) there are three kinds of mergers, the horizontal merger which is an event of merging competitors, the vertical merger which is a merger between a company and one of its suppliers and the conglomerate which means that the company merges with a company outside its own business or supply chain. (Schraeder & Self, 2003, p.513)

Mergers should be performed with a composed approach if the employee involvement and acceptance ought to be of a successful nature; this in order not to threat the organisational identity. Differences in the firms are also of importance to acknowledge, when both the management style and general organisational behaviour can differ to a greater extent between the firms, when this can create difficulties within the organisational barriers. (Schraeder & Self 2003, p.512)

According to Cartwright and Cooper (1993, p.59), mergers will not have a major influence on the culture of the company if the culture of the company is of a stronger nature, the difficulty will then be to integrate the new cultures. Integration between two firms which have different traditions and cultures may result in a high cost action. Before a merger is taking place negative effects, such as fade outs and the risk of losing the original identity will become a demotivating force within the new company. (Löwendahl, 2000, p.140) Mergers between companies have a high failure rate, this is often due to cultural problems. This could affect the perception which the customers have towards the company, since the customers are the ones that become damaged particularly in the service business. (Esther & Green, 2004, p.198-203)

As organisations are a part of the society it is also dependent on the entire environment, this due to the need of employees, capital and customers, when they all interact to some extent with the organisation. Therefore the organisation needs to adapt to the current circumstances in the environment in order to reach success. (Hatch, 1997, p.65) When a person belongs to a group physically, it does not automatically mean that the person identifies with the entire group. An organisation consists of a number of different identity formations, they are all members of the organisation but are not identifying with each other. Therefore the individual is able to identify more with various groups and be reluctant to participate with others. This could result in problems if a change within the organisation takes place. If an individual do not identify with a certain group, new innovative ideas and proposed changes from that group might not have an impact on the individual. Instead the individual might react in destructive ways, this due to the lack of wanted involvement with the leading group. (King & Andersson, 2002, p.87) An organisation is structured by internal groups, these together structure networks inside the organisation which are related to each other based on power, prestige and status. (Hogg & Terry, 2001, p.1) Organisations are very complex as they consist of several individuals, this could result in a situation where every organisation could be seen as a unique structure. As individuals affects or are being affected by the organisation their own beliefs of the organisation differs depending on the eye of the beholder. (Hatch, 1997, p.37)

We claim, all the different components which assemble an organisation are of vital importance to consider when an assessment of the organisation is being held. Due to unpredictable and constant changes within society, it is of essential importance to be able to manage events and occurrences which might have a fundamental impact on future activities inside the organisation, in order to achieve the objectives within the organisation. Sweden is a multi cultural country and this influences organisations when different cultures and identities are being assorted. Depending on the cultural level, different identities will show varied strengths. We argue that a deeper knowledge concerning different cultures can strengthen the identity within the organisation when the barriers are weakened. We claim that the culture is not only established through countries, different regions and areas can influence and form cultures in different directions.

It is important for the whole organisation to function well together, this because of the fact that the demands from the customers often is changing. The transportation company have to be able to offer reliability, high quality but still have low prices to its customers, and still be able to make a profit. (Crainic, 2000, p.272-273) All these stated factors could be a hard equation to solve if the
company has internal problems, it is important to have a well functioning and collaborating organisation.

It is necessary to understand and be able to satisfy the demands from its customers as the environment which surrounds the transportation company alternates. Several transportation companies often seek close relationships with its customers. One reason behind this is to become an integral part of the customer supply chain, in order to be aware of the customer needs. Another way is to differentiate or operate some special types of transportation systems.

When offering specialized services/products to customers they obtain a competitive advantage towards competitors. Thereby, they are able to better satisfy customer needs. (Dobie, 2005, p.51) This specialization could also be beneficiary as it gives possibilities for higher margins. (Carbone & Stone, 2005 p.505)

We argue the importance of high quality service when it comes to the logistic sector. We claim this is dependent on several factors. One of the main issues is the internal competence within the organisation, the employee’s ability to work together and to be keen towards customer requests. One aspect within the internal sector is the relationship between both personal and customers in order to achieve success. In family firms there is often a well developed personal contact between the personal and its customers. This relationship might be hard to duplicate for competitors and could be a high competitive advantage.

According to Brunninge and Nordqvist (2004, p.85.) the management in family firms are better governed than in non family firms, this is due to the apparent maximization of the business value which the management are likely to aim towards. At the same time family firms strategies often focus towards performance in short term based revenues instead of long term profit maximization. Higher performance in sales revenues and in net margins was also found within family companies, in comparison with the non-family firms. Westhead and Cowling (1997, p.33) claims that certain objectives within family firms and non-family firms might differ when it comes to the economic aspirations. Conflicts which may arise within family firms are generally between the non-financial targets and between the financial targets. These instances usually arise when the company does not merely have the ambition to obtain profit. But moreover in order to improve the owner’s standard of living and secure employment to other family members. (Westhead & Cowling, 1997, p.34)

We argue that family firms have a tendency to withhold a stronger culture within the firms in comparison to non-family companies. We claim this is due to perceptible long traditions of family habits and practices. This family culture can be very strong and hard to transform in accordance to new company objectives, which occur in mergers.

In order to receive an understanding in how a small expanding company should manage the integration of acquired companies and maintain one identity within the organisation, in order to reach their objectives and discern how this can be achieved? We will enter the reality in order to get the supreme response to our enquiry.

1.2 Thesis statement

How should a small expanding company manage the integration of acquired companies and at the same time maintain a sought identity within the organisation, in order to reach their main strategic objectives?

1.3 Purpose

From a case study we aim to attain the essential knowledge necessary to be able to find relevant answers to how they manage their organisational transition. Our aim is to comprehend both the employees and the management actions, in correspondence with the upcoming situation. The employee's objectives are based upon their understanding of the shaped mission. If the
employees misinterpret the management objectives, a gap will probably emerge between the two parties and create difficulties. Our aim is to acknowledge the objective which the two parties can comply with. Further we want to create proposals for organisations who are facing future organisational transitions, based from our findings in this study.

1.4 Delimitations

We delimit this study to small companies and limited the research to surround the cultural environment and its influence on the company. The theoretical framework has therefore mainly consisted of topics which have impact on a company which are undergoing an organisational transition.

1.5 Word definitions

**Acquisition**- One organisation buys another organisation

**Corporate identity**- The “special” identity within an organisation

**Culture**- Values and individual behaviour which prolongs trough an organisation

**Family-firm**- A company which owned by one family

**Logistic**- Movement of merchandise from one location to another

**Network**- Connections between individuals

**Merger**- Two organisations which go together as one

**Social identity**- Individuals identity within social context
1.6 Outline of thesis

* Introduction
  In this we provide the reader with an introduction of the study along with the purpose and thesis statement, this to provide the reader with a knowledge foundation concerning the study.

* Scientific Approach
  In this chapter we will give an account of our opinions and in how we interpret the reality in correspondence to the chosen problem, this to provide the reader with information about our reality.

* Practical methodology
  We present a description on how the thesis was performed in this chapter, this to provide the reader with information on how we conducted the study.

* Analyses based on theoretical and empirical data
  In this chapter we will present our theoretical framework combined with the collected empirical data, this in order to provide the reader with our gathered material in correlation with the theoretical framework.

* Final discussion
  In this chapter we will present our final discussion with our answer and conclusion to the research question, this to provide the reader with an account of our analytical findings and recommendations.

Figure 2: Outline of thesis, created by the authors.
2. Scientific approach

In the theoretical methodology the purpose is to utilise the means of different techniques which later on is applicable on a specific problem. (Lehâney & Vinten, 1994, p.7-8) In this chapter we will give an account of our opinions and in how we interpret the reality in correspondence to the chosen problem.

2.1 Choice of subject

We found that we sought to elaborate our theoretical knowledge into the practical environment. Our choice of subject is a prolongation of our already established knowledge, practised from our education courses. Mainly, those from the master program in management, which we both studied together. Therefore we searched after an applicable problem in relevance to our knowledge. It is in our interest to attain an understanding of issues which may occur in a company which are undergoing an organisational change, as this situation could be the reality in our future career. This search ended when an applicable company were recognized.

We found the company trough one of the author's personal network. From there we were informed about a suitable an interesting topic in accordance to our recent business studies. We found the area to be of high interest since we recently had made several changes within an organisation in our final course of the management program.

Today there is a constant development and restructuring within organisations, particularly those who are going trough a merger or acquisition. These organisations have to restructure internally, to be able to adjust to the new corporate situation. Due to these alterations within organisations, an implementation of a new organisational design is according to us crucial. We decided to study the organisation in question in order to achieve a greater understanding of different issues surrounding an organisation in times of changes.

2.2 Perspective

The applied perspective in this thesis is from the corporate identity point of view, the organisation as a whole, as well as the individuals and their part in the organisation has been taken in consideration within this thesis. The purpose of utilising the corporate identity perspective in this thesis is to get a comprehensive view of eminent factors and make the research as coherent and useful as possible. When using the corporate identity perspective we are able to involve several factors which affect the individuals within the organisation and thereby the organisation as a whole. The chosen perspective will have an influence on the entire study, when the authors will chose in what way the study will be interpreted and conducted. (Lundahl & Skärvad, 1999, p. 62)

Our aim is to comprehend both the employees and the management actions in correspondence with the upcoming situation. The employees objectives are based upon their understanding of the mission set up by the management. If the employees misinterpret the management objectives, a gap will emerge between the two parties. Our aim is to acknowledge the objective which the two parties comply with.
2.3 Preconception

When an individual makes an observation it will lead to an action and response by the individual, this action will then to a certain degree be based on the individuals' preconception of the observation. The preconception emerges from the observers' earlier knowledge and social background. (Holme & Krohn, 1997, p.151)

Our aim with this study is to interpret and give acknowledgement of our opinions within the research area. This is important since our goal is to use our knowledge in the interpretation of the organisation, in order to implement and propose new innovative paths. The researchers own interpretation and opinions concerning the study is authoritative within a scientific study. (Evjegård, 2003, p.17)

Bearing in mind our preconception and how it might influence this thesis, we consider it to be important to give an account for it. We will strive to accomplish this, to the degree of our own consciousness.

2.3.1 Our preconception

Cohesive for both of us is that we have completed the Master’s Program in management at the Umeå School of Business and Economics. Within the master program, Operations management and Social identity theory are courses valid and in relation to our thesis. We have both been taken the course “Organisation and leadership on the Business A-level. One of us has taken courses in Organizational behaviour, business ethics and human resource, the other one have taken courses in logistics and cultural behaviour. We claim that these courses have brought useful knowledge to our subject. Bearing this in mind, we have got a broad knowledge within the organisational area and our preconception is partly based on this.

Unified for both of us is our engagement in team sport activities, by this we have learned to commit ourselves to other people within organisational structures and patterns. We consider equivalent objectives are to strive for within organisations in order to achieve significant results.

Both of us have experiences of different working environments within both small and big organisations, from 4-12 and larger organisations, more than 40- employees. By this we have got an insight in how different organisations function and of alternative organisational designs. A greater understanding of organisational patterns might also influence our preconception. By this we have obtained a greater understanding in the importance of a solid, well functioning communication.

Both of us have been living abroad for an extensive period of time on several occasions. This has given us experiences and a deeper comprehension of how new cultures influences individuals. The social identity theory and the occupation abroad can be beneficiary when we interpret the organisation, were different kinds of identities are joint together.

Both of us are born and raised in Sweden, one of us is born and raised in the capital, while the other is born and raised in a middle size town in the north of Sweden. We argue that due to our different upbringing situations and influences from different experienced cultures, this might result and have a positive impact on the thesis. This is due to the fact that we both have had a different insight and experienced different cultural environment, which we can utilise as we might discover different aspects on diverse objects.

One of us have linked connection towards the studied organisation, this provides us with prior knowledge regarding the organisation in question. This fact could enhance our access and increase the prior information. At the same time a conflict might arise if there is a preconceived opinion, concerning the organisation which might affect the outcome of the thesis.
We claim that our preconception concerning the chosen organisation was based upon prior general preconceptions of logistic firms and their organisational identity. This understanding was therefore not based upon this specific organisation and made us go through the process as impartial as possible.

Despite the fact that we have been working within different organisations, both public and family owned, has made us a part of the organisation on an internal based level. Since we have not experienced any top managerial positions we therefore lack the knowledge concerning problems which managers may encounter.

2.4 Scientific ideal

Two of the most common scientific approaches in social science is positivism and hermeneutic. (Johansson-Lindfors, 1993, p.10-11) We claim that our thesis statement and research problem, demands an interpretation, this is inline with the hermeneutic research ideal. (Widerberg, 2002, p.26) The hermeneutic research method is commonly connected to the qualitative research approach. The hermeneutic process consists of three major expressions preconception, understanding and an explanation of the phenomenon. These three combined creates the hermeneutic circle which is determined to be continuous. (Gummesson, 2003, p.484-485)

Our purpose with this thesis is to interpret and understand the probable incidents which may take place in an organisation between the stakeholders during a merger or acquisition. The doable results ought to give us the comprehension of how to make the transition, as smooth as possible for all involved parties. The process which this thesis is commenced through our prior composed and attained facts concerning the studied problem. From this we aim to achieve a deeper understanding which will benefit us with the ability to explain the phenomenon as truthful as possible, this is inline with the general hermeneutic process.

The fact that this is an explicit company in a specific time further implies a hermeneutic approach within the organisation. (Lundahl & Skärvad, 1999, p.43) The hermeneutical approach is build upon the interpretation of the authors own view. (Kvale, 1993, p.62)

The reader should bear in mind that this thesis is an outcome of two person interpretations of the studied problem. The outcome could differ if the authors or the company were to be altered, due to the fact that every person has a diverse reality according to us.

2.5 Scientific approach

We started our thesis by gathering empirical information bearing in mind our preconception and condemnation of the reality. We continued by searching for valid theories which would broader our view to further comprehend the chosen problem. We continued our theoretical search and conducted the empirical framework in accordance to the theory. After gathering the empirical data we once again conducted a literature search to be able to add and eliminate redundant theories.

We based our interview outline and our questionnaires in accordance to our theoretical framework, this in order to obtain valid questions associated to our studied problem. This approach is identified as an abductive way of conduct. (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 1994, p.45) The abductive approach is also discussed by Johansson-Lindfors (1993. p. 59) a situation where the theory and the empirical framework alternate each other. (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 1994, p.42) As mentioned above our way of conduct is more towards the abductive approach, due to our inclination when switching from the theory and the empirical framework. Our approach which verifies this statement is demonstrated by the utilisation of the manager in the commencement of the study. Our general preconception was based upon prior knowledge from both life experience as well as prior studies, to be able to get an insight of the studied organisation we wanted to obtain necessary information in accordance to our research area. We therefore conducted an
interview with the manager on two different occasions, were we exchanged ideas and analysed the present situation which resulted in the foundation of our theoretical framework. This way of conduct helped our ongoing process with the studied organisation were we as outside examiners had to attain authorization from all involved parties.

The two most common scientific approaches are the deductive and inductive approach. The deductive approach is distinguished from its method by going strictly from the theoretical framework towards the empirical framework. (Patel & Davidsson, 1991, p.21) The inductive approach is originated from empirical data which is transpired to the theoretical framework. (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 1994, p.42) The abductive approach could also be reminiscent with the hermeneutical spiral as both of them commence by the preconception of a subject. We originate our study from the preconception to a holistic elucidation in a recurring pattern. The resemblance between them helps us to obtain an answer to our problem as well as to comprehend the reality of the company. By this we are able to acquire comprehension of the entirety in the study that matches our purpose.

2.6 Research method

We used both a qualitative and quantitative research method within this thesis, the qualitative method is the one which permeates trough the entire study, in a higher extent and the quantitative was used to broaden the understanding of the organisation. Our reason for a qualitative study was to achieve a deeper knowledge in this specific organisation in order to accomplish our aim of this study, to investigate how an expanding organisation within the logistics industry should manage their organisational transition, from small into a larger company.

According to Jaye (2002, p.558-559) the qualitative study is useful when an assessment of individuals and the divergence in their actions are taken place. When individuals are the essential part of a study, the qualitative method is the ideal. (Lundahl & Skärvad, 1999, p.101) This is the reality in this study and this makes the selection and utilisation of the qualitative method suitable.

The researcher has an essential function when conducting a qualitative study, this is linked to the researcher’s active participation and its influence on the study with prior knowledge. Fundamental parts of the study where the researcher is active are the data collection and the researcher’s analysis of it. (Jaye, 2002, p.561-562)

The quantitative method is more suitable when it comes to situations which can be measured or when hypotheses are getting to be examined. (Patel & Davidsson, 1991, p.12) Our purpose is not to conduct an entirely qualitative permeated study. We also want to expand the collection of information by utilizing a quantitative study conducted by the company, on their customers, this to broaden our insight in the company when validating the respondent’s view of the company. The empirical framework will be produced primarily by utilising a qualitative method and furthermore a quantitative method will be located in the appendix III, this information is only utilised to support our empirical framework and is not analysed in a broader extent.

2.7 Case study

A case study can be utilised when the aim of investigating a specific research area such as an organisation or one or more individuals. The importance of observing the studied object in its present environment is to achieve equitable information utilising various gathering methods. The main motive for doing this is to be able to answer the research question in a truthful and relevant manner. (Cepeda & Martin, 2005 p. 875)

Our chosen research question is based upon a wide-ranging spectrum which should be of interest for a number of different organisations. When utilising the case method we are able to attain a greater understanding of the apparent situation of the specific company. This will thereby provide us with information of imminent factors concerning organisational behaviour. Additional when performing a case study we claim that one great advantage could be the fact that even
though different companies and people in it may differ the underlying factors could be comparable and applicable on another company in a comparable situation.

The fact that case studies are not to be seen as valuable as a scientific based study in Scandinavia have made them to be less utilised in a broader extent. (Solberg Soilen & Huber 2006, p. 17) We do not consider this to be an obstacle for our case study, instead we see the possibilities to conduct this kind of research since our aim is to achieve a great understanding of the chosen organisation.

This statement is strengthening by Woodside and Wilson (2003 p.494) who proclaims that case studies are suitable when the objective is to describe and understand individuals behaviour in diverse settings.
3. Practical methodology

The practical methodology illustrates how information concerning the chosen problem is collected. This includes the gathering of primary and secondary data. Criticism of the data is also vital to address to achieve legitimacy.

3.1 Secondary Sources

Secondary sources are gathered material from other sources, which earlier has been analysed and published for other areas. (Johansson-Lindfors, 1993 p.117) It is important for the researcher to analyse the secondary sources and critically view the research, to be able to verify the liability. The researcher should also carefully view the material in order to fit the purpose. (Lundahl & Skärvad, 1999, p.132).

The main reason for us, when using secondary sources, is to understand and comprehend the studied problem. Bearing in mind our purpose and abductive approach, it is essential to find the most relevant sources, when these influence our study to a great extent.

3.1.1 Collection of Secondary Sources

The search for secondary sources has mostly been conducted through the library at Umeå University homepage. The search engines used was Business Source Premier, Science Direct, EBSCO, Academic Search Elite, Emerald full text and Google Scholar. We focused our search concerning topics such as, Methodology, Abductive approach, Hermeneutic, Transportation, Logistics, Service, Quality, Growth, Family firms, Mergers and Acquisitions, Social Identity, Corporate Culture, Human Resource, Organisational Change and Corporate Identity. Occasional combinations of the different search topics has been utilised to narrow down equivalent search results. The scientific articles were used in the background, theoretical methodology, practical methodology and the theoretical framework. When gathering the secondary sources we choose the material based upon its relevance in correspondence to our preconception and our experienced understanding of the studied organisation. Some of the theoretical framework has been influenced by a specific researcher as they have conducted a number of equivalent materials in that specific area and therefore have suited our theoretical aspect. Despite of the prior mentioned statement we have aimed to find other researchers materials which also have suited into our theoretical profile. By doing this we claim to have attained an extensive but yet specific theoretical framework.

We have also searched for literature through the university database, Album. Where we found additional literature in relevance to our articles. When trying to identify larger valid concepts the added literature where of importance. The books were also used as the main foundation in the background. In addition we used the chosen company's webpage, when following up on background information, such as number of employees and contact information.

3.1.2 Criticism of secondary Sources

The authors have the responsibility of examine the utilised written literature and find the purpose and reason behind the origin of it. (Patel & Davidsson, 1991 p.55)

Our aim has been to use theories in accordance to our research problem and we have searched for relevant theories contiguous to our thesis statement. The scientific articles which we have utilised are Peer reviewed (scientifically revised) this verifies the credibility of the sources.

We base our secondary sources in correlation to our study, this to be able to understand and identify our problem. As we have worked through a hermeneutical and abductive approach, we have used our knowledge as the foundation. However material which solely is based on own ideals should be avoided as these affects the results of the study. If facts are based upon the researchers own reality, the risk of not achieving a truthful and correct view could be apparent. (Patel & Davidsson, 1991, p.57) In order to receive a high understanding and avoid the above
mentioned predicament we have searched for material exterior to our own knowledge. Leth and Thurèn (2000, p.22) describes four criteria's which should be used when evaluating secondary sources these are authenticity, time, dependency and tendency.

**Time**, as time elapses the reliability decreases, this means that there might be a need of an examination when a source is written. Is there a time gap between the subject it described and the actual event the source might lack of credibility. There might also be a need of updating the source, as time can change the foundations of a source and therefore not be valid anymore. The writer should always consider the sources creation date and try to find as new and relevant sources as possible. **Dependency**, if the action is described by an author based on its experiences as an eyewitness or if it is a recreation of someone else's word. If something is written after an eyewitness story it is more reliable than something that is written after hearsay. There is consequently a need of getting as close as possible to the original source. **Authenticity**, is the source of original art or is it a copy. There is always a risk for forgeries, this means that the source collector should be critical towards where the information is found. **Tendency**, is the author of the source objective or has it some kind of interest in the material. If the author has an active part and the information is important for the author, the information could be altered to fits its purpose. A rule written by Leth and Thurèn (2000, p. 23) that is of great importance when it comes to critical examine sources:

"Every source which have an interest to distort or deceit the truth, have to be suspected of doing that."  (Thuren and Leth, 2000. p.24)

We have applied these criteria's when considering the theoretical literature in this thesis. We have tried to find suitable information from a relevant time period this is both concerning the theoretical information as well as the empirical gathering, this in order to keep the existing data relevant to our study. Further we have always tried to get as close as possible to the primary source of information, this to be able to achieve, dependency and authenticity. We have always taken in information which has been peer-reviewed with the intention to find as objective sources as possible.

There has been a focus on actual research material from relevant databases, from the University library's search engine. There is also a risk from our part of misinterpreting information from interviews or articles, as this is conducted from a hermeneutic approach. This is something we are aware of and something we claim to have been able to eliminate to a high extent.

The studied organisation could be affected by numerous circumstances and due to this we are of need of several different theoretical aspects as these could benefit us with the holistic view. As we work trough the different theoretical aspects and continuously relate them back to the chosen approach, we will thereby increase our aimed objectivity. Our aim trough the search of secondary sources has always been to return to the originated source, this in accordance to Lundahl and Skärvad (1992, p. 224) and further help us in our quest for objectivity.

We claim that our secondary sources are in line with our criteria's of objectivity and therefore ought to be relevant.

### 3.2 Primary sources

Primary sources are data which the researcher has collected in order to compose and study connections in them. (Holme & Krohn, 1997, p. 132) Our approach was to conduct interviews with employees within the chosen organisation, we also took part of questioners from the customers in order to receive a picture of existing demands and needs. Interviews is a primary source which can be collected trough different approaches, face to face interviews is one example to receive a large amount of information. Interviews can also be conducted in other ways for example, by telephone or mail. (Dahmström, 2000, p.71) The primary sources in the thesis mainly consist of interviews which we conducted face to face, we utilised this approach in order to receive straight answers to our questions and thought this to be appropriate when conducting this type of study. As the chosen organisation also was close to our home location, we claim that
it were to be most suitable to meet with the respondents instead of doing telephone interviews. We also utilised questionnaires as a supplementary source to the respondent’s answers, which will be presented in the appendix III.

When we have utilised two sources in order to receive valid data regarding the chosen organisation, this approach could be viewed as a triangulation method. By using the triangulation method provides the researcher with additional essential information for the study. (McDonnell, 2000, p.387). Our motive for utilising the triangulation method was to achieve a holistic picture of our research object.

We commenced our interview sessions by using our prepared interview template asking the questions in the order as they followed depending on the theoretical structure. We started to raise the informal questions as customary and recommended by Dahmström (2000, p.106) this in order to get acquainted with the respondent. The interview template was structured after our theoretical framework. Our aim on the interview session was to uphold an open climate as possible and give the respondent time and independence to answer the questions in their own pace. When all questions from the interview template had been raised, we continued by asking additional questions that had been addressed and notified during the interview, this in order not to miss out on additional interesting topics which has appeared during the interview.

Our main purpose in performing the interview session in this manner was to obtain as much information as possible both in order to analyse the gathered material in accordance to the theoretical framework, as well as receive an honest opinion from the respondents in connection to the present situation.

3.2.1 Selection of respondents

We discussed interesting respondents within the organisation and came up with a significant number of employees which would benefit us with a total overview of the organisation as a whole. After the discussion we decided to interview five employees from the office in Umeå and all of the three employees at the office in Skellefteå, this in order to receive accurate information. When we evaluated the number of significant respondents, we commenced by our aim of receiving a total picture of the organisation. The criteria we decided the respondents needed to uphold, where that they had to be working in at least one of the relevant business section. Due to this we chose the respondents in accordance to the specific business sections. We have interviewed at least two employees from the relevant business sections, to be able to receive an accurate picture. In this we got a relevant number of representatives from each area. In addition we choose the president of the company, to be interviewed, this in order to receive the opinion of the management. We choose this approach to be able to achieve the best suitable information in accordance to our thesis statement and fulfil our purpose. In total we interviewed eight of a total nine employees at that time. The only employee which where not interviewed was the other part-owner of the company, this due to fact that the part-owner was no active in the company during this period.

Since our purpose with the study was to achieve comprehension of the organisation and its vital fundamentals and functions, we claim the usefulness of anonymity to be crucial. Since the focus is not placed on the individual and only on their own interpretations of the situation anonymity is useful. (Widerberg, 2002, p.40)

When applying anonymity in a study it enhances the probability of receiving honest answers from the respondents. In our case we consider this to be a vital aspect since the aim of the study needs a reality based picture. (Lundahl & Skärvad, 1992, p.193) The manager in this study has been given the male gender; this due to grammar reasons and this does not mean that we consider a manager to be of male nature in everyday life. The reason for having total anonymity on the organisation as a whole as well as the respondents is the fact that the study will be provided for the general public and it will not benefit us or the studied organisation if important information could be seen by outside competition. We want to assert that this is not a demand from the chosen organisation but a active decision from our part.
3.2.2 Collecting and working with data

Our thesis is a case study based on an analysis of an organisation conducted through personal interviews. We started by searching for a relevant company to base our study on. We identified a relevant company who we perceived as interesting, this due to its relevant issues within the organisation. Then we got in contact with the president of the company and booked a meeting. At the meeting we discussed our ideas and the main foundations of the thesis and at same time he acknowledges his point of view. This resulted in our thesis statement and purpose. We continued by creating an interview template Appendix (I) in accordance to our gathered theory and basic understanding of the chosen organisation. We created two separate templates with similar questions but with different outlines depending on the respondents’ position in the company. Our aim has been to formulate questions that not affects or have an impact on the answers from the respondents. During the interviews we revealed the questions to the respondent for the first time. We utilised this approach in order to receive spontaneous and honest answers. We created our interview template in accordance to the funnel shaped method, we started to ask the basic and fundamental questions in the beginning of the interview and ended with the more sensitive questions. This is also inline with the approach which Johansson-Lindfors (1993, p.112) advocates, and states the importance of this technique in order to enhance the answer from the respondents.

The company which we chosen were situated in two cities Umeå and Skellefteå. We started by booking interviews with five of the employees in Umeå, after this an interview session was arranged with the president of the company. The third interview session was arranged in Skellefteå where three employees where interviewed. Before our interviews were conducted we got to know each respondents work environment, this in order to observe the respondents behaviour at their workplace. When getting familiar with the respondents natural surroundings we claim to have obtained a basic understanding of the environment which the respondents are acting in. The interviews in Umeå where conducted in the conference room at the company. The employees where interviewed one after another, the complete session lasted from eight in the morning to three o clock in the afternoon. The length of the interviews varied from one, to one and a half hours. The interview with the president of the company where conducted in Umeå and the length was one hour and twenty minutes. The interviews in Skellefteå where conducted from eleven until half past three. Two of the interviews where conducted during lunch meetings, which lasted from eleven to half past one, each interview took approximately one and a half hour. The last interview where performed in the office of the third employee and lasted one and a half hour.

During the interviews each session where both taped by using an mp3 player as well as written down. The positive aspect of the use of an mp3 player is the fact that the recorded and collected information is easily obtained when needed. Johansson-Lindfors (1993, p.123) also claims that a taped interview session is of advantage since it is almost impossible to write down all essential information. The respondents where asked if they approved of being recorded, something they all accepted. As the respondents where anonymous, they were labelled in order of appearance with capital letters in order to distinguish them from one another. After each interview session we transcribed all the gathered material, from each of the respondents. We gathered the empirical material both from the mp3 player as well as the written down information. All our respondents had the ability to obtain the gathered information in order to provide us with their approval. We have presented our empirical framework in parallel with our theoretical findings in a joint analyses chapter. We have chosen to present our empirical and theoretical findings in this specific way in order to enhance the reader’s ability to identify our main purpose for the study. The total numbers of empirical findings are instead to be found in Appendix (II).
3.2.3 Criticism of primary sources

All of the interviews were being conducted during the employees working hours, this is something that could have affected the respondents in a negative manner. The main negative aspect could be stress, when the respondent were occupied with something else than work and might lose important working hours. This could especially be noticed as all of the respondents discussed the overload of work within the organisation. Then some of the responses might have been answered with a stress-related undertone. These could result in consequences such as loss of valid information. In general the respondents were enthusiastic and interested in the study, but unfortunately not all employees were informed about the interviews in advance and in those cases the reaction initially was a bit negative.

3.3 Access

The access in this study has on several occasions varied in its form, when there has been trouble of getting in contact with essential persons, central to the study. This has affected us in a negative aspect such as the time consuming process of trying to get hold of the respondents. Despite these above mentioned occurrences, the final outcome of the study was not influenced. The access has been to our satisfaction in reference to the final result. Access is considered to be the researchers’ ability to collect information surrounding the chosen object. (Johansson-Lindfors, 1993, p.135)

We claim that we got honest and valid answers from the respondents, when every one of them was very positive in the end of each interview. The respondents attained the ability of ventilating their own views and opinions in the end of each interview as a supplement, this in order of increasing our access and benefit all involved parties. Also due to our interview method we claim to have increased the access to the extent which it is possible. We argue that due to our approach we have created an ambience which has been open and comfortable for the respondent. The fact that we have chosen to make the respondents as anonymous as possible have increased the access to their responds, especially on controversial matters.
4. Theoretical and empirical data

In this chapter we will present our theoretical framework combined with the collected empirical data. The theoretical parts are divided depending on our view of the governing idea through the study and the occurrence as we interpret the situation within the organisation. For each theoretical part we have positioned the empirical data in correlation to the specific theoretical section. In each joint theoretical and empirical section we further present a distinct italic analysis of the combined data.

4.1 Introduction to the theoretical framework

We have chosen to present our empirical and theoretical data in correlation with each other. In order to achieve a thesis with the aim of being an exhilarating experience for the purposed reader. When performing the study in this certain manner we want to provide the reader with a correlation between the theoretical parts and the empirical data, with the hope that the readers interpret the data with an individual approach. We argue that this way of conduct will enhance the reader’s ability to identify and understand our main intention with the study.

Our main purpose with the study is to describe and identify the different areas and factors which influence an organisation during an organisational change. We have identified a specific number of theoretical areas which we claim is of importance to utilise when analysing the organisational change. The theoretical framework consists of theories from areas such as:

- Mergers and acquisitions,
- Family firms,
- Network theory,
- Corporate identity,
- Culture,
- Social identity,
- Service quality,
- Human resource.

The organisational theory part is something we have utilised as an introduction to our theoretical framework, this in order to present as brief introduction in the concept of organisational theory. We claim that the internal network and the different parts are vital in order to enhance all involved in-processes and communications inside an organisation. The studied organisation has gone through a number mergers and acquisitions, therefore we claim that the merger and acquisition theory is significant to this thesis. In order to create a successful merger we argue that it is of great importance to look beyond the obvious, the nature of the industry, the products and the vision and mission of the company.

Although the studied organisation is not perceived as a family firm in practice, the operating company is operated by two s with a strong personal involvement in most of the decision making concerning the company. Due to this we are able to perceive the studied company as a family firm depending on the strong connection and influence which the two managers have on the organisation. We argue that an organisation commonly consist of one dominated culture which permeates through the entire organisation. This phenomenon affects the whole organisation in all different sectors, from work procedures, management behaviour, work environment, work comfort for the employees to the service execution and service satisfaction perceived by the potential customer. For a transportation company the quality is of great importance, destroying a customer’s product can not only create financial problems but also hurt the willingness of the customer to hire the company once again for a transport of a product.

We argue that the importance of adding and creating values for customers are vital for the success of service companies. In an industry where the service is very standardised such as in logistics, it is very important to create an added value. Therefore an educational process for the employees inside an organisation is vital to be able to execute and provide a high service quality.
All of these combined theoretical parts will provide us with a theoretical framework which will help us to answer our research statement in accordance to the purpose. We aim to identify the different occurring processes in times of organisational changes. We have created a model in accordance to our theoretical framework in order to enhance the understanding for the reader. This is our interpretation of the studied phenomenon in the commencement of our thesis which might alter in the final presentation of our conclusion, depending of the validity of the gathered information.

Figure 4: Theoretical framework model, created by authors

**4.2 Introduction for the empirical collection**

The chosen logistic company was founded in 2003, this after a merger between two other companies. Company 1 is the originated company and company 2 is the new company which was founded after the merger. Hereafter we will call them company 1 and company 2 which also could be referred to as “the company”. The company’s business concept is to be a small company positioned towards special and complex transportations, with a main focus on the size of the freight and nurturing of the service and punctuality. This could concern transportations of materials such as reinforced steel or other industry components such as cranes and industrial machines. The company also transports other smaller freights often of a higher value such as capital goods.

Today the company have fifteen employees which are divided between three offices Umeå, Skellefteå and Malå, the main office is located in Umeå. Company 2 was in the year of 2005 affected by the merger between company 1 in Umeå and in Skellefteå. In 2006 another logistic company in Malå were merged into the company, their main business area is in the transportation of wooden chips. Due to the fact that Malå has there own business area that is not connected to the other business areas in Umeå and Skellefteå, could Malå therefore be seen as a branch to company 2. The organisation is divided in three different business areas, dispatch, special transport and domestic. The transport planning are conducted trough the transportation supervisors who are working in pairs. One of them is located in Umeå and the other one in Skellefteå. The employees have a partner in the same business area in order to have someone to share and exchange ideas with. The mergers have mainly affected the offices in Umeå and Skellefteå as they are focused on the same business areas and therefore have a greater relationship to one another.
We have focused on the offices in Umeå and Skellefteå since they were the ones that have been affected by the mergers to a wider extent. We have divided the different respondents in accordance to their work location, this in order to achieve a simplification of the gathered empirical data.

4.2.1 Respondents background and personal fact

**The manager (President)**

The respondent has the position as management director at the company and has the main responsibility over the company. The respondent is also active in customer relations mainly concerning contracts and agreements. The respondent has been working at Company 2 since the beginning, prior to this he was active in organisation Q, which later on was one of the companies that were merged into company 2. The respondent loves his work, and said that as he is the one of them which has built the company not only company 2, but also the former one, organisation Q feels that, this is what he wants to do.

"Why would you work with something you do not like?" *(The manager)*

The respondent works with the future strategy of the company and is also the representative of the company.

**Umeå office**

**Respondent A**

Respondent A has been working in Company 2 since the beginning of 2003 and is in charge of the administrative duties. This includes, taking care of invoices, correcting prices, updating documents, and handing out prices to customers. Respondent A claims that it is hard to have a complete overview of what everyone else in the company does, but at the same time asserts that it is no problem to handle any administrative duties if the one person who is in charge of it is at home, or absent for any reason. One of the best competitive advantages according to A is the fact that Company 2 are able so solve problems that no other transportations companies are able to solve. Respondent A claims that the company has a very good experience in this area.
Respondent B
Respondent B is in charge of transports and is a transport coordinator. B is also in charge of contacts with the customers, making deals, selling transport solutions and setting prices towards the customers. Respondent B has worked with Company 2 since the beginning and before then B was employed by Company 1 doing the same types of jobs. Respondent B says that the company’s specialisations are on complex transports along with local support, as well as a direct and personal service instead of a call-centre. These above mentioned areas are to be seen as key ingredients to their success and regarded as their competitive advantages.

Respondent C
Respondent C works both at Company 1 and Company 2. C’s responsibility and main task are to handle invoices and other administrative duties. C has the same responsibility areas at both the companies and has been working in this manner for the past two years. Respondent C has the best knowledge in the administration section and would be able to cover up for another person in this area, but in the other departments C does not have the knowledge to help out if needed. Respondent C claims that the company’s main competitive advantage it the ability to handle special customised transports and their solid knowledge in transportation. Respondent C claim that the customer is the one who sets the demands and it is their obligation within the company to satisfy the customer.

Respondent D
Respondent D used to work as a driver at Company 1 and now works as a transportation supervisor in Company 2 since the start up. As a transportation supervisor, D is in charge of the financial part of the trucks, arranges transport service and is making sure that the trucks are kept busy. Respondent D claims that it is important to be able to fill in for one another if it is necessary in the company. D says that those areas would mainly be in transportation when the administration part is not one of D’s main tasks.

Respondent E
Respondent E works as a transport supervisor and is responsible for a certain number or trucks in the fleet of vehicles which are to be used, this to make it profitable for both the company and the drivers. E was hired in January 2006, earlier on E worked at another transportation company with similar responsibilities. Respondent E feels that there is no problem filling in for others if it is necessary, especially in the areas concerning transportation offering and customer service. Respondent E claims that the company’s main competitive advantage is their wide service offering, this is due to their local touch. E claims that the customer gets a more personalised service due to the small size of the company. The customers also have the ability to attain a better possibility of getting in touch with the ones who are responsible for the planning of the transportation.

Skellefteå office
Respondent F
Respondent F works as a sales manager with a primary focus on the company’s international customers and is also working as the on site manager for the office in Skellefteå. Respondent F used to work in a smaller section of Company 1 before the merger called Norrsped (a small company within Company 1) which has been situated in Skellefteå since 1999. F’s main responsibility at Company 2 is to find new customers which suits the profile of Company 2. F claims that Company 2 has there own approach and want to separate themselves from the former company, Company 1. The drivers have a more important role in Company 2 but also more pressure to produce and perform says F.

Respondent G
Respondent G works as a transport supervisor and is responsible for the fleet of vehicles, which are operating within Sweden. H has been working at Company 2 since the merger between Umeå Company 1 and Skellefteå Company 1 and has been working at Company 1 for the past twenty-six years. The main focus for G is on the designated area within the company and states that there is no time to help or assistance others in the company. Respondent G aim at the same time to work as close possible with the personnel which are located in Umeå and who shares the same
business area. G claims to have daily contact with the business associate in Umeå and argues the importance of it. According to respondent G, the competitive advantage of Company 2 is their flexibility and their capability of helping and solving their customer's difficulties. The company’s historical experience and the well-grounded knowledge that is rooted within the company also provide the company with a great advantage.

**Respondent H**

Respondent H works as transportation supervisor and has been working at Company 1 Skellefteå for ten years. Respondent H’s main tasks involves transportation’s abroad and the mainly the Nordic countries with a stronger focus towards Norway. Respondent H works in collaboration with a person situated in the office in Umeå, this as they both works with transportation’s abroad. The main problem with this collaboration the lack of a well functioning communication between them claims H. H states that the communication problem has to do with the fact that they have a very heavy workload today. The company's main competitive advantage according to respondent H is its knowledge and the wide variety in the fleet of vehicles. The main advantage with the large fleet is that it provides the organisation with both flexibility and the ability to take on difficult transports. It does not matter if the transport is very large or heavy, we have the ability of solving every transport claims respondent H.
5. Framework concerning Organisation & Network

5.1 Theoretical framework concerning Organisation & Network

5.1.1 Organisation
Organisations are often created if a task is too large for an individual to execute, which is the major advantage of an organisation. The organisation could be seen as an integration of a number of individuals which transforms them into a group, often to perform a joint task. (Hatch 1997 p.162) In an organisation you will find a large number of specific skills and abilities concentrated in a small environment. (Connell, 2001, p.220)

One of the positive causes to create large companies is the fact that they often have ability to have more resources and knowledge inside the company compared to a smaller company. This benefit is often compared to the disadvantage larger companies have towards the smaller ones. The fact is that small companies often have a flatter organisation which helps them to easily communicate inside the company and rapidly introduce changes. Larger firms can also more easily find themselves suffering from complacency. (Connell, 2001, p.220)

5.1.2 Network
When assessing an organisation it is of importance to understand the internal network in the organisation. The reason for this is to comprehend how the employees socialize and function together. The different connections between the members are vital to analyse, this in order to receive information of the organisation as a whole unit. When a change within an organisation is about to take place, a general view over the network and its formation is necessary, this in order to facilitate managers with significant information. Leaders within organisations are most often the initiators and deliverers when a specific change is being implemented. According to McGrath & Krackhardt (2003, p.325), an identification of the change has to be made by the involved individuals and then the organisation will be able to pursue the change. (McGrath & Krackhardt, 2003, p.328)

We claim that the internal network and the different parts are vital to enhance all involved in processes and communications which is of uttermost importance when it come to the performance of service companies. There is a constant need of a well functioning communication in order to execute a successful service.

How networks affect the change in an organisation is important to reflect upon in order to accomplish a thriving change. Several researches has been made on network theories in times of change, the viscosity model is one of them. The model advocate that in order to reach the best results, you have to start to implement the change in the outskirts of the organisation moving towards the centre and the connection between the subunits should very be very diminutive. (McGrath & Krackhardt, 2003, p.328)

The viscosity model argues that if the change is implemented at the outskirts of the organisation it is more probable to be accepted all through the organisation. If the change is controversial, it is better for the change process to be implemented in a specific sheltered area were the change is less likely to generate a repercussion. In this way the change can be implemented among members of the organisation which are positive towards the change and the negative spirits has a less likelihood of remaining negative when the majority have received the change. (Krackhardt-Stern (1988, p.123) The Viscosity models conclusion is, when a change is bound to be executed it is better to establish the change slowly from the periphery with the focus on specific clusters, this in order to be successful. We argue that the chosen organisation have been trough a merger and the interest for us is to locate how they implemented this change, something that the viscosity model will help us to recognize. With an evaluation process of the actual situation the successful rate will be apparent.
In an article written by Minguzzi and Passaro (2000, p.182) they argue how the economic surroundings influences the small firms and its relationships. The homogeneity within the company is a strong factor which affects the firm, experiences as well as education and social background are most often the underlying factors.

The firm is represented with different attributes and has its influences from many different areas. The external environment is one of the most important influences which also show the level of entrepreneurship in the firm. (Low & MacMillan 1988, p141). The external network is also influenced by the level of the teaching process in the company which in its turn is depended of the entrepreneurial level in the company. (Lindsey, Brass & Thomas 1995, p.646 and Ropo & Hunt, 1995, p.92). Facing new obstacles or undertake new ventures are often connected to the level of entrepreneurship in the firm, the company generally has a greater confidence if there is a high level of entrepreneurship present. When entrepreneurship prolongs in the company, the firms culture and furthermore the growth of the company will be determined, the external environment then offers the company a greater ability to be competitive.

Figure 6: The network of relationships between the economic environment and the entrepreneurial culture in small firms, (Minguzzi & Passaro, 2000, p.184, Figure 1)

The authors separated the different factors which influence the company in two categories, internally and externally, internally the human resource and willingness towards change. The external factors are dominated by the interaction of the market and the company. These features determine the level of competitiveness within the company, firms that are not capable to apprehend these factors will be suspended form the market. According to Minguzzi & Passaro (2000, p.185) small firms learning procedure is not a planned process this in opposite to larger firms which is known to have developed and formal constructions with both the external and internal factors in cooperation with one another.

5.2 Empirical data concerning Organisation & Network

The manager (President)
The respondent’s works with the future strategy of the company and is also the representative of the company. The respondent acts as a discussion partner with the sales force, but also with all of the other employees in order to help the process of the company to run smother. In the last year of 2006 the manager has taken a step back in order to evaluate the employees and to see how much responsibility they take on their own behalves when they are not assigned a specific task According to the manager this has been done in order to better understand the employees, but
also to recognize any organisational problems. The company’s business concept is to be the small company with immense resources positioned towards special and complex transportations. The company’s main focus is on the size of the freight and nurturing of the service and punctuality with the objective of being a perfect partner for the customers.

According to the respondent the cooperation between the employees are working well, but there could be improvements in some areas. The manager says that he would love to have a situation where everyone takes their own responsibility for everything and not only their own specific area. To enhance the cooperation the company will introduce a computer based “chatting” program. The communication inside the company is often of the informal kind. They have financial meetings every month for all employees and then additional meetings with the sales force every two weeks; this part is undergoing an evaluation process at the moment.

According to the manager the overall communication within the company is very open and this not only concerning work related issues.

“It is important to have an open communication and I personally encourage my staff to always speak their mind!” (The manager)

According to the manager the company could progress and develop the organisation in different areas, for example to have a closer connection among the employees and have meetings more often. Another thing that he believes could be improved is the communication between the employees. The respondent feels that although this ought to be done it is not easy to implement as there often is too much work to be done. The company has also tried to use the knowledge of their own workforce and implied a mentor function as some in the personal has a vast experience, and tried to match them with personnel that have less experience in pairs. According to the respondent it has been hard to implement this idea and to make it function well, mostly because some of the employees is not used to work in pairs and instead prefer to work alone. It often has been these employees which have had problems to adopt the new changes according to the manager. But at the same time they have never been pressured and forced into the organisational change, it has more or less been a method of guidance in order to more successfully approach their new business associate. The ambition of the organisation is according to the manager, to have a well functioning organisation that has the ability to offer the customers services of high quality.

Umeå office

Respondent A and claim that the internal cooperation in the company works well, everyone is located close to each other and due to this the respondents claims that the openness and the possibility for a good communication are in reach. Respondent B claims that the group of employees is very cohesive seeing as the majority has been involved since the founding of Company 2.

“We have a very positive crew at this company. “ (C)

C and B claims that the communications between the employees are functioning well and that it is mainly done trough the intranet, email or verbally. There are also plans to invest in a new computer program that would work in the same way as a chat-room. This should help increase the communication further according to B. D says that the company have an intranet system which is supposed to function as a way to receive and give information within the company. The negative thing is that you never go in to check the latest information says D. On the other hand C claims that there are always things that the company can improve in, the lack of communication between the different offices are one factor which C thinks is evident to clarify. The internal communication is one concern which A, D and E feels could be improved.

“You have to sit alone and even make decisions which you are not fully entitled to make!”(D)
Regarding the cooperation within the company, respondent D and E claims that this is an area that functions very poorly. D feels that the employees are not at all involved with each other. The only one, one D could turn to is the other transportation supervisor. This is mainly due to the large work burden, when all of them have little time to assist one another. Respondent D feels that the working conditions have become worse within the organisation.

"You have to have someone to discuss your ideas with otherwise you get to be crazy" (D)

E claims that it would be of great help if the employees could discuss different ideas and solutions with one another. Further D claims that if you would have something on your mind you could bring this subject up for discussion, simple things such as how we feel in the working environment, how everything is proceeding and developing! But nothing of this sort exist right now, states D. You just keep going!

"If you ask someone here something, no one give you a proper respond mainly because they do not care!" (E)

D, E and A says that the contact between the employees and the joint owners has decreased. D claims that it is really hard to get in touch with the joint owners and nowadays there are not any meetings with the employees.

"You never get to know anything until the last minute." (D)

E claim that it has been a big transition, in comparison of former jobs, were E had a better contact with the owners and felt this to be of importance for the company. According to respondent D customers today have difficulties to get in contact with people at company 2 this depending on the amount of phone calls which the transport supervisors have each day. This also means that it is hard to carry out your work successfully states D, something that has created frustration among both employees and customers. On the question on the customer demands and influence, respondent B and A claims that most demands are set by the customer. Although, B also states that they always try to have a dialogue so that problems are dealt with and both parts can benefit from each transport solution. Respondent B and A feels that the company are equipped with the right resources to solve a number of transportation problems since they have a vehicle park that enables their business concept. Nothing is impossible. The customers can feel secure and if any problems would arise, help is only a phone call away.

C claims that there are different alignments in the company were everyone has to be an expert in their special section, that is why the company is divided in their different areas. In the administration section you are not as closely attached to your specific area and you have the benefit of being more open towards the other sections within the company. You always try to keep yourself updated to be able to help out and not to be totally fixed argues C.

Skellefteå office

Respondent G and H feel as a part of the company and are very found of the work. G believes that the co-operation between the employee’s functions well in accordance to the present situation, with a very high work phase. Further on respondent F states that there is a great demand for better involvement from all personal that is involved within the company.

G and H claim that it is very hard to get in contact with the other colleagues, especially with the ones who are not located in the same office. G argues that this is mostly due to the fact that they are more or less constantly talking on the phone. Also in this area, the communication does not work out for the best, mainly since the phones are occupied all the time. I have the ability to speak with the co-workers here in Skellefteå, but my contact person in Umeå is someone who I want to have a better communication with says H. Problem arises with the lack of communication when the same work is done twice.

"The communication between us employees is more or less zero!" (H)
Respondent H is very positive towards the new Intranet chatting program and believes that this will increase the communication between the employees. This is something that is vital for us here at the company.

Respondent F claims that the company’s competitive advantage is the local connection to the north part of Sweden and the fact that this does not mean that the service has to be local. The customers are not the one who has to fight for themselves instead the company is there to help them. H claims that it is challenging to work with demanding customers and the aim of being first to take the next step within the transportation business. H states that the job means to handle many tasks at ones and the struggle of making all of them to fit together. F has been working in the transportation industry for many years and during this time the communication has changed to a wider extent. Today the ability to use mobile phones and the overall speed of a high tech business world has created a situation which demands quick decisions and answers, as well as more uncertainty. There is an overall shorter time between a booking of a transport to the actual delivery of the service and to obtain the final result. G has a gigantic network in the phone book an advantage is the contact with other companies and haulage contractors which provide the company with a cutting edge.

“You have a phonebook filled with names and numbers to colleges and drivers, which comes very useful whenever there is something that needs to be arranged.” (G)

5.3 Analysis of Organisation & Network

The manager (President)

In the last year of 2006 the manager has taken a step back in order to evaluate the employees and to see how much responsibility they take on their own behalves when they are not assigned a specific task. According to the manager this has been done in order to better understand the employees, but also to recognize any organisational problems. According to McGrath & Krackhardt (2003, p.325), when an assessment of an organisation is about to take place it is of importance to understand the internal network in the organisation. The reason for this is to comprehend how the employees socialize and function together. Leaders within organisations are most often the initiators and deliverers when a specific change is being implemented. Firms are represented with different attributes and have its influences from many different areas. The external environment is one of the most important influences which also show the level of entrepreneurship in the firm. (Low and MacMillan 1988, p.141). The company has also tried to use the knowledge of their own workforce and implied a mentor function as some in the personal has a vast experience, and tried to match them with personnel that have less experience in pairs. According to the respondent it has been hard to implement this idea and to make it function well, mostly because some of the employees is not used to work in pairs and instead prefer to work alone. It often has been these employees which have had problems to adopt the new changes according to the manager. According to McGrath & Krackhardt (2003, p.328, an identification of the change has to be made by the involved individuals and then the organisation will be able to pursue the change. A according to Lindsley, Brass & Thomas (1995, p.646) and Ropo & Hunt (1995, p.92) the external network is also influenced by the level of the teaching process in the company which in its turn is depended of the entrepreneurial level in the company. Facing new obstacles or undertake new ventures are often connected to the level of entrepreneurship in the firm.

The company’s business concept is to be the small company with immense resources positioned towards special and complex transportations. The company’s main focus is on the size of the freight and nurturing of the service and punctuality with the objective of being a perfect partner for the customers. According to Connell (2001 p.220) larger companies often have the ability to have more resources and knowledge inside the company in comparison to a smaller company.

According to the manager the overall communication within the company is very open and this not only concerning work related issues.

“It is important to have an open communication and I personally encourage my staff to always speak their mind!” (the manager)
According to the manager the company could progress and develop the organisation in different areas, for example to have a closer connection among the employees and have meetings more often. Another thing that the manager believes could be improved is the communication between the employees. The respondent feels that although this ought to be done it is not easy to implement as there often is too much work to be done. According to Connell (2001, p.220) the fact is that small companies often have a flatter organisation which helps them to easily communicate inside the company and rapidly introduce changes.

They have financial meetings every month for all employees and then additional meetings with the sales force every two weeks; this part is undergoing an evaluation process at the moment. According to Minguzzi & Passaro (2000, p.185), small firms learning procedure is not a planned process this in opposite to larger firms which is known to have developed and formal constructions with both the external and internal factors in cooperation with one another. According to Connell (2001, p.220) larger companies often have the ability to have more resources and knowledge inside the company in comparison to a smaller company. The fact is that small companies often have a flatter organisation which helps them to easily communicate inside the company and rapidly introduce changes.

**Uméa office**

C and B claims that the communications between the employees are functioning well and that it is mainly done trough the intranet, email or verbally. On the other hand C claims that there are always things that the company can improve in, the lack of communication between the different offices are one factor which C thinks is evident to clarify. The internal communication is one concern which A, D and E feels could be improved. Connell (2001, p.220) claims that small companies have a flatter organisation which helps them to easily communicate inside the company and rapidly introduce changes.

C claims that there are different alignments in the company were everyone has to be an expert in their special section, that is why the company is divided in their different areas. You always try to keep yourself updated to be able to help out and not to be totally fixed argues C. Connell (2001, p.220) claims that in an organisation you will find a large number of specific skills and abilities concentrated in a small environment. Hatch (1997, p. 162) claims that the organisation could be seen as an integration of a number of individuals which transforms them into a group, often to perform a joint task.

Regarding the cooperation within the company, respondent D and E claims that this is an area that functions very poorly. D feels that the employees are not at all involved with each other. The only one, one D could turn to is the other transportation supervisor. This is mainly due to the large work burden, when all of them have little time to assist one another. Respondent D feels that the working conditions have become worse within the organisation. McGrath & Krackhardt (2003, p.325), claims that, when assessing an organisation it is of importance to understand the internal network in the organisation. The reason for this is to comprehend how the employees socialize and function together. The different connections between the members are vital to analyse, this in order to receive information of the organisation as a whole unit. When a change within an organisation is about to take place, a general view over the network and its formation is necessary, this in order to facilitate managers with significant information.

On the question on the customer demands and influence, respondent B and A claims that most demands are set by the customer. According to Lindsley, Brass & Thomas (1995, p.646) and Ropo & Hunt (1995, p.92) the external factors are dominated by the interaction of the market and the company. These features determine the level of competitiveness within the company, firms that are not capable to apprehend these factors will be suspended form the market.

Although, B also states that they always try to have a dialogue so that problems are dealt with and both parts can benefit from each transport solution. Respondent B and A feels that the company are equipped with the right resources to solve a number of transportation problems since they have a vehicle park that enables their business concept. Nothing is impossible. The customers can feel secure and if any problems would arise, help is only a phone call away. According to Minguzzi and Passaro (2000, p.185) who argues the importance of the economic surroundings. The firm is represented with different attributes and has its influences from many different areas. The external environment is one of the most important influences which also show the level of entrepreneurship in the firm.
**Skellefteå office**

According to F there is a great demand for better involvement from all personal who are surrounding the company. Respondent F claims that the company's competitive advantage is the local connection to the north part of Sweden and the fact that this does not mean that the service has to be local. The customers are not the one who has to fight for themselves instead the company is there to help them. From the theory by Lindsley, Brass & Thomas (1995, p.646) and Ropo & Hunt (1995, p.92) the external network is also influenced by the level of the teaching process in the company which in its turn is depended of the entrepreneurial level in the company.

The communication within the organisation is very poor and is of urgent need of improvement argues H. Problems arise with the lack of communication when the same work is done twice. Connell claims that (2001, p.220) small companies often have a flatter organisation which helps them to easily communicate inside the company and rapidly introduce changes.

Respondent F claims that the company’s competitive advantage is the local connection to the north part of Sweden and the fact that this does not mean that the service has to be local. The customers are not the one who has to fight for themselves instead the company is there to help them. H claims that it is challenging to work with demanding customers and the aim of being first to take the next step within the transportation business. H states that the job means to handle many tasks at once and the struggle of making all of them to fit together. F has been working in the transportation industry for many years and during this time the communication has changed to a wider extent. Lindsley, Brass & Thomas (1995, p.646) and Ropo & Hunt (1995, p.92) claims that facing new obstacles or undertake new ventures are often connected to the level of entrepreneurship in the firm, the company generally has a greater confidence if there is a high level of entrepreneurship present. When entrepreneurship prolongs in the company, the firm’s culture and furthermore the growth of the company will be determined, the external environment then offers the company a greater ability to be competitive.

G has a gigantic network in the phone book an advantage is the contact with other companies and haulage contractors which provide the company with a cutting edge. A coresponding to Lindsley, Brass & Thomas (1995, p.646) and Ropo & Hunt (1995, p.92) the external factors are dominated by the interaction of the market and the company. These features determine the level of competitiveness within the company, firms that are not capable to apprehend these factors will be suspended from the market.

**Conclusion of the analysis:**

The respondents as well as the manager have confirmed a common communication problem within the organisation. Some of the respondents claim that this problem is of crucial form and a change is essential to implement in order for the organisation to function in a well manner. An entrepreneurial spirit prolongs through the entire company as the company have to adjust to specific customer demands. Several of the respondents indicate of a well functioning organisation, at the same time some of the respondents claims the opposite. The company is influenced by external factors and is actively working to apprehend the demands of the customers in order to remain competitive.

**Our Conclusion:**

We claim that the biggest problem which the organisation is facing today is the lack of communication between the manager and the employees. The manager believes that by providing the employees with the freedom of deciding their own task gives them an opportunity to be more motivated and free minded. We claim that the opposite situation have occurred since the employees clearly does not approve to this working manner. An improvement of the communication among the employees is also something we claim is vital to uphold in order to be successful within the organisation.
6. Framework concerning Mergers & Acquisition

6.1 Theoretical framework concerning Mergers & Acquisition

6.1.1 Mergers & Acquisition

Mergers are explained as the event when several companies come together as one. An acquisition on the other hand is when one organisation acquires another organisation and still attains the main control. (Dackert, 2001, p.10)

Today this phenomenon is common within companies, as the desire to adapt to the present situation on the market, forces the companies to adjust in able to be competitive. One of the competitive tools can be through an acquisition by a company or a merger between companies.

These two options are today alternatives which companies choose to apply in order to attain economies of scale, achieve diversification, new service offerings or obtain market share advantages (McCann, 1996, p. 835) Mergers and acquisition partners are usually companies which share the same strategic fit, even tough this is an important part this does not make the strategy to be an evident success. Many mergers and acquisitions have a very high failure rate. (Fralicx and Bolster (1997 p.50) claims that a shared culture is the most essential part in a functional merger. Cartwright and Cooper (1993, 59) Schraeder and Self (2003, p.513) states that the initial aims are often not realised due to cultural differences. Merger and acquisition failures are highly influenced by problems caused by the staff, sometimes this impact can be as high as fifty percent of the merger failure. (Dackert, 2001, p.10)

In order to be successful we argue that it is of great importance to look beyond the obvious, the nature of the industry, the products and the vision and mission of the company. It is also important to examine the company further, looking at their approach in work procedures, culture and actual and already achieved objectives. We claim that the culture ought to be one of the important factors when assessing an upcoming acquisition or merger. The synergy effect must also be evaluated in order to enable a successful merger or acquisition. To believe in the new structure vertically in all effected levels, is of uttermost importance to be able to achieve a successful transformation. The studied organisation has gone through a number mergers and acquisitions, therefore we claim that this specific theory is equivalent to our thesis.

According to Devine & Lammiman, (2000, p. 30) All through the integration period when the two companies are being merged, their different work methods and backgrounds which the organisations initially have got, are being united, with a hope of an optimistically positive and creative outcome.

Organisational culture tends to be unique to a particular organisation, composed of an objective and subjective dimension, and concerned with tradition and the nature of common beliefs and expectation concerning the organizational life. (Schraeder & Self (2003) p.512

In accordance to Schraeder and Self, (2003, p.512) organisation needs to share a common culture when it comes to shared values and believes. An integrated culture will provide the organisation with the benefit of a strong cohesion. To become a united culture the necessity of adapting to the current environment is of vital importance, this in order to be able to transform the organisation when changes are taking place. The difficulties in unifying a culture, becomes apparent to an organisation in the occurrence of a merger or acquisition transition. In order to reach a successful merger, an assessment of the organisation should be performed in order to find out the organisations cultural compatibility. But at the same time a certain level of disagreement in opinions can create the opposite effect and generate synergies.

Mergers and acquisitions sometimes comes as a chock to the involved personnel, fears of losing identity within the organisation, layoffs, relocation, and the loss of control are some of the worries which might emerge. Positive reactions which employees might experience are the hope
for new learning experiences of new skills, new objectives and improved processes. When an execution of a merger or an acquisition is about to take place it is important that the implementation of the process is proceeding in a smooth transition. The success of the merger transition is dependent on this initial approach. An aggressive transition would act as a threat to the organisations identity and possible create a bad sentiment towards the new opposed organisation. (Schraeder & Self, 2003, p.513)

One of the difficulties with integrations of firms, is the compatibility of the diverse business strategies within the organisations. These differences generate the biggest challenges for all involved personnel when an opposition against new methods usually are hard to revise. These obstacles are able to intensify depending on how large the differences are between the organisations, for example, international mergers and the size of the organisation. Devine & Lammiman, (2000, p. 30)

How the power is executed and managed is central in the implementing process of the merger. The obtained status in the hierarchy, which the managers' reaches, can be of significant importance in the level of successfulness. The manager is responsible to solve conflicts which may arise when the principal differences in the company becomes apparent. (Buono et al., 1985, p.482).

We argue that it is important to acknowledge the change within an organisation, the management should in an early stage be able to cope and integrate the employees in the new transpired situation. We claim that it is of greatest importance to be legible to all involved parties to make the transition process smoother. When being legible from the commencement of the merger everyone is able to adjust to the new situation and able to integrate to new organisation. Cartwright and Cooper (1993, p.58) claims that the organisational culture is a difficult entity to modify and transform, as it is not meant to be altered. At the same time there are ways to change organisations if they are somewhat alike. Particular strong organisational cultures are the ones that can be hard to revise. Big differences between the companies becomes much more apparent when the merger is taking place and these diversities can highlight the weakest elements from each of the companies, which creates difficulties in a merger, with a high failure rate. The strength within an organisation also shows the type of bond between the employees. Organisational cultural mixtures have been the foundation of many after effects such as change in behaviour and episodes when managers are being held responsible of the new events by the employees.

It is the manager's responsibility to see to it that the merger is successfully accomplished. There are some key methods which the managers should implement, integration of the employees, acknowledgement of progress and a regular feedback on the achievements. (Appelbaum et al (2000, p.649) According to Appelbaum et al (2000, p.650) an open communication among the employees and the manager is of high significance, this to undermine stress among the unwitting employee’s and the possible conflicts which may arise. A detailed and specified plan of how the merger process will take place and which possible new changes which might occur, will simplify the integration process further for all involved parties.
According to Schraeder and Self, (2003, p.517) the Human Resource perspective is something to acknowledge and pursue during the entire merger or acquisition process. By conducting the HR perspective the personnel will receive more knowledge throughout the procedure and become better informed of strategies and goals of the new company. In the merger and acquisition process there might be a need of repositioning some of the employee assignments. The new merged company requires for new knowledge and expertise, in some of the cases this will end up in layoffs. The acceptance level of layoffs and repositioning will increase, if the employees have got the information beforehand. New assignments demands for preparation and education of the employees, getting the employees prepared in an early stage increases and results in a smoother transition for all involved parties. Marks and Mirvis (1992, p.23) also suggest building of teams, this can create a us vs. them spirit, which can result in a positive motivation and encouragement for the employees. Schraeder and Self, (2003, p.518) also propose for an outside consultant to be hired, a external view can be of need when it comes to educate personnel for upcoming work tasks and also inform management of culture assembling in terms of the merger. Kouzes & Posner (1990, p.30) argues that Top management has to give the perception of being highly credible and trustworthy towards their personnel. When achieving a mutual trust towards the employee’s, top management will more effortlessly persuade personnel of the new events to be of positive nature.

Schweiger and DeNisi, (1991, p.111) claims that employees which have experienced a merger or acquisition often reacted with some kind of anxiety, most commonly with stress related syndromes. The syndromes could be associated with the new upcoming arrangements which the organization has went trough and would be present even tough the two merging organisations had cultural similarities. Schweiger and DeNisi (1991, p.112) Elliot and Maples (1991, p.109) argued that the stress related syndromes could be helped by the management with different kinds of arrangements such as workshops together with the employees. This could function as a helpful tool to overcome the problems surrounding mergers and acquisitions.

In accordance to Schweiger and DeNisi (1991, p.111) above mentioned statements, we argue that the stress related factor certainly would be of impact on any major organisational change. The importance of being legible and also involve the affected employees in different kinds of workshops as stated by Elliot and Maples (1991, p.109) are something we claim could be vital in order to achieve a more positive integration process.
6.2 Empirical data concerning Mergers & Acquisitions

The manager

Although the mergers were preceded during a rather short time period the process to implement the situation was continuous. The employees had many questions asserts the manager, and acted quite cautious, but the respondent said that it worked out well and as they focused to have an open dialog problems was easily solved.

“I try to solve the problems from the merger as they occur.” (The manager)

The respondent claims that the fact that the people who were involved in the merger already knew each other benefited situations when problems occurred. Another thing that affected the company after the merger was the fact that parts of the workforce had there own ways of achieving their results. This way of working was not inline with the manager’s beliefs and was something that he changed into a unanimous way of working.

One benefit subsequent to the mergers has been that the new company have obtained the possibility to reject certain customers. The reason behind this was the fact that they requested more than they offered, which did not benefit the company. The respondent have identified some negative impacts following the merger, one of them was the ability to control the larger workforce which had been created. The changes which the respondent wanted to obtain took longer time then premeditated as well as the effects.

Umeå office

The merger to create company 2 was never discussed among the employees at company 1 before the actual merger, it was a fact which they had to accept and adapt to when that day arrived claims D. Respondent A claims that the merger with Skellefteå was the one which affected the organisation the most. Mainly because A felt there was a major difference between the two organisations regarding culture and work. According to B there had been cooperation between Skellefteå and Umeå before, but along with the merger another form of teamwork appeared. The persons within the two companies came to look at another in a different way.

Respondent C claims that the first reaction towards the merger and acquisition was that it was a positive refreshing event. The personal was informed about the new company, before the actual start, and it where no mayor problems, as most of them already knew each other form before. Respondent C claims that there where smaller fears against each other in the commencement process of the merger.

When it comes to the mergers and how it has affected the work, respondent C said that it seemed to be bigger differences in terms of work strategies between Umeå and Skellefteå. Respondent C also believed that the people from Skellefteå had a harder time to adjust to the fact they where a part of company 2 in Umeå, as they had other ways of doing things and a more hierarchal structure.

Respondent D thought that it was hard to understand who you worked for in the beginning of the transfer.

One day I was at company 1 and the other at company 2, and the most frightful thing about that was that this information was given to me by others who knew about the merger!! (D)

According to A, B, C and D the merger created a lot of double work, when everything had to be done twice, this due to the fact that is was two different companies, who handled things in different ways. One of the major problems which arose when the merger with Skellefteå was final, was that the customers had different agreements with both companies in Umeå and
Skellefteå. Legitimate problem arouse, when the assessment based on which of them should be valid?

"The different owners also affected the company, in the beginning it was more of an “us against you” spirit, although it was getting better as time went by." (A)

D thinks that the company have been growing too large in a faster phase than it should, in order to maintain beneficial settings for the employees. D adds that it also was not a good idea to divide company 2, D claims that the company has grown to be too big for its own benefit. B points out that they still run two different computer systems, one for company 1 and another for company 2. This creates problems with sending invoices and sometimes company 1 gets things that should have gone to company 2 and vice versa. This also creates confusion among the customers who have hired company 1, but then receives an invoice from company 2. This will however be taken care of with the implementation of the new computer system that will be in use from the beginning of 2007. According to B customers have had the problem of not knowing if they have been in contact with Skellefteå or Umeå, or where the person that they have spoken with currently is.

C s mayor difficulty in terms of the merger was to see the areas and examine were they belonged and to who? In the beginning it felt like they stole our transports, but after a while most people adjusted themselves to the new situation. People in the organisation now have to think differently, the reality is that it is one united company. When reflecting of the customer aspect, the most difficult thing for them has been to now know which company they have hired, company 1 or company 2, this can create difficulties in terms of the invoices. But otherwise C had no problem when adjusting to the new organisation.

B wants to involve the company so that they come closer to one and other. B stresses the importance of “us” as opposed to “we-and-them”. B thinks that the best way to achieve this is to have an open climate and good communication which should exist on every level trough out the company.

According to respondent B, the employees are used to do much of the work as a habit, but due to the company’s wish to be flexible much stress has come from unclear guidelines on whom to ask about prices and other inputs. This creates a lot of impatience and tension due to the employees’ unwillingness not wanting to invent the wheel twice.

Skellefteå office

F was working at the company when the merger occurred and where also responsible for handling the transfer in Skellefteå. Even if the culture differs between the two companies F, states that the cultural differences between the two offices, did not make the process difficult, this since the employees were aware of the approaching merger. Respondent G and the other employees were informed about the merger over night. The first impression at the start of the new organisation was according to G and H very positive. Both of the owners from organisation Q were well known by both G and H since many years, which made the transition smother. H claims that it was not a big surprise when the merger between the two organisations in Skellefteå and Umeå was executed. According to respondent H the merger has provided with both positive and negative impacts. Positive aspects with the merger is the fact that H and G have more colleagues to share the large work burden with and are also experiencing the work to be more challenging nowadays with more demanding customers.

According to F there have been a problem when there have not been the same commitment between the employees in their way of acting and producing within the company. Mainly the fact that there are three different offices with different structures that are doing more or less the same things creates great tensions. In the beginning of the transition the biggest problem according to H, was in how to identify where the customers belonged, if they belonged to company 1 or company 2. This problem was solved after a while, argues H but where at the time very difficult, time-consuming and probably a bit annoying for the customers says H. Another stressful issue which H and G experienced was the major uncertainty of were the company would be located,
H and the others did not know if they were to stay in Skellefteå or move to Umeå. One other problem according to H and G was the question of whom they were working for: was it the manager or company 1.

"It might be easier to just belong to company 1 argues H."

Respondent G was against the changes made in the new computer system, this since they had to work with two different systems depending on the situation. This is something that will change and has been a negative part of the merger. Both company 1 and company 2 have according to respondent G made something positive of the merger and created a more solid company.

Respondent H believes that the organisation in Umeå benefited a lot by merger the company in to one. One of the main reasons for this thought was that the office in Skellefteå already had a very solid base of customers, which Umeå now also received. An actual benefit of the official merger is that there will be one new employee, something that respondent H experience to be necessary. The greatest difference which H has noticed is that there are fewer co-workers in Skellefteå to share and discuss your ideas due to this you have to be available all the time says H.

"You are more or less available any time of the day, it is almost sickening." (H)

H claims that in order to make the merger work out in the best manner, it is important not to create an us Vs them situation. It is crucial to give and take between each other in order to overcome negative situations. There is no right location for the company but there is a need to create a mutual understanding. It should be one organisation and not three. F would like to create sections where people with the same responsibilities are gathered so that they easily can help each other and not stress the others. Something F feels today can be a big problem since it is easy to be affected by others and their stress.

6.3 Analysis of Mergers & Acquisitions

The manager

Although the mergers were preceded during a rather short time period the process to implement the situation was continuous. The employees had many questions asserts the manager, and acted quite cautious, but the respondent said that it worked out well and as they focused to have an open dialog problems was easily solved. According to Schweiger and DeNisi (1991, p.111) Mergers and acquisitions sometimes comes as a chock to the involved personnel, fears of losing identity within the organisation, layoffs, relocation, and the loss of control are some of the worries which might emerge. Buono et al., (1985, p.482) claims that it is the manager’s responsibility to see to it that the merger is successfully accomplished. There are some key methods which the managers should implement, integration of the employees, acknowledgement of progress and a regular feedback on the achievements. According to (Schweiger, DeNisi, 1991, p.111), an open communication among the employees and the manager is of high significance, this to undermine stress among the unwitting employee's and the possible conflicts which may arise. A detailed and specified plan of how the merger process will take place and which possible new changes which might occur, will simplify the integration process further for all involved parties.

The manager claims that the fact that the people who were involved in the merger already knew each other benefited situations when problems occurred. Another thing that affected the company after the merger was the fact that parts of the workforce had their own ways of achieving their results. This way of working was not inline with the respondents beliefs and was something that he changed into a unanimous way of working. According to Devine & Lammiman, 2000, p. 30) all through the integration period when the two companies are being merged, their different work methods and backgrounds which the organisations initially have got, are being united, with a hope of an optimistically positive and creative outcome.

One benefit subsequent to the mergers has been that the new company have obtained the possibility to reject certain customers. The reason behind this was the fact that they requested more than they offered, which did not benefit the company. The respondent have identified
some negative impacts following the merger, one of them was the ability to control the larger workforce which had been created. The changes which the respondent wanted to obtain took longer time than premeditated. Cartwright and Cooper (1993, p. 58) states that the initial aims are often not realised due to cultural differences. Merger and acquisition failures are highly influenced by problems caused by the staff, sometimes this impact can be as high as fifty percent of the merger failure.

**Umeå office**

The merger to create company 2 was never discussed among the employees at company 1 before the actual merger, it was a fact which they had to accept and adapt to when that day arrived claims D. Respondent A claims that the merger with Skellefteå was the one which affected the organisation the most. Mainly because A felt there was a major difference between the two organisations regarding culture and work. Many mergers and acquisitions have a very high failure rate. (Fralicx and Bolster (1997 p.50) claims that a shared culture is the most essential part in a functional merger.

According to B there had been cooperation between Skellefteå and Umeå before, but along with the merger another form of teamwork appeared. The persons within the two companies came to look at another in a different way. Buono et al., (1985, p.482) argues that the organisational culture tends to be unique to a particular organisation, composed of an objective and subjective dimension, and concerned with tradition and the nature of common beliefs and expectation concerning the organizational life. B wants to involve the company so that they come closer to one and other. B stresses the importance of “us” as opposed to “we-and-them”. B thinks that the best way to achieve this is to have an open climate and good communication which should exist on every level through out the company. A according to (Devine & Lammiman, 2000, p.30 A II through the integration period when the two companies are being merged, their different work methods and backgrounds which the organisations initially have got, are being united, with a hope of an optimistically positive and creative outcome.

Respondent C claims that the first reaction towards the merger and acquisition was that it was a positive and refreshing event. Buono (1985, p.482) claims that positive reactions which employees might experience in a merger are the hope for new learning experiences of new skills, new objectives and improved processes. When an execution of a merger or an acquisition is about to take place it is important that the implementation of the process is proceeding in a smooth transition. The success of the merger transition is dependent on this initial approach.

Respondent C said that it seemed to be bigger differences in terms of work strategies between Umeå and Skellefteå. Respondent C also believed that the people from Skellefteå had a harder time to adjust to the fact they where a part of company 2 in Umeå, as they had other ways of doing things and a more hierarchical structure. According to A, B, C and D the merger created a lot of double work, when everything had to be done twice, this due to the fact that is was two different companies, who handled things in different ways. Cartwright and Cooper (1993, p. 58) claims that big differences between the companies becomes much more apparent when the merger is taking place and these diversities can highlight the weakest elements from each of the companies, which creates difficulties in a merger, with a high failure rate.

According to respondent B, the employees are used to do much of the work as a habit, but due to the company’s wish to be flexible much stress has come from unclear guidelines on whom to ask about prices and other inputs. This creates a lot of impatience and tension due to the employees’ unwillingness not wanting to invent the wheel twice. One of the difficulties with integrations of firms, is the compatibility of the diverse business strategies within the organisations. These differences generate the biggest challenges for all involved personnel when an opposition against new methods usually are hard to revise. These obstacles are able to intensify depending on how large the differences are between the organisations, for example, international mergers and the size of the organisation.(Buono et al., 1985, p.482).

Respondent C claims that there where smaller fears against each other in the commencement process of the merger.

*One day I was at company 1 and the other at company 2, and the most frightful thing about that was that this information was given to me by others who knew about the merger!* (D)
Schweiger and DeNisi (1991, p.110) claimed that employees which have experienced a merger or acquisition often reacted with some kind of anxiety, most commonly with stress related syndromes. It is the manager’s responsibility to see to it that the merger is successfully accomplished. There are some key methods which the managers should implement, integration of the employees, acknowledgement of progress and a regular feedback on the achievements. According to Schweiger and DeNisi (1991, p.110-111) an open communication among the employees and the manager is of high significance, this to undermine stress among the unwitting employee’s and the possible conflicts which may arise. A detailed and specified plan of how the merger process will take place and which possible new changes which might occur, will simplify the integration process further for all involved parties.

Skellefteå office

Even if the culture differs between the two companies, F states that the cultural differences between the two offices, did not make the process difficult, this since the employees were aware of the approaching merger. Many mergers and acquisitions have a very high failure rate. (Fralicx and Bolster (1997 p.50) claims that a shared culture is the most essential part in a functional merger. Respondent G and the other employees were informed about the merger over night. According to Buono (1985) an aggressive transition would act as a threat to the organisations identity and possible create a bad sentiment towards the new opposed organisation. The first impression at the start of the new organisation was according to G and H very positive. Buono (1985, p.482) argues that positive reactions which employees might experience are the hope for new learning experiences of new skills, new objectives and improved processes.

According to F there have been a problem when there have not been the same commitment between the employees in their way of acting and producing within the company. Mainly the fact that there are three different offices with different structures that are doing more or less the same things creates great tensions. Fralicx and Bolster 1997 p.50 claims that a shared culture is the most essential part in a functional merger. Mergers and acquisition partners are usually companies which share the same strategic fit, even tough this is an important part this does not make the strategy to be an evident success. Many mergers and acquisitions have a very high failure rate. Cartwright and Cooper (1993, p.58) states that the initial aims are often not realised due to cultural differences. A stressful issue which H and G experienced was the mayor uncertainty of were the company would be located, H and the others did not know if they were to stay in Skellefteå or move to Umeå. One other problem according to H and G was the question of whom they where working for was it the manager or company 2. According to Buono (1985, p.482), organisation needs to share a common culture when it comes to shared values and believes. An integrated culture will provide the organisation with the benefit of a strong cohesion. To become a united culture the necessity of adapting to the current environment is of vital importance, this in order to be able to transform the organisation when changes are taking place. The difficulties in unifying a culture, becomes apparent to an organisation in the occurrence of a merger or acquisition transition.

Respondent H believes that the organisation in Umeå benefited a lot by merger the company in to one. One of the main reasons for this thought was that the office in Skellefteå already had a very solid base of customers, which Umeå now also received. An actual benefit of the official merger is that there will be one new employee, something that respondent H experience to be necessary. The greatest difference which H has noticed is that there are fewer co-workers in Skellefteå to share and discuss your ideas due to this you have to be available all the time says H.

H claims that in order to make the merger work out in the best manner, it is important not to create an us Vs them situation. It is crucial to give and take between each other in order to overcome negative situations. It should be one organisation and not three. In accordance to Buono (1985, p.482), organisation needs to share a common culture when it comes to shared values and believes. A n integrated culture will provide the organisation with the benefit of a strong cohesion. To become a united culture the necessity of adapting to the current environment is of vital importance, this in order to be able to transform the organisation when changes are taking place. The difficulties in unifying a culture, becomes apparent to an organisation in the occurrence of a merger or acquisition transition.
Conclusion of the analysis:
Due to the fact that the mergers were preceded during a rather short time period all of the respondents including the management have been affected by the transition. The mergers have resulted in both negative and positive aspects such as difficulties in customer relations, internal communication, benefits of additional personnel and employment safety ness. The employees were familiar with each other before the actual mergers which have made the transition easier since they knew and trusted each other mainly on behalf of the management. Still major differences became evident since cultural differences appeared between the two offices as well as differences in terms of work strategies.

Our Conclusion:
We claim that the merger has played a mayor impact on the company in many areas. Some of the main difficulties which we identified were the fact that the merger never was discussed thoroughly between the management and the employees. This in its turn created stress and other related effects when the employees were confused of which company they belonged to. The cultural differences between the offices which also became evident, due to the merger were something that could have been avoided to a greater extent if discussed and acknowledged in advance.
7. Framework concerning Family firms

7.1 Theoretical Framework concerning Family firms

7.1.1 Family firms

The definition of a family firm is usually described as a company which have got family members who own more than 50% of the shares within the company and the business is governed by a family member. (Westhead, 2003, p.95)

Although the studied organisation is not perceived as a family firm in practice, the operating company is run by two s with a strong personal involvement in most of the decision making in the company. Due to this we are able to perceive the studied company as a family firm depending on the strong connection and influence which the two managers have on the organisation.

A unique recognized business can describe the family firm. (Westhead, 2003, p.94) A great deal of all independent firms can be seen as family firms, in which sense family firms are very complex and not to be perceived as an homogenous entity in comparison to first generation family firms.

As many firms originally was founded by a family and evolve through generations. (Poutziouris, 2003 p.206)

A family firm have three intertwined factors, these can create difficulties. The factors consist of the owner, the family and the management. Family firms have a tendency to achieve their main objectives, bearing in mind the factors, which can create complex tension when all of the parties are involved at the same time. (Hoy & Verser, 1994, p.12)

The apparent ownership within the organisation may create tensions among the present owners as there might be different opinions concerning the objectives which the company proclaims. The above mentioned factors may create difficulties which have the possibility to interfere in the ongoing process within the organisation.

Some of the main objectives within a family firm are the prospect of passing on the firm to the next generation, this ability offers many advantages such as inside knowledge, loyalty and trust which are key components within a family firm. This element should be taken in consideration when it comes to the aims of profit making. Consequences with family involvement, is the difficulty of separating work and family issues. (Westhead, 2003, p.94)

Expanding a business is generally not the main objective within a family firm, maintain independency is most often the main ambition. A resistance of not expanding a family business might be the fear of being acquired by a bigger company and thereby loose their power. Instead the owners govern the company in the best suitable way in which they are still able to maintain control of the company. (Goffee & Scase 1985, p.66) According to Westhead and Cowling (1997, p.33) the executives of a family firm most often have the following objectives, providence of work to family members, wealth, status in the society and the ability to pass the business on to family members.

Entrepreneurship is one important aspect to reflect upon within a family firm, if this is attained the company can be able to improve their service or products and also increase the productivity and revenue. (Zahra, Hayton & Salvato, 2004, p.363) These factors are vital to the family firm in order to remain competitive within their industry. But the reality shows another picture, many family firms are becoming more and more conservative as times goes by. Reluctance towards more and innovative changes is usually connected towards the fear of a letdown. (Zahra, Hayton & Salvato, 2004, p.364) The possibility of putting the company into bankruptcy is a serious factor which the companies bear in mind before making a decision concerning entrepreneurship. Conservative approaches are also usually related to the company’s organisational culture. (Sharma, Chrisman, Pablo & Chua, 2001, p.30).
The organisational culture represents the ideals, aspiration and historical motives which manages the organisation towards their particular approach. These organisational values replicates and form the organisational culture and will verify the organisations willingness towards entrepreneurial actions. (Zahra, Hayton & Salvato, 2004, p.364)

A study concerning the correlation between the family firms culture and their approach towards entrepreneurial activities, advocate the importance of endorsement when it comes to entrepreneurship. These activities might give the firm an advantage to other competitive companies by focusing on a (RBV) resource based view. (Chua, Chrisman & Steier, 2003, p.333) The culture within a family firm is difficult for competitive companies to imitate. This due to their uniqueness and distinctiveness associated with the family firm. (Chua, Chrisman & Steier, 2003, p.336)

There have been several studies which have proclaimed that, the individual organizational members, family subsystem and the business subsystem have distinctive relations between them which create exclusive competences and resources. These interactions have been referred to as familyness, which in its turn might result in a competitive advantage, this will distinguish the family firm from its rivals. (Zahra, Hayton & Salvato, 2004, p.367) According to Zahra, Hayton and Salvato (2004, p.367-368) the organisational culture within family firms in Sweden, have the ability to adjust these essential alterations.

The strong correlation between both of the owners can result in a competitive advantage for the new organisation. When there are two strong different influences within the organisation there could be problems when creating a well functioning common culture. The positive aspect of the change is only of successful nature if the implementation process is succeeded.

Chua, Chrisman and Steier (2003, p.335) claims that family firms does not show apprehension in terms of making changes, therefore family firms will have a better response within the firm, when alterations are being made.

### 7.2 Empirical data concerning Family firms

**The manager**

The manager believes that the employees views the company as a family firm, much due to the strong culture and influence the respondent and his have had on the company. But at the same time he himself does not perceive the company as a family firm.

The company is partly owned by company 1 and organisation Q but when it comes to the decision making the manager and his are the main influencers and are in charge of the company. The respondent and his have created a situation where the culture is heavily dependent on their values which they have brought in from their old company.

**Umeå office**

Respondent A characterises a family owned company as a company that has a good connection within the organisation and that is renewable. C experiences a company to be a family firm in relation to its size and then preferably a smaller size company. Respondent A and C claim that in the way that you notice that the company is a family owned company is the fact that it is easier to make decisions and that it feels more secure. Further B claims that the company and the other employees show a lot of respect towards each other. It is also easier when you know each other within the company and that you feel belongingness to one another claims both A, B and C. A family business, according to B is quick to do alterations to meet new challenges and have a short chain of command, but does not perceive company 2 as a family owned company.

Respondent C claims that company 2 is a family firm due to its strong cohesion its effectiveness thanks the short distance between the management and the employees. Also the fact that they call upon each others birthdays and other special events even tough Company 1 has a bigger involvement in these areas. Company 2 is not a typical family firm in accordance to respondent
D’s view of the company. This is mainly due to the fact that it is partly owned by company 1 and that you hardly ever see the manager says respondent D.

The characterisation of a family firm according to D is a smaller size company with only one family who is the owner. D claims that it should be easier to come to a decision in a family company and the cohesion should be greater but this is not the case in this company and right now the cohesion does not exist at all. D says that the cohesion used to be present in the company when they used to sit down in the morning for a coffee break and ventilate their ideas.

“You have to ventilate your ideas it is very important, this in order to feel that you can affect the company in a positive way and you feel belongingness to the company.” (D)

Respondent E claims that a family firm is characterised by a relatively small organisation with strong cohabitation. Respondent E claims that it feels like that there are only two people that are working at the company and that is E and one of the other transportation supervisors.

“You never get to hear anything! You do not feel like an important part of the company.” (D)

The market is at the moment very stable, which brings a lot of job opportunities claims B. All of the respondents in Umeå claim that the company are following upcoming demands on the market and that this vital in order to survive in the business. One example is the new computer system which will be implemented and will help the company in keeping control of upcoming tasks but also the necessity to update the fleet of vehicles in order to be able to solve new customer demands. Changes are essential in terms of creating future success. The fact that the company always tries to help the customers with transport solutions makes them very flexible and adjustable to the different requirements.

“You have to adjust if you want to remain in the game says A”

The company have clear goals which company 1 are setting on the company once every other month, states respondent B. Due to these goals we are able to see how, the company is doing. Right now the company is doing very well that we do not have time to think about the old days when it did not go that well says B.

Respondent E claims that it is of importance to adjust the company according to the prevailing market conditions. You have to follow customer demands and at the same time try to check the market of constant changes. Respondent E claims that the financial goal of the company is primarily, set by company 1. E says that once every quarter they have a very diffuse review concerning the whole company, but all the smaller pieces in the company is not something the company run trough. E believes that the managers are to busy to care about the smaller pieces and instead focus on the whole of the company. The financial meetings are often focusing on company 1 and not on company 2, say respondent E.

Skellefteå office

Respondent F think that the company has its special characteristic and own uniqueness as a small company usually have, but at the same time with the same benefits as a big company with major resources and control. The benefits of the smaller company is the ability of making fast decisions but without the alternative of “hiding” among others and instead be able to take responsibility.

“It is a very open climate, where you do not have to be afraid that someone is looking over your shoulders.” (F)

The company has strong visions and strategies which provide respondent F with a feeling of security. Something else respondent F reflects upon is the ability to completely be in control over the work which F is performing and feels that there is great support from the management concerning this. The company is in general very influenced by the entrepreneur culture which originates from the owners as well as their beliefs. This is of great importance and a valid benefit
as organisation Q have long time experience of the industry in question. The company is not seen as a family company by respondent G, who also argues the fact that it is hard to discover the real identity of the company, if it is a joint company or if it is only company 1.

Respondent H’s view of the company is that it is a family firm. H claims that their boss does not feel like a superior towards them as employees. H believes that due to the fact that the manager has been working closely alongside with them for many years with the same kind of duties as them, have created this view of him. H argues the benefit of an open communication with the manager which has given H a lot of freedom in the way of handling the job.

“We trust each other.” (H)

The company have learnt throughout the years to adjust to the ambient demands that are present on the market. This is something that seriously affects company 2 when it comes to updating the fleet of vehicles states F. F claims that the situation of today makes it easy to change supplier or reallocate production due to cost savings. This makes the dialog between company 2 and their customers very essential since they should try to find the optimal solution where both parties are able to make money, argues F. According to F it is important to find reliable customers and then build up a trustworthy relationship where both parties reach a mutual understanding and have a common trust to one another. The industry is constantly under development, with new environmental rules and new machinery. It is important to be at the top but company 2 is not a company that strives to lead the development says F. Also by getting the drivers to focus on the whole picture is an important factor for company 2 according to F.

“It would cost too much in the long run to develop new transportation solutions, instead we let others come up with the solutions and when we see that they work, we are interested of buying them.” (G)

Regarding the adaptation to changes in the market, respondent G claims that the Skellefteå office is very fast in utilising new methods in order to approach the customer demand. The company as a whole is bound to follow changes in the market and are well prepared for this according to respondent G. But respondent G emphasises and is of the strong opinion that the major changes in the market mainly have been in the Skellefteå region. This has forced them to find new solutions and customers, which have been very beneficiary for them. This is something that G thinks the Umeå office should be aware of and could bring positive reactions in Umeå where they still have not had major changes in the market.

F claims that there is a mayor focus on the customers and the fact that the customers are setting the working pace creates a very stressful situation according to F.

“It is important to clean out your desk, when you have time for it, this in order not to be swamped with work.” (G)

One major aspect, which has to be taken to consideration today, especially if you are a logistic firm, is the environmental aspect says G. Today and maybe even more in the future other ways of transports can become more interesting for the customer even though G is of the opinion that the competition will be easy to compete with.

One of the biggest problems according to H is how to handle the payments from the customers. When it comes to charging the customer there are always problems because the customers are also trying to cut their own expenses argues H. The company is according to H one of the leading companies in this specific market, this when being able to perform hard or difficult transports.
7.3 Analysis concerning Family firms

The manager (president)

The manager believes that the employees views the company as a family firm, much due to the strong culture and influence the respondent and his sibling have had on the company. But at the same time he himself does not perceive the company as a family firm. A great deal of all independent firms can be seen as family firms, in which sense family firms are very complex and not to be perceived as an homogenous entity in comparison to first generation family firms. A s many firms originally was founded by a family and evolve through generations. (Poutziouris, 2003 p.206),

The company is partly owned by company 1 and organisation Q but when it comes to the decision making the manager and his are the main influencers and are in charge of company 2. Hoy and Verser (1994, p.12) claims that a family firm have three intertwined factors, which can create difficulties. The factors consist of the owner, the family and the management. Family firms have a tendency to achieve their main objectives, bearing in mind the factors, which can create complex tension when all of the parties are involved at the same time.

The manager and his sibling have created a situation where the culture is heavily dependent on their values which they have brought in from their old company. According to Chua, Chrisman & Steier (2003, p.333) the culture within a family firm is difficult for competitive companies to imitate. This due to their uniqueness and distinctiveness associated with the family firm. (ibid, p.336) Zahra, Hayton & Salvato (2004, p.367) claims that the individual organizational members, family subsystem and the business subsystem have distinctive relations between them which create exclusive competences and resources. According to Westhead (2003, p.95) a definition of a family firm is usually described as a company which have got family members who own more than 50% of the shares within the company and the business is governed by a family member.

Umeå office

Respondent A and C claim that in the way that you notice that the company is a family owned company is the fact that it is easier to make decisions and that it feels more secure. Further B claims that the company and the other employees show a lot of respect towards each other. It is also easier when you know each other within the company and that you feel belongingness to one another claims both A, B and C. Respondent C claims that company 2 is a family firm due to its strong cohesion its effectiveness thanks the short distance between the management and the employees. There have been several studies which have proclaimed that, the individual organizational members, family subsystem and the business subsystem have distinctive relations between them which create exclusive competences and resources. (Zahra, Hayton & Salvato, 2004, p.367). These interactions have been referred to as familyness, which in its turn might result in a competitive advantage, this will distinguish the family firm from its rivals.

A family business, according to B is quick to do alterations to meet new challenges and have a short chain of command. Changes are essential in terms of creating future success. The fact that the company always tries to help the customers with transport solutions makes them very flexible and adjustable to the different requirements claims C. The market is at the moment very stable, which brings a lot of job opportunities claims B. All of the respondents in Umeå claim that the company are following upcoming demands on the market and that this vital in order to survive in the business. Chua, Chrisman and Steier (2003, p.335) claims that family firms does not show apprehension in terms of making changes, therefore family firms will have a better response within the firm, when alterations are being made. According to Zahra, Hayton & Salvato (2004, p.363) entrepreneurship is one important aspect within a family firm, if this is attained the company can be able to improve their service or products and also increase the productivity and revenue. These factors are vital to the family firm in order to remain competitive within their industry.

“You have to adjust if you want to remain in the game says A”

The company have clear goals which Company 1 are setting on the company once every other month, states respondent B. E and D says that once every quarter they have a very diffuse review concerning the whole company, but all the smaller pieces in the company is not something the company run through. E and D believes that the managers are to busy to care about the smaller pieces and instead focus on the whole of the company. The financial meetings are often focusing
on Company 1 and not on Company 2, say respondent E. According to Hoy and Verser (1994, p.12) a family firm have three intertwined factors, which can create difficulties. The factors consist of the owner, the family and the management. Family firms have a tendency to achieve their main objectives, bearing in mind the factors, which can create complex tension when all of the parties are involved at the same time.

**Skellefteå office**

Respondent F think that the company has its special characteristic and own uniqueness as a small company usually have, but at the same time with the same benefits as a big company with major resources and control. The benefits of the smaller company is the ability of making fast decisions but without the alternative of “hiding” among others and instead be able to take responsibility. According to Chua, Chrisman & Steier (2003, p.336) there have been several studies which have proclaimed that, the individual organizational members, family subsystem and the business subsystem have distinctive relations between them which create exclusive competences and resources.

The company has strong visions and strategies which provide respondent F with a feeling of security. Something else respondent F reflects upon is the ability to completely be in control over the work which F is performing and feels that there is great support from the management concerning this. The company is in general very influenced by the entrepreneur culture which originates from the owners as well as their beliefs. This is of great importance and a valid benefit as Organisation Q has long time experience of the industry in question. A study concerning the correlation between the family firms culture and their approach towards entrepreneurial activities, advocate the importance of endorsement when it comes to entrepreneurship. These activities might give the firm an advantage to other competitive companies by focusing on a (RBV) resource based view. The culture within a family firm is difficult for competitive companies to imitate. This due to their uniqueness and distinctiveness associated with the family firm. (Chua, Chrisman & Steier, 2003, p.333)

Respondent Hs view of the company is that it is a family firm. H claims that their boss does not feel like a superior towards them as employees. H believes that due to the fact that the manager has been working closely alongside with them for many years with the same kind of duties as them, have created this view of him. H argues the benefit of an open communication with the manager and also that H has been given a lot of freedom in the way of handling the job. According to Westhead (2003, p.94) some of the main objectives within a family are the ability to offer advantages such as inside knowledge loyalty and trust which are key components within a family firm. This element should be taken in consideration when it comes to the aims of profit making.

"We trust each other:"

The company have learnt throughout the years to adjust to the ambient demands that are present on the market. This is something that seriously affects Company 2 when it comes to updating the fleet of vehicles states F. This makes the dialog between Company 2 and their customers very essential since they try to find the optimal solution where both parties are able to make money, argues F. Zahra, Hayton & Salvato (2004, p.363) daims entrepreneurship is important to reflect upon within a family firm, if this is attained the company can be able to improve their service or products and also increase the productivity and revenue. According to F it is important to find reliable customers and then build up a trustworthy relationship where both parties reach a mutual understanding and have a common trust to one another. The industry is constantly under development, with new environmental rules and new machinery. One major aspect is the environmental part says G, it is important to be at the top but Company 2 is not a company that strives to lead the development says F. Also by getting the drivers to focus on the whole picture is an important factor for Company 2 according to F. The organisational culture represents the ideals, aspiration and historical motives which manages the organisation towards their particular approach. (These organisational values replicates and form the organisational culture and will verify the organisations willingness towards entrepreneurial actions. Zahra, Hayton & Salvato, 2004, p.364)
Conclusion of the analysis:
The respondents overall opinion of the company is that it is not a family owned company in its rightful manner, but at the same time many of the respondents as well as management views the company to be family related due to its strong cohesion with organisation Q. This influence the company on many different areas, some of the respondents claims that it is easier to make decisions and that it feels more secure and a strong cohesion among some of the employees. All of the respondents claim that the company are following upcoming demands on the market and that this vital in order to survive in their business area.

Our conclusion:
We claim that the company is not characterised of being a typical family firm this due to the owner situation. However there is a strong connection with the manager and the company due to the manager's influence and impact over the company. This impact is similar to the one within a family firm and benefits the company with a strong cohesion. The inheritance of a family firm is difficult to pass on in this case which also implies that it might be difficult to interpret the company as a family firm.
8. Framework concerning Corporate culture, Identity & Social identity

8.1 Theoretical framework concerning Corporate culture, Identity & Social identity

8.1.1 Corporate Culture

To illustrate the corporate culture a quotation from Lee, Kim and Yu (2004, p.340) is suitable, a common expression used for describing a special work practice inside an organisation.


We argue that an organisation commonly consist of one dominated culture which permeates through the entire organisation. This phenomenon affects the whole organisation in all different sectors, from work procedures, management behaviour, work environment, work comfort for the employees to the service execution and service satisfaction perceived by the potential customer. We argue that the culture within the company is the main influencer when it comes to the identification process of the specific organisational behaviour especially in situations were the organisations are going through organisational changes.

Corporate culture originates from the fact that the individuals inside an organisation have different ethnical or social backgrounds. Inside an organisation they together build up norms and rules which results in a corporate culture. (Sadri & Lees, 2001, p.853) According to Schein (1988, p.9) cultures inside organisations consist of three different levels, assumptions, values and artefacts. These factors affect and describe the culture inside an organisation. (Hatch, 1997, p.210)

Schein claims that the culture is driven from the core out, the assumptions affect all the other levels. Members from the organisation create values and artefacts which symbolises the cultural core as they are based on the organisations assumptions. (Hatch, 1997, p.217)

Assumptions are the ground and core of the organisational culture, which could be seen as the beliefs inside an organisation. The assumption represents the reality which the members inside the organisation accept as true and what they perceive as important. This constructs the "truth" which permeates through the organisation. The culture does not only consist of one assumption or one belief, the culture is constructed by all the common assumptions and beliefs which the members of the organisation have. (Hatch, 1997, p.213 and Schein 1988, p.9-10) In a company where there are only one or a few individuals in the organisation they create the organisational
culture solitary on their own beliefs. In larger organisations the culture is heavily depending on the originator or the stronger people inside the organisation, often people who have worked there for a long time or the management.

Values are the second level which affects the organisational culture, it consists of the social principles and goals set by members of the group. The values could be democracy, tradition or other principles which the members endorse or believe in. (Hatch, 1997, p.214 & Schein 1988, p.9) Norms are a part of values, these are the unwritten rules which exist in the organisation. The norms express what is expected from the members and how they should behave in certain situations. The values are an extension from the assumptions, and make the culture more alive. (Hatch, 1997, p.216 & Schein 1988, p17)

The artefacts are the tangible things which the organisational members have constructed (Hatch, 1997, p.216) It is important to know that although the artefacts are tangible and often easy to understand they are at the outer limit of the culture and therefore easy to misinterpret, as they often are individuals reflections of the assumptions, they do not have to represent the core of the culture. (Hatch, 1997, p.217 & Schein, 1988, p.11)

Culture do change, this happens when new outside values influence the original culture, most often when top management brings in new values. When individuals share and employ the culture in an organisation the culture could be seen as strong. The culture is broadly accepted and the special “rituals” or work practices are used is the ultimate sign of strong cultural connection. The strength of the culture can also have an effect on the company’s financial result. (Lee, Kim & Yu, 2004, p.341)

A functional merger or acquisitions is not only depending on the economical outcomes and benefits the cultural compatibility is also of great importance. Cultural struggles within an organisation can easily destroy some of the wanted economical benefits, it could also create a unwanted workplace for the employees. (Lund, 2003, p.229)

There is a connection between corporate culture and employee satisfaction. As the workforce today have a higher probability of quitting and changing workplaces in a larger extent compared with earlier generations. Management have to work hard to cultivate the relationship with the employees, this to make them more loyal towards the company and making them to stay as an employee for a longer time period. According to research satisfied employees are more often at work and more likely to stay for a longer time period compared to unsatisfied employees. To achieve this management should focus on creating an environment filled with teamwork cohesion and encouraging people to be innovative and make their voice heard. (Lund, 2003, p.230)

8.1.2 Corporate Identity

During the years there has been a number of definitions of what corporate identity is, in the mid 70:s the definition circled around the logo and the visual appearance of the company, a popular definition where “the firm’s visual statement to the world of who and what the company is - of how the company views itself - and therefore has a great deal to do with how the world views the company.” Defined by Melewar, Bassett and Simões, (2006, p.139)

The definition of corporate identity mentioned earlier has evolved and is today more surrounding the actual culture of the company “Every organisation has an identity. It articulates the corporate ethos, aims and values and presents the sense of individuality that can help to differentiate the organisation within its competitive environment.” (Melewar; Bassett and Simões, 2006, p.139)

The culture in an organisation and the reality the organisation works in are the two factors that affect the corporate identity. The corporate identity is one of the best ways to differentiate an organisation from others. The identity is also regularly one important part of the competitive advantage a company can have. As this identity is a way of conduct in the specific organisation, the common identity involves all personal and links them to the whole organisation. (Haugh &
McKee, 2004, p.380) Corporate identity is constructed by the management’s conduct, the communication inside the organisation but also the image and reputation of the company. (Balmer & Dinnie, 1999, p.184) Corporate identity could also be helpful when it comes to serving stakeholders, declaring their position and how important they are for the organisation. Making employees more motivated as they feel more “at home” can easily relate and feel positive about the company, the identity of the company and the wanted characteristics of the individuals are closely related. The identity could also create more confidence from the companies’ customers or potential customers. (Melewar & Jenkins, 2002, p.76). If the employees can identify with the organisation they will be motivated to perform well and in the long run it will lead to a productive workforce. (Melewar, Bassett & Simões, 2006, p.140)

In merger situations where two or more different corporate identities meet creates tensions as there are problems in declaring which identity is the favourable one, there are also a vast amount of intangible things that has to be considered. An often used approach to help and nurture a merger is to create new partial identities, this could include a new corporate name or a new logotype, which makes the work to create a new united corporate identity easier. (Balmer & Dinnie, 1999 p.184)

Melewar and Jenkins defined in the year of 2002 a model for how the corporate identity is affected and created by a number of factors inside and outside a company. (Melewar & Jenkins, 2002, p.81)

We have chosen to customize the model to fit our case better. The reasons for customizing the original model were that some of the parts could be excluded, the excluded parts are management behaviour, employee behaviour which instead are incorporated in the corporate behaviour. They are all described below, but evaluated in one factor. Nationality is a factor which also has been excluded the reason for this is that the company are stationed in one country and therefore it should not be affected by different nationalities characteristics.

Figure 9: Corporate identity model, authors’ interpretation of Melewar and Jenkins (2002, p.81)
The reason for utilizing this model is to examine the corporate identity in the case of an organisation. By using the model we can find differences among wanted and actual behaviour, see if the whole organisation works against the same goals, if both the identity and culture of the organisation creates competitive advantages for the organisation. The model can also help us to further understand the company and its employees. We are then able to understand if there are any internal problems which could create tensions between management or even among the employees. As it is a service organisation that is investigated it is of great importance that everyone acts in required manners, otherwise the service could be performed with different quality depending on the person performing it, which could result in discontented customers.

To make this model understandable we describe each of the parts below.

- **Corporate Communication:** Involves all communication which originates from the company, which could be marketing and information spread by the management. It involves both internal and external communication.
- **Uncontrolled Communication:** Communication spread by employees or third party information as customers etc. This is communication which is not controlled by the organisation itself.
- **Architecture and Location:** The actual location of the organisation, is the organisation located in areas known to be important for the specific industry, an example is Silicon Valley. This could also concern the layout of the offices, and if they reflect the corporate image.
- **Corporate visual identity:** The visual identity, name, symbol or/ and logotype of the company, if it is known both by employees and customers and if the company is heavily identified with its logotype or a special typography.
- **Corporate Behaviour:** The actions of a company, are they taking environmental responsibilities or working against child labour; ultimately it is evaluated on the actions of the personal and not on what is on a paper.
- **Management Behaviour:** The actions performed by the management and their interaction with stakeholders.
- **Employee Behaviour:** The actions by employees to reach the goals set by management, there could be a difference with how the management would like things to be done and the actual action employees use to reach the wanted result.
- **Corporate Culture:** The behaviour, values and beliefs shared among the employees inside an organisation.
- **Goals, Philosophies and Principles:** The main idea about what makes the company special, what we are and what makes us to be one organisation.
- **Organisational imagery and History:** The corporate culture, company history and if there are some special routines etc.
- **Nature of the industry:** What regulates and controls the market are there any special rules or constraints. This factor could also depend on if the company operates on a growing or decreasing market.

### 8.1.3 Social Identity: (SIT)

Social Identity theory is based on the fact that people often wants to imagine them in a positive manner. Individuals compare themselves and their surroundings trying to find unwanted manners and flaws in groups the individual are not a part of. The social identity is not solely focused on the individual, it is more focused on the individual’s identities within a group and how identities grow inside groups. (Hogg, Abrams, Otten & Hinkle, 2004, p.247)

The individual evaluates itself and establish positive or wanted characteristics/values then the individual strives to find groups with the desired qualities or perceived to have these characteristics. The reason for this is that individuals want to belong to groups which offer him/her an emotionally correct feeling, often concerning principles and social status. The selection and evaluation process is conducted by the individual as it actively compares and evaluates the groups it has a possibility to enter. The behaviour is done in all kinds of situations in life, as every individual have several identities depending on the context, at work at home playing a game etc. When the comparison part is done the individual chooses to enter the group which is the most agreeable and closest to the individuals’ preferences, this group is called the
“in-group” the groups which are not chosen and unwanted the individual is called “out-groups”. The basic principle is that the “in-groups” always is seen as more favourable and more superior when the individual compares them against other groups. The individuals inside a group diminish the differences between themselves by trying to oversee them, the opposite are done towards out-groups where the differences are emphasized. (Terry & O’Brien, 2001, p.272)

**ORGANIZATION A**

As seen in this figure Organization A, consists of 9 sub groups which all is a part of the organization, and connected with each other which creates a internal network. The groups inside the organization could be competing and trying to get the most out of a situation for the specific group’s best and not for the organization as a whole.

Figure 10: Internal groups in an organisation, created by the authors

We claim that organisations which have been trough a merger ought to understand that new individuals will me merged together and considerations has to be acknowledge according to this phenomenon. Individuals and their different behaviour have to be recognized in order to create a common entity between these. The managements are the ones that have to be the initiator of identifying the different individuals in order to create a successful integration process.

According to Haunschild (1994, p.1177) in a merger situation, a new organisational identity and organisation is created. A problem which could be solved by using SIT theories are the fact that in the new organisation there still exist identities from the earlier two or more organisations. There is therefore a risk for internal struggles between the subgroups inside the new organisation, as they try to achieve a positive and leading position within the new organisation. This could create tensions and endanger the success of a merger. In a merger situation the power and status of the groups can change, groups can feel that their “legitimate” or “deserved” power or status has a risk of being affected negatively by the merger, which makes them more hostile to the actual merger. A group with low status or power that might be affected positively, will be more optimistic towards the merger. (Terry & O’Brien, 2001, p.274)

Individuals in groups that perceive there are opportunities for them to create new groups and want to make the move, often accepts the hierarchy and status inside the organisation. They have a chance to move to other groups which are located on a higher status level. These are often also often committed to the whole organisation and not only to there subgroup. We argue that this is important to consider in our case, mainly because of the existents of old organisations and the fact that the organisation are divided in different geographic locations.

The SIT theory is able to explain why groups are strengthened or why individuals leave a group, this due to its capacity to predict and evaluate special circumstances which affects an individual’s choices and actions. This theory is able to explain why some kind of conflicts occurs inside an organisation. Before entering a group both the individual and the group searches for appropriate targets, the individual looks for a group that can contribute to its needs, while the group wants to find an individual which can contribute and help the group to reach their goals. (Hogg & Terry, 2001, p.93) If both parties meet the criteria’s set by the two, the individual enters the group – ENTRY. After this the individual and the group confront each other, to see if they fit, both parties make use of the new constellation. If both recognize a positive development, the individual becomes a full member of the group – ACCEPTANCE. After this the group and the individual keeps on working together to meet the wanted criteria’s set by both parties, if there is a
positive development the connection between the two gets stronger. But if there is a negative
development where the parties are not able to meet each others demands the commitment
deteriorates. This results in a commitment struggle between the individual and the group, this
often results in a situation where the individual loses the full member status – DIVERGENCE.
From this position the two parties try to find a cooperative reaction, if positive the individual
becomes a full member again, if negative the individual leaves the group – EXIT. (Hogg, Terry,
2001, p.94-95)

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\text{TIME}
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\text{ENTRY: EN} \\
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\text{DIVERGENCE: DI} \\
\text{EXIT: EX}
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Figure 11: Group socialization model (Hogg, Terry, 2001, p.95, figure 6.1)

We argue that this model have the ability to help us evaluate if there are any problems within the
organisation concerning the commitment mainly to the organisation as a whole. By utilising this
model the commitment of the workers are to be identified. Also by utilizing the information
from the SIT theory we are able to find internal groupings and how these might affect the
organisation.

Individuals in today's society are usually active in many different spheres, this results in the
situation were the individuals belongs to numerous groups depending on specific preferences,
personalities and life situations. The conclusion of this phenomenon indicates that individuals
have a number of different identities. Based on the in-group out-group phenomenon, people
inside the in-group are given more trust, and the benefit of a doubt in situations, something that
the out-group is not granted as easily. (Hogg, Terry, 2001, p.69)

**8.2 Empirical data concerning Corporate culture, Identity & Social identity**

**The manager (President)**
The culture within the organisation is focused on personal engagement and on the liability of the
workforce, the respondent believes that this has been lost, as the company has grown.

The culture in the company is according to the manager is very strong, mainly due to the
historical strength and the fact that the culture is strongly linked with the actual business. The
respondent views himself as part of the company culture. The culture in Company 2 is something
which the respondent originated from Organisation Q and by that time was to be successful.

"You mediate the company culture with your own personality!"

The company culture also entails the importance of long-term engagement between the
customers and the company. The manager believes that is important that the employees
understand the importance of “word of mouth” and the significance of personal engagements.
I do not want my employees to hide I want them to be focused and be willing to take place, and show commitment.

The manager have not yet identified any special groupings within the company, the only thing that he mentions, are the fact that the employees are divided into groups depending on their business area.

Umeå office
Respondent A claims that others outside of this organisation might experience them and their culture in a certain way which they themselves do not see. The unity within the organisation is something that, A claims that this is something that feels special for the company, they do not feel that they are two different companies.

We are one united company.” (A)

According to respondent D the experienced culture within the company is that the company is not united. The company is shattered and there is no real group unity says D. You work one on one and you do not cooperate with one another. You suffer a lot from this none cooperation and many important links get lost on the way and the most frightened thing is that it is not getting better.

You bust you’re as off all alone and no one helps you out!”(D)

Respondent A does not experience any special group formation within the company except for in the divided business areas. The first impression which respondent A got of the company was the good cohesion between the employees. Respondent A noticed the positive atmosphere when going in to the break room, according to A everyone was cheerful and talked happily with one another. Both respondent A, B and C claims to feel very comfortable at work and thinks it is very challenging and developing. This is also in respondent B’s case related to the fact that the job is extremely stimulating trough the varied assignments and considers this to be quite unique and interesting. A also feels comfortable with the other co-workers and experience appreciation from them. Respondent C enjoys the work at both the companies and claims it to be stimulating thanks to the varying tasks. C feels that the company highly value their employee’s comfortable zone, anything that C needs for the job is easily fixed, when asked for.

You never have to have a dreadful chair or something else that negatively could affect your work.”(C)

Respondent Es experienced culture in Company 2 is that everyone is working alone. E says that you have to do everything on your own and sometimes that give a sense of vulnerability and exposure. And this affects the job in a negative manner, claims E. E claims that due to the merger and acquisition it may take some time until everyone can cooperate.

C feels more at home at Company 1, but Company 2 also share the same foundation and values as Company 1. C claims that their good verbal dialog between the employees could be something that affects the company to have a positive environment. People do not complain in the organisation, much of this has to do with the fact that there are to much work to handle and they do not have the time says C. The excellent solidarity in the company contributes to make the whole experience even better says B.

If you have a problem, there is always a solution. If you ask someone to help, you never have to feel that you are stuck and in the end you will reach your goal. That is the way it is.” (B)

Before the merger Company 1s special transportation where having financial difficulties, today the situation is reversed and Company 2 is performing good results. But at the same time it feels like Company 2 and the employees in Umeå does not get that affected but instead ride alongside the company and pays attention to the new changes. Respondent B states that Company 1 has a
special culture due to its history and with all the different drivers and people that has helped create its ambience. Respondent B feels that the culture in both Umeå and Skellefteå are quite rigid, there is a internal feeling that both companies has done things in their respective ways and no one are willing to change their behaviour.

“*We think that we are the ones that are doing it right, they think they are. It has always been that way*”. But who is to say which way is the right way? (B)

A and B also claims that the hierarchy is more noticeable within the former company Company 1, than in Company 2 were almost no internal hierarchy can be observed according to all of the respondents. We are all equally low under management claims D. According to A, B and C there have been differences when comparing Umeå and Skellefteå were in Skellefteå there were more individual secretaries and the respondents also experienced a stronger hierarchy which inhibited the workflow between the offices. This hieratical structure was not something the respondents were accustomed to.

“*There will always be problems when one finds one self in this predicament, which is to tell the other what way of doing things is right or wrong*?”(B)

“We think that we have a more modern way of thinking and they are one step behind us, they are locked to their own believes and we are better at exploring new things”(C)

Overall the company has evolved very negatively since it became bigger according to respondent D. Now everybody is working by themselves and you do not help each other out even if there are vehicles missing from one section. You are afraid of getting misinterpreted by the others and you would think that it would be easy to receive help, but it is the other way around.

**Skellefteå office**

The company is according to F more than only a transportation company and the general opinion is that it is a company one should be proud of working at, even the drivers should feel special.

“*The company works hard to maintain a culture where everyone should be able to stick out and be listened too as well as the importance of receiving respect.*”(F)

The company is in general very influenced by the entrepreneur culture which originates from the owners as well as their beliefs. This is of great importance and a valid benefit as Grenholms have long time experience of the industry in question. Respondent G’ claims to have the directors’ trust and support, since they are aware of the employee’s ability to be successful in their work. Respondent G and H claims not to experience any hierarchy inside the organisation, there is neither any special grouping between the employees. Respondent H says that there is not that much contact between the offices in Umeå and Skellefteå but states that in Skellefteå there are no formations which influence the work. The environment within the organisation is instead very isolated according to G, this have lead to a stressful environment. One negative difference which have occurred after the merger, is the fact that there are no help to get inside the company, argues respondent G.

“*Nowadays it is harder to discuss and find solutions with colleges.*”(G)

Respondent F claims that there is a very noticeable hierarchal structure within the company and the culture differs to a great extent only if you compare Umeå towards Skellefteå. Skellefteå is an old industrial community whereas Umeå is a service society. The order of precedence is still of importance in Skellefteå while it is a more open business climate in Umeå claims F.

“*I am aware of the fact that we have a strong order of precedence here, but I have not done anything about it.*”(F)
According to F there are not only demands on the employees but also on the lorry drivers, they should reach some criteria’s, be willing to listen and react and come with ideas to help Company 2, which in the long run also helps the driver argues F. Both Company 2 and the lorry drivers needs satisfied customers and as Company 2 could be seen as a mediator between a customer and the driver who manages the service, both Company 2 and the driver has a common interest. This mutual interest is something F claims to be of importance, as this provide with the ability to produce more profits for all involved parties. Company 2 should listen to the drivers but the drivers should also listen to Company 2 when they come with suggestions on the vehicles. F claims that involved parties have one choice, whether to except the culture or not and if not, then you should leave the company.

“No one will benefit of having people who do not understand the reason behind this special culture.” (F)

8.3 Analysis concerning Corporate culture, Identity & Social identity

The manager (President)
The culture within the organisation is focused on personal engagement and on the liability of the workforce, the manager believes that this has been lost, as the company has grown. According to Lund (2003, p.229) a functional merger or acquisitions is not only depending on the economical outcomes and benefits the cultural compatibility is also of great importance. Cultural struggles within an organisation can easily destroy some of the wanted economical benefits, it could also create a unwanted workplace for the employees. The culture in the company is according to the manager very strong, mainly due to the historical strength and the fact that the culture is strongly linked with the actual business. The respondent views himself as part of the company culture. The culture in Company 2 is something which the respondent originated from Organisation Q and by that time was to be successful. Sadri and Lees (2001, p.853) states that the corporate culture originates from the fact that the individuals inside an organisation have different social backgrounds. Inside an organisation they together build up norms and rules which results in a corporate culture. Schein (1988, p.9-10) further stress that in a company where there are only one or a few individuals in the organisation they create the organisational culture solitary on their own beliefs. In larger organisations the culture is heavily depending on the originator or the stronger people inside the organisation, often people who have worked there for a long time or management

The company culture also entails the importance of long-term engagement between the customers and the company. The manager believes that is important that the employees understand the importance of “word of mouth” and the significance of personal engagements. Schein (1988, p.9-10) claims that assumptions are the ground and core of the organisational culture, which could be seen as the beliefs inside an organisation. The assumption represents the reality which the members inside the organisation accept as true and what they perceive as important. This construcst the “truth” which permeates trough the organisation (Hatch, 1997, p.213) Norms are a part of values, these are the unwritten rules which exist in the organisation. The norms express what is expected from the members and how they should behave in certain situations. The values are an extension from the assumptions, and makes the culture more alive. (Hatch, 1997, p.216 and Schein 1988, p17) According to Balmer, Dinnie (1999, p.184) Corporate identity is constructed by the managements conduct, the communication inside the organisation but also the image and reputation of the company.

The manager have not yet identified any special groupings within the company, the only thing that he mentions, are the fact that the employees are divided into groups depending on their business area. According to Haunschild (1994, p.1177) in a merger situation, a new organisational identity and organisation is created. According to Terry, O’Brien(2001, p.274) in the new organisation there still exist identities from the earlier two or more organisations. There is therefore a risk for internal struggles between the subgroups inside the new organisation, as they try to achieve a positive and leading position within the new organisation.
Umeå office
Respondent A claims that others outside of this organisation might experience them and their culture in a certain way which they themselves do not see. The unity within the organisation is something that A claims is something which feels special for the company, they do not feel that they are two different companies. According to Balmer and Dinnie, (1999 p.184) in merger situations where two or more different corporate identities meet creates tensions as there are problems in declaring which identity is the favourable one, there are also a vast amount of intangible things that has to be considered. An often used approach to help and nurture a merger is to create new partial identities, this could include a new corporate name or a new logotype, which makes the work to create a new united corporate identity easier.

“We are one united company.” (A)

According to respondent D the experienced culture within the company is that the company is not united. The company is shattered and there is no real group unity says D. You work one on one and you do not cooperate with one another. You suffer a lot from this none cooperation and many important links get lost on the way and the most frightened thing is that it is not getting better. According to Terry and O’Brien (2001, p.272) different group foundations is made and when a comparison is done individuals tend to choose to enter the group which is the most agreeable and closest to the individuals' preferences. This group is called the “in-group” the groups which are not chosen and unwanted the individual is called “out-groups”. The basic principle is that the “in-groups” always is seen as more favourable and more superior when the individual compares them against other groups. The individuals inside a group diminish the differences between themselves by trying to oversee them, the opposite are done towards out-groups where the differences are emphasized.

“You bust you’re as off all alone and no one helps you out!”(D)

Respondent A does not experience any special group formation within the company except for in the divided business areas. Respondent A noticed the positive atmosphere when going in to the break room, according to A everyone was cheerful and talked happily with one another. Both respondent A, B and C claims to feel very comfortable at work and thinks it is very challenging and developing. A also feels comfortable with the other co-workers and experience appreciation from them. Respondent C enjoys the work at both the companies and claims it to be stimulating thanks to the varying tasks. C feels that the company highly value their employee’s comfortable zone, anything that C needs for the job is easily fixed, when asked for. If the employees can identify with the organisation they will be motivated to perform well and in the long run it will lead to a productive workforce. (Melewar, Bassett & Simões, 2006, p.140) According to Sadri and Lées, (2001, p.853) Corporate culture originates from the fact that the individuals inside an organisation build up norms and rules which results in a corporate culture.

Respondent E’s experienced culture in Company 2 is that everyone is working alone. E says that you have to do everything on your own and sometimes that give a sense of vulnerability and exposure. And this affects the job in a negative manner, claims E. E claims that due to the merger and acquisition it may take some time until everyone can cooperate. Cultural struggles within an organisation can easily destroy some of the wanted economical benefits, it could also create a unwanted workplace for the employees. (Lund, 2003, p.229)

Respondent B states that Company 1 has a special culture due to its history and with all the different drivers and people that has helped create its ambience. Respondent B feels that the culture in both Umeå and Skellefteå are quite rigid, there is an internal feeling that both companies has done things in their respective ways and no one are willing to change their behaviour. According to Lund (2003, p.229) a functional merger or acquisitions is not only depending on the economical outcomes and benefits the cultural compatibility is also of great importance.

“We think that we are the ones that are doing it right, they think they are. It has always been that way”. But who is to say which way is the right way? (B)

A and B also claims that the hierarchy is more noticeable within the former company, Company 1, than in Company 2 were almost no internal hierarchy can be observed according to all of the
respondents. We are all equally low under management claims D. According to A, B and C there have been differences when comparing Umeå and Skellefteå were in Skellefteå there were more individual secretaries and the respondents also experienced a stronger hierarchy which inhibited the workflow between the offices. This hieratical structure was not something the respondents were accustomed to. (Balmer, Dinnie (1999, p184) additional claims that in merger situations where two or more different corporate identities meets creates tensions as there are problems in declaring which identity is the favourable one, there are also a vast amount of intangible things that has to be considered. A n often used approach to help and nurture a merger is to create new partial identities, this could include a new corporate name or a new logotype, which makes the work to create a new united corporate identity easier.

Overall the company has evolved very negatively since it became bigger according to respondent D. Now everybody is working by themselves and you do not help each other out even if there are vehicles missing from one section. You are afraid of getting misinterpreted by the others and you would think that it would be easy to receive help, but it is the other way around. Schein(1988, p.17) claims that norms express what is expected from the members and how they should behave in certain situations. (Hatch, 1997, p.216)

**Skellefteå office**

The company is according to F more than only a transportation company and the general opinion is that it is a company one should be proud of working at, even the drivers should feel special. The company works hard to maintain a culture where everyone should be able to stick out and be listened too as well as the importance of receiving respect. Schein (1988, p.9-10) claims that assumptions are the ground and core of the organisational culture, which could be seen as the beliefs inside an organisation. The assumption represents the reality which the members inside the organisation accept as true and what they perceive as important. This constructs the “truth” which permeates trough the organisation (Hatch, 1997, p.213)

The company is in general very influenced by the entrepreneur culture which originates from the owners as well as their beliefs. This is of great importance and a valid benefit as Organisation Q has long time experience of the industry in question. Balmer and Dinnie (1999, p.184) claims that corporate identity is constructed by the managements conduct, the communication inside the organisation but also the image and reputation of the company. According to Sadri and Lee,(2001, p.853) Corporate culture originates from the fact that the individuals inside an organisation have different social backgrounds. Inside an organisation they together build up norms and rules which results in a corporate culture.

Respondent G and H claims not to experience any hierarchy inside the organisation, there is neither any special grouping between the employees. Respondent H says that there is not that much contact between the offices in Umeå and Skellefteå but states that in Skellefteå there are no formations which influence the work. The environment within the organisation is instead very isolated according to G, this have lead to a stressful environment. Lund (2003, p.229) states that Cultural struggles within an organisation can easily destroy some of the wanted economical benefits, it could also create an unwanted workplace for the employees. Respondent F claims that there is a very noticeable hierarchal structure within the company and the culture differs to a great extent only if you compare Umeå towards Skellefteå. Skellefteå is an old industrial community whereas Umeå is a service society. The order of precedence is still of importance in Skellefteå while it is a more open business climate in Umeå claims F. According to Balmer and Dinnie (1999 p.184) In merger situations where two or more different corporate identities meets creates tensions as there are problems in declaring which identity is the favourable one, there are also a vast amount of intangible things that has to be considered. A n often used approach to help and nurture a merger is to create new partial identities, this could include a new corporate name or a new logotype, which makes the work to create a new united corporate identity easier.

Both Company 2 and the lorry drivers needs satisfied customers and as Company 2 could be seen as a mediator between a customer and the driver who manages the service, both Company 2 and the driver has a common interest. This mutual interest is something F claims to be of importance, as this provide with the ability to produce more profits for all involved parties. Company 2 should listen to the drivers but the drivers should also listen to Company 2 when they come with suggestions on the vehicles. F claims that involved parties have one choice, whether to except the culture or not and if not, then you should leave the company. Haugh and McKee (2004, p.380) states that the corporate identity is one of the best ways to differentiate an organisation from others. The identity is
also regularly one important part of the competitive advantage a company can have. As this identity is a way of conduct in the specific organisation, the common identity involves all personal and links them to the whole organisation.

“No one will benefit of having people who do not understand the reason behind this special culture.”

The norms express what is expected from the members and how they should behave in certain situations. (Hatch, 1997, p.216 and Schein 1988, p17)

Conclusion of the analysis:
The culture within the organisation is experienced differently by the respondents. Several of the respondents claims that it exists a united coherent culture within the organisation, when at the same time a limited number of respondents claims that the culture of the organisation has created a sense of loneliness instead of a united group. Management believes that the culture is very strong but some of the personal engagement has been lost due to the mergers. The management strives to proclaim a committed organisation and the willingness to be apparent. The personnel believe that differences exist in the culture between the cities of Umeå and Skellefteå. These differences affect the entire organisation and the work environment.

Our conclusion:
We claim that the company when divided between the two offices have created a cultural gap between the wanted cultural and actual culture. This has created a situation where the cultural identity of the organisation is vague which creates tension between the two offices as well as internally between the employees. We have also identified situations where some individuals are outside of the cohesion similar to the ones that are described in the in group out group theory.

9.1 Theoretical framework concerning Service Quality & Human Resource

9.1.1 Service Quality

The ability to offer a good service quality to the customers has increased enormously the last couple of years. Nowadays it is not longer only the big companies that plays a major role in the world economy, medium sized and smaller companies also has a great impact on the market of today. Earlier when service has been discussed, the big debate has evolved around the large companies, until recent years smaller companies have often been left out of the discussion. The approach has now changed when the final aim was considered the same of any company despite the size of it. The objectives which the companies shared were the satisfaction of the customers. (Chowdhary & Saraswat, 2003, p.105)

A company which provides service most often has an organized and well managed culture. Services companies are set to be more individual and easier to predict and examine norms and procedures. The customer and the service is the centre of attention in a service firm. Most often the service has to be designed for the specific customer were the behaviour and decision-making plays an important role in the company. The leadership and its culture play therefore a major role in the company and have to permeate trough the entire organisation to be able to transfer the values to the employees. This is important in order for the employees to understand the importance of the culture in order to make the right decisions and offer the right service and differentiation. (Chowdhary & Saraswat, 2003, p.106-107) Gummesson (1998, p.11) has acknowledged specific recommendation of how the contact between the employees and customers ought to be assembled. The employees should adjust their service towards the company’s missions, objectives and strategies.

We claim that the organisational changes which are executed within the company might have an affect on the quality on the service offered by the company. The organisational wellbeing would then become damaged in this process affecting all involved stakeholders, such as employees, owners and also the customers. If the service is affected by the merger the organisation would have to respond to the outcome, which might result in another organisational distress.

The service quality model by Parasurman, Zeithamal and Leonard, (1985, p.44) provides us with valuable inputs on how the actual service and the quality is offered and perceived by the customers. The model consists of sex different factors which are:

Company perceptions of consumer expectations, customer expectations might not be inline with the company’s perceived executed service quality. The firm is not able to recognize and identify the level of customer expectation.

Customer driven service designs and standards, when an assessment of customer expectations is being executed the difficulty is to translate customer’s needs into the company’s service portfolio.

Service delivery and External communications to customers, this phenomenon stresses the importance of not offering the customer a service that is not able to be accomplished by the company. Due to the fact that the customers will be disappointed the experienced service will be valued in a low extent.

Perceived service and expected service is the phenomenon of the customer’s expectation of the outcome of the service. If the customer expectations are exceeded this results with a high quality service, if the opposite action takes place the provided service is often evaluated in a poor manor. (Parasurman, Zeithamal & Leonard, 1985, p.45)

The model is originally created to serve service companies with information concerning gaps in their service offering. For us this area is not relevant to examine in accordance to our already established purpose, our aim is not to find gap in the offered service quality. At the same times
we claim that this model could be beneficiary when it comes to accessing organisational defects which might be the circumstance after a merger.

A figure concerning different problems which might arise when it comes to delivering a service is presented by Zeithmal, A Valarie, Parasuraman and Berry L Leonard, (1985, p.33-35) the authors proclaims that there are four different factors which should be taken in consideration, the first is intangibility since services are intangible and connected to performance rather than to be touched. After this comes heterogeneity is concerning the factor of variation in the quality of the service depending on both the employees and the customer’s ability to obtain the service. Inseparability is the third step which imposes the difficulty to separate the customer from being part of the service process. The fourth and last step stresses the importance of the fact that services can not be stored and it is hard to forecast the supply and demand. Several strategies to overcome service difficulties are discussed, to overcome intangibility the service provider should stress the importance of word of mouth, be personal with the customers, create strong organisational image and use cost accounting when setting the price on the service. To surmount the heterogeneity, the service provider should focus on customising the service. The third step inseparability, is to be prevailed if the personnel are trained in handling customer contact. Perishability is to be coped with trough different strategies which the service provider can utilise when handling variable demand, for example have a closer relation between the capacity of the company as well as the demand of the company’s service offering.

Figure 12: GAP model, by Zeithamal and Leonard (1985, p.44, figure 2)
9.1.2 Human Resource

In service industries there often is a physical person performing the required product. The buyer of the service can therefore often evaluate the bought product both by the actual product but also by evaluating the person performing the task. For a company in the service sector it is important to look inside the organisation, to make it easier to uphold a certain wanted quality, both concerning personal and product, hence the importance of human resource management (Dessler, 2004, p.12) conducting internal education, having well defined and physical evaluations and appraisals, with both own personal and customers, are vital if the organisations wants to be able to develop the individuals inside an organisation. Thanks to actions like those mentioned above, numerous contiguous problems can be prevented to affect the organisation. Management should actively search and locate if there is a need for training inside the organisation. To make the work easier and more valid a need analysis on wanted skills or demands on each specific job should be created resulting in a wanted profile. Then by assessing the employee and the profile a need of training could appear. (Dessler, 2004, p.160) The analysis should be edited and reworked to fit the organisational goals and philosophies but also fit the environmental changes, concerning market structure or technological changes. (Dessler, 2004, p.159)

According to Burke (1999, p.53), quality control is of great importance for managers inside a service company. There are different ways of enhancing and evaluate the quality inside an organisation, one is to actively utilizing feedback from customers and employees. This can both create learning inside the organisation but also to strengthen the wanted culture values in the organisation. Companies which believe in the importance of quality of the service and have created well functional employee educational systems often have benefited from it. (Burke, 1999, p.53) When the company also is able to be clear about the need of quality and working active with it there is a high probability that the employees will embrace the quality thinking and the performance of the company will be enhanced. (Burke, 1999, p.54)

For a transportation company the quality is of great importance, destroying a customer’s product can not only create financial problems but also hurt the willingness of the customer to hire the company once again for a transport of a product. There is not only a problem in taking care of the goods, it can also be vital to be at the drop of location at the right time, as this also can create problems for the customer depending on timetables etc.
Management have the role of both addressing and actively craft the cultural values and formulate them for the employees in an understandable manner, as the culture can have an impact on the actual quality. Today some of the more popular cultural ideas according to Burke are the case of putting the customers in focus. (Burke, 1999, p.53) It then is of importance that everyone inside the organisation embraces the cultural values and act according to them to achieve the wanted results. To spread the values and information could be done in many ways, trough formal communication or education/training. The reason for this is to create a unified and strong culture and actively nurture it. This is the only way to be able to observe and receive any results of the work. According to Burke (1999, p.57) it could also be wise to not only look at information gathered by the organisation itself, as this is hard to see it as independent and objective.

As the competition increases in the service industry one way to create a “new” service is to add more value to the offered service. This puts more demand on everyone in the organisation to understand the customers and learn how they could ad value, or create a service which suits the customer. According to Smith (1998, p.119-120) one of the best ways for an organisation to reach this is to create a learning organisation. A common view of learning is that it is best achieved during real situations, therefore it is important that everyone inside the organisation is given opportunities to update and develop new skills and knowledge. Consequently this is something that should be embedded in the corporate core or identity, which then creates a positive atmosphere to make the change to function and given the chance to prosper. By achieving this, the organisation becomes more aware of other solutions and is more suited to identify new added values which could be inserted into the company’s service portfolio.

We argue that the importance of adding and creating values for customers are vital for the success of service companies. In an industry where the service is very standardized as it is in logistics, transporting something from one location to another, it is very important to create this added value, or creating a own speciality to be able to compete. Therefore an educational process for the employees inside an organisation is vital to be able to execute and provide a high service quality. We claim that this process would be beneficiary both for the customers but also the employees as they receive feedback which could improve their work situation, external appreciation and thereby enhance their wellbeing at work.

9.2 Empirical data concerning Service quality & Human resource

The manager (President)
According to the manager Company 2 is a quality oriented company and are to be viewed as an important and excellent business partner. Company 2 has been working hard to become a company which is easy to work with, this is based on the fact that they aim to be perceived as a small company. This is achieved by a horizontal organisation with the ability to provide with quick responds. The respondent experience the word quality as something connected to honesty which is something the manager believes is vital for him and his organisation. Honesty to the manager also includes occasions when one has to turn a customer down in accordance to the company’s values, even in occasions when they believe that they are not able to provide the required service.

“The key is to be able to give the customers swift and correct answers to their problems.” (The manager)
The company’s competitive advantage is according to the manager, the expertise of finding suitable transportation solutions for complex logistic problems and also their ability to conduct successful assignments. The company looks for long-term focused customers, and works hard with solving and adjusting there own fleet of vehicles to be able to follow customer’s demands. Also working close to your customers and to have a close connection in order to trust and nurture them is a vital factor for the manager.

“To be successful, it is important to solve the customer’s problem and adapt to the new challenges.”
According to the manager it is easier for them to provide a higher quality of the provided service thanks to the narrow segment which they are working in. The company uses the sales force to evaluate the service quality of the company as they often interact with the customers. Company 2 also conducts a web based questioners where customers are able to answer questions concerning the offered service. By having this close contact with the market the company quickly can change and adjust the organisation to fit customer's demands.

According to the manager the customers have a big influence in their requests, when it comes to the outcome of the expected service. Customer demands often include arrival and pick-up limitations often concerning time. The manager argues that it is important to come to an agreement which complies both with the company as well as the customers.

According to the respondent, the company do not se themselves as competitors with DHL or BTL, this as these companies are too big to adjust to customers special needs, when it comes to certain transportations problems. The customers of Company 2 often hands them a time schedule in advance something which assist both parties to easier find suitable transport solutions and the planning for the same. The respondent says the company strives to obtain an active discussion with the customers. The respondent also pointed out their core competences and specialties which the company aims of proclaiming. He continues with an example of a person that goes to an ICA grocery store to buy steel nails, instead of buying it at a hardware store. This example states the fact that customer demands differ, depending of the need of additional knowledge and quality in the purchase decision.

The manager claims to have appraisal sessions were he and the employee discusses the future of the employees concerning, education personal and personal development. At appraisal meetings The manager verbally suggest what he thinks is best for the specific employee but the employee is also provided the ability to speak ones mind. Internal education are then often offered trough Company 1. When it comes to evaluations of the employee's performance within the company, The manager claims to provide the employee with the results on a regular basis.

Umeå office

According to respondent A and E the company offers good service quality with the motto:

“Nothing is impossible” (A)

Respondent D claims that the most difficult part is to find suitable trucks to fit the customer request and the ability of having the right amount of time to arrange a truck that will fit in to their concept. Respondent D claims that it is complicated to provide the customer with perfect quality, the cost of having specialized trucks for every transport is very expensive. D believes that it demands advanced planning, to be able to provide the best possible service.

A and C feel that Company 2 have a good reputation in the business as they receive many request and questions from other companies. Most of the transports which the company receive are too difficult to carry out for other transportation companies according to B. The company is offering the service both in Sweden and abroad and B claim that this provides the company with an advantage. The great capacity makes it easy for them to carry out difficult transports with a high quality. In the special transport segments we have decided to say yes to most of the transports which other companies turns down.

“The service which others can not manage we should handle instead“ (B)

The level of the service quality is the foundation of the business and therefore very important. If there are no cheap alternatives available when you execute a service, it sometimes has to be done with the expensive alternative instead, argues B. Respondent B believes that if you have closed a deal with a customer then the service can cost a great deal of money and then the money issue is not the important factor, the service quality on the other hand is of importance.
"We have to turn customers down even tough we do not like to!" (B)

The offered quality is regularly checked by a customer survey and by the sales force that has the most interaction with the customers. The employees can take part of the surveys to see the results claims respondent A. A also states that they get feedback from customers by telephones calls or E-mails, this usually occurs when they are not satisfied with the service. Respondent B believes that more work could be done in this area and would like to make follow ups of some accomplished services, to see the outcome and receive feedback, but this is something that is hard to implement today when there is no time for it. One negative aspect with a company which are growing in such a fast pace as we are, is the feeling that we sometimes are growing too much to be able to offer the same service quality argues B. The quality is for the most part good, if the service is actually provided for the customer.

Many of our customers have heard of the company trough word of mouth but also from their competitors and want us to solve their problems claims B and D. We have a booking system which some of our customers utilise, but the contact is mainly over the phone. Sometimes the customer probably experience us as a very busy company, this due to the fact that we are always on the phone and it can be hard to get a hold of us claims all the respondents. Respondent B claims that the company helps the customers to get in contact with other possible customers, in order to be as cooperative towards their customers as possible. According to all of the respondents it is important to understand the customers otherwise you do not get any new customers.

"Sometimes you do not understand your customers at all and then you have to tell them to solve it by themselves!" (B)

C claims that the feedback which you obtain at the company always comes from the customer and drivers and not from the management. The customers call you back to thank you or the drivers are happy to receive the correct compensation. This is important according to C, because you need to receive some feedback else you do not know what you have done wrong or right. C claims that the general opinion from the customers is satisfaction and the main complaints are that it is hard to get in touch with them. D says that customers get irritated when you are not accessible to them and they want you to be more available in one way or another. The phone calls have increased now especially as we are not as many that are working here now than we used to be. Respondent D is aware that the company do run different quality checks, for example service quality questionnaires. But D says that the employees never take part of the results of the questionnaires.

"We never sit down and discusses what the customer thinks about us!"(D)

It is hard to estimate and judge the quality of the service claims E due to the extensive workload.

"You do not even have the time to finish your project until you have to take upon the next one. “(E)

Respondent E claims to be stressed and short mouthed against the customers in certain periods, this due to the stressful environment. Most of the communication between respondent E and the customers are made over the phone, but there are also contact trough Email. First and foremost respondent E believes that their customers get to hear about them trough already established customers.

All of the respondents claim that they recently had been offered internally based education by the company. Not that long ago the employees were asked by the director, if there was some special education which they wanted to participate in or needed. A claims that there is not any time to attend any internal courses, even if A would want to, this in order to make the job more effective.

"Many times you have to learn it by yourself!“ (B)
Respondent B claims to have been offered to take part of an internal education a while ago. B and C says that an education in the computer system is something that would be of interest. C feels that there is no time for it at the moment. B is also taking part of a health program which is conducted by the company.

“You do not prioritize yourself! You tell yourself that you can do it later, but later never happens.” (C)

Respondent D claims that it does not exist any internally education in the company.

“You have to learn everything by yourself and learn from your own mistakes.” (D)

D and E says that they where offered internal education for the first time in two years just a week ago. But E claims that there where not enough time to ponder over the different alternatives. D and E had only half an hour to take a decision concerning this.

“There is no chance to come up with a suggestion in only five minutes.” (D)

D claims that it would not be worth the hassle of taking part of an internal education, it would only make the stress level higher due to more work pilling up ahead of you. The only one who would be suffering is yourself, especially when you do not know when this education would take place argues D. You do not even know if it is supposed to be during working hours says D. Respondent D claims to need a course in how to cope with stress.

Today and during the last few years there has been a few numbers of actual appraisals claims C and D. Totally lacks of feedback from the management has made the employees tired and worn out claims D. D argues that it does not make your job any easier when you never get any feedback from your boss and not a single token of appreciation, not even a pat on the shoulder, instead your boss comes in every now and then throwing out some pieces of paper and walks out again.

“You want to be able to talk to your boss, to be able to sit down and discuss things that matters.” (D)

D and E believes that the managers no longer are active with the employees something that negatively affects the organisation, when it lacks to a higher extent in both communication and feedback.

“It is hard to do a good job, when you never receive any feedback!”(D)

C Every other year we are supposed to do things together with each other and every unit area manager has the ability to do something for the staff during the year, this to create a stronger cohesion. According to E the company recently were down to Jönköping to be able to bound and connect with each other which was a lot of fun according to respondent E.

Skellefteå office

“The customer has the power since they are the ones with special requirements and demands, which we as a company have to adjust ourselves to.”(H)

When it comes to quality it is important that the customer receives what they pay for says G. The quality standard they set is very high, and everyone should receive a high quality service. Respondent H believes that the quality of the company is of high standard and claims that this is due to the company’s objective of always aiming to achieve a perfect result. The fact that the company also keeps their promises towards their customers creates high quality according to H. H claims not to have the time or ability of evaluating the quality of the service the company is offering, but believes that the service were successful if the company or H does not hear anything else from the customer or drivers. Respondent H believes that it is important to evaluate the quality of their service offering and said that the sales force mainly does this.
"It is important that the company do not believe they are better than they are in reality."

(H)

Respondent F works closely with the customers and express the importance of keeping in contact with the customers in order to receive necessary feedback. It is very significant to obtain trustworthy customers, especially since I will do anything to find the best solutions for them, says F. It is imperative to find the right customers for the company, who fits in to the Company 2 profile of special transportation solutions. F states the fact that it is better to have a small number of customers to be able to focus on them to a higher extent, than to provide a lower service quality to a high number of customers. F arranges meetings with the customers to get a better communication the company also performs a questionnaire two times a year, this to discuss special improvements which the customers demands. This is also done to maintain an excellent relation between Company 2 and their customers.

"We have a clear focus and an aim of having close customers as our friends" (F)

There is often a small margin of error between a successful or unsuccessful delivery of the service which Company 2 provide according to F. If a transport is delayed with one hour there is a risk of large fines as this delay can carry great costs for the customers. Therefore it is important that both the driver and the employees at the offices at Company 2 are aware of situations on the roads and the specific demands the customers have put on the required transport. A driver should call to the customer if something happens and explain the present situation, the driver must also inform the office, so that they can talk to both the customer of Company 2 and explain the problem which the service has been affected by. The reason for this is that there often are two different companies that will be affected by the problem in the delivered service.

Respondent G argues the great feeling when the providence of a service and transport has been of a successful nature. Then the correlation between the other employees and the customer are very satisfactory. Respondent G claims to be used to work late and overtime in accordance to be able to fulfil G’s own personal value system.

"My values and believes are closely connected to the "mother syndrome" I work constantly day or night until the work is done!" (G)

On the human resource area respondent G and H claims that there used to be internal education provided for the employees. It is mainly up to the employees to ask for an additional education and G believes that they would receive it if they wanted to. Respondent F and H says that the company has an educational system but it demands that the employee take the main responsibility for this to occur.

"If you want to take part of any education, you yourself have to take an active role in achieving this." (H))

H states that the one really positive thing with the company is the fact that there have never been any problems when it comes to actively better the work areas for the employees. H says that there have never been any financial reasons for not getting the workplace improved and this is something that has not changed even after the merger.

F often rides in the same car as the manager when they are out meeting customers. At these occasions they have open conversations concerning the company and respondents F claims that this provides with valuable feedback. Respondent G on the other hand argues that the communication between the owners and the employees could be a lot better. G believes that the owner does not have the time to check up on them and instead trust that they are doing a good job. The company does not have any special appraisal system, this is something that respondent H claims are missing at the company. If an appraisal system would exist this would benefit the company with employees who would aim of achieving better results. The mayor problem with
this argues H, is the fact that no one has any time to put aside and the aim to achieve even more work.

9.3 **Analysis of Service quality & Human Resource**

**The manager**

According to The manager Company 2 is a quality oriented company and are to be viewed as an important and excellent business partner. According to Burke (1999, p.53) some of the more popular cultural ideas inside organisations are the case of putting the customers in focus. It then is of importance that everyone inside the organisation embraces the cultural values and act according to them to achieve the wanted results. The respondent experience the word quality as something connected to honesty which is something. The manager believes is vital for him and his organisation. Honesty to The manager also includes occasions when he has to turn a customer down in accordance to the company’s values, even in occasions when they believe that they are not able to provide the required service. According to Chowdhary and Saraswat, (2003, p.106-107) a company which provides service most often has an organized and well managed culture. Services companies are set to be more individual and easier to predict and examine norms and procedures. The customer and the service is the centre of attention in a service firm. Most often the service has to be designed for the specific customer were the behaviour and decision-making plays an important role in the company. The leadership and its culture play therefore a major role in the company and have to permeate through the entire organisation to be able to transfer the values to the employees. According to Burke (1999, p.53) management have the role of both addressing and actively craft the cultural values and formulate them for the employees in an understandable manner, as the culture can have an impact on the actual quality.

"**The key is to be able to give the customers swift and correct answers to their problems.**"

The company’s competitive advantage is according to The manager, the expertise of finding suitable transportation solutions for complex logistic problems and also their ability to conduct successful assignments. The company looks for long-term focused customers, and works hard with solving and adjusting there own fleet of vehicles to be able to follow customer’s demands. Also working close to your customers and to have a close connection in order to trust and nurture them is a vital factor for the manager. From the GAP model by Parasurman, Zeithaml and Leonard, (1985, p.44) you can find the step which identifies the Perceived service and expected service is the phenomenon of the customer’s expectation of the outcome of the service. If the customer expectations are exceeded this results with a high quality service, if the opposite action takes place the provided service is often evaluated in a poor manor.

"**To be successful, it is important to solve the customer’s problem and adapt to the new challenges.**"

According to The manager it is easier for them to provide a higher quality of the provided service thanks to the narrow segment which they are working in. The company uses the sales force to evaluate the service quality of the company as they often interact with the customers. According to Burke, (1999, p.53) quality control is of great importance for managers inside a service company. There are different ways of enhancing and evaluate the quality inside an organisation, one is to actively utilizing feedback from customers and employees. Company 2 also conducts a web based questioners where customers are able to answer questions concerning the offered service. By having this close contact with the market the company quickly can change and adjust the organisation to fit customer’s demands. The manager argues that it is important to come to an agreement which complies both with the company as well as the customers. According to Parasurman, Zeithaml and Leonard (1985, p.44) and three gaps from the gap model. The first gap: Company perceptions of consumer expectations, customer expectations might not be inline with the company’s perceived executed service quality. The firm is not able to recognize and identify the level of customer expectation. The second gap: Customer driven service designs and standards, when an assessment of customer expectations is being executed the difficulty is to translate customer’s needs into the company’s service portfolio. The third gap: Service delivery and External communications to customers, this phenomenon stresses the importance of not offering the customer a service that is not able to be accomplished by the company. Due to the fact that the customers will be disappointed the experienced service will be valued in a low extent.
The manager claims to have appraisal sessions were he and the employee discusses the future of the employees concerning, education personal and personal development. According to Dessler (2004, p.12) it is important for companies in the service sector to look inside the organisation, to make it easier to uphold a certain wanted quality, both concerning personal and product, hence the importance of Human Resource Management Conducting internal education, having well defined and physical evaluations and appraisals, with both own personal and customers, are vital if the organisations wants to be able to develop the individuals inside an organisation. At appraisal meetings The manager verbally suggest what he thinks is best for the specific employee but the employee is also provided the ability to speak ones mind. Internal education are then often offered trough Company 1. When it comes to evaluations of the employee's performance within the company, The manager claims to provide the employee with the results on a regular basis. Dessler (2004, p.160) claims that management actively should search and locate if there is a need for training inside the organisation. To make the work easier and more valid a need analysis on wanted skills or demands on each specific job should be created resulting in a wanted profile. Then by assessing the employee and the profile a need of training could appear. The analysis should be edited and reworked to fit the organisational goals and philosophies but also fit the environmental changes, concerning market structure or technological changes. (Dessler, 2004, p.160) A coresponding to Smith (1998, p.119-120) one of the best ways for an organisation to create a learning organisation is best achieved during real situations. Therefore it is important that everyone inside the organisation is given the opportunity to update and develop new skills and knowledge. Consequently this is something that should be embedded in the corporate core or identity, which then creates a positive atmosphere to make the change to function and given the chance to prosper.

**Umeå office**

Respondent D claims that the most difficult part is to find suitable trucks to fit the customer request and the ability of having the right amount of time to arrange a truck that will fit in to their concept. Respondent D claims that it is complicated to provide the customer with perfect quality, the cost of having specialized trucks for every transport is very expensive. D believes that it demands advanced planning, to be able to provide the best possible service. A coresponding to the gap model which is presented by Parasurman, Zathamal and Berry (1985, p.44) and the second gap: customer driven service designs and standards, when an assessment of customer expectations is being executed the difficulty is to translate customer's needs into the company's service portfolio. The third gap, Service delivery and External communications to customers, this phenomenon stresses the importance of not offering the customer a service that is not able to be accomplished by the company. Due to the fact that the customers will be disappointed the experienced service will be valued in a low extent.

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C claims that the feedback which you obtain at the company always comes from the customer and drivers and not from the management. Chowdhary and Saraswat, (2003, p.106-107) claims that the leadership and its culture play a major role in the company and have to permeate trough the entire organisation to be able to transfer the values to the employees. This is important in order for the company to offer the right service and differentiation.

The level of the service quality is the foundation of the business and therefore very important. If there are no cheap alternatives available when you execute a service, it sometimes has to be done with the expensive alternative instead, argues B. Respondent B believes that if you have closed a deal with a customer then the service can cost a great deal of money and then the money issue is not the important factor; the service quality on the other hand is of importance. Chowdhary and Saraswat (2003, p.106-107) argues that service companies are set to be more individual and easier to predict and examine norms and procedures. The customer and the service is the centre of attention in a
service firm. Most often the service has to be designed for the specific customer were the behaviour and decision-making plays an important role in the company.

The offered quality is regularly checked by a customer survey and by the sales force that has the most interaction with the customers. The employees can take part of the surveys to see the results claims respondent A. A also states that they get feedback from customers by telephones calls or E-mails, this usually occurs when they are not satisfied with the service. Respondent B believes that more work could be done in this area and would like to make follow ups of some accomplished services, to see the outcome and receive feedback, but this is something that is hard to implement today when there is no time for it. A coörding to Burke (1999, p.53) quality control is of great importance inside a service company. There are different ways of enhancing and evaluate the quality inside an organisation, one is to actively utilizing feedback from customers and employees. This can both create learning inside the organisation but also to strengthen the wanted culture values in the organisation.

Sometimes the customer probably experience us as a very busy company, this due to the fact that it can be hard to get a hold of us claims all the respondents. According to all of the respondents it is important to understand the customers otherwise you do not get any new customers. It is also hard to estimate and judge the quality of the service claims E due to the extensive workload. A coörding to the gap model which is presented by Parasurman, , Zeithamal and Berry (1985, p.44) and the first gap: Company perceptions of consumer expectations, customer expectations might not be inline with the company's perceived executed service quality. The firm is not able to recognize and identify the level of customer expectation. The forth gap Perceived service and expected service is the phenomenon of the customer's expectation of the outcome of the service. If the customer expectations are exceeded this results with a high quality service, if the opposite action takes place the provided service is often evaluated in a poor manor.

"Sometimes you do not understand your customers at all and then you have to tell them to solve it by themselves!"(B)

Respondent E claims to be stressed and short mouthed against the customers in certain periods, this due to the stressful environment. Chowdhary and Saraswat (2003, p.106-107) has acknowledged specific recommendation of how the contact between the employees and customers ought to be assembled. The employees should adjust their service towards the company’s missions, objectives and strategies.

All of the respondents claim that they recently had been offered internally based education by the company. Not that long ago the employees were asked by the director, if there was some special education which they wanted to participate in or needed. A claims that there is not any time to attend any internal courses, even if A would want to, this in order to make the job more effective. A coörding to Smith (1998, p.119-120) one of the best ways for an organisation to create a learning organisation is best achieved during real situations. Therefore it is important that everyone inside the organisation is given the opportunity to update and develop new skills and knowledge. Consequently this is something that should be embedded in the corporate core or identity, which then creates a positive atmosphere to make the change to function and given the chance to prosper.

B and C says that an education in the computer system is something that would be of interest. C feels that there is no time for it at the moment. B is also taking part of a health program which is conducted by the company. Respondent D claims that it does not exist any internally education in the company. D and E says that they where offered internal education for the first time in two years just a week ago. But E claims that there where not enough time to ponder over the different alternatives. D and E had only half an hour to take a decision concerning this. Dessler (2004, p.160) argues that to make the work easier and more valid a need analysis on wanted skills or demands on each specific job should be created resulting in a wanted profile. Then by assessing the employee and the profile a need of training could appear. The analysis should be edited and reworked to fit the operational goals and philosophies but also fit the environmental changes, concerning market structure or technological changes. (Dessler 2004, p.159)

D claims that it would not be worth the hassle of taking part of an internal education, it would only make the stress level higher due to more work pilling up ahead of you. The only one who would be suffering is yourself, especially when you do not know when this education would take
place argues D. You do not even know if it is supposed to be during working hours says D. Respondent D claims to need a course in how to cope with stress. D and E believes that the managers no longer are active with the employees something that negatively affects the organisation, when it lacks to a higher extent in both communication and feedback. Dessler (2004, p.160) argues that management should actively search and locate if there is a need for training inside the organisation. To make the work easier and more valid a need analysis on wanted skills or demands on each specific job should be created resulting in a wanted profile. Then by assessing the employee and the profile a need of training could appear.

Today and during the last few years there has been a few numbers of actual appraisals claims C and D. Totally lacks of feedback from the management has made the employees tired and worn out claims D. D argues that it does not make your job any easier when you never get any feedback from your boss and not a single token of appreciation, not even a pat on the shoulder, instead your boss comes in every now and then throwing out some pieces of paper and walks out again. Dessler (2004, p.12) claims, having a well defined and physical evaluations and appraisals, with both own personal and customers, are vital if the organisations wants to be able to develop the individuals inside an organisation.

Skellefteå office

"The customer has the power since they are the ones with special requirements and demands, which we as a company have to adjust ourselves to." (H)

When it comes to quality it is important that the customer receives what they pay for says G. According to the gap model which is presented by Parasurman, Zethnal and Barry (1985, p.44) and The forth gap Perceived service and expected service is the phenomenon of the customer’s expectation of the outcome of the service. If the customer expectations are exceeded this results with a high quality service, if the opposite action takes place the provided service is often evaluated in a poor manor.

The quality standard they set is very high, and everyone should receive a high quality service. Respondent H believes that the quality of the company is of high standard and claims that this is due to the company’s objective of always aiming to achieve a perfect result. The fact that the company also keeps its promises towards their customers creates high quality according to H. Respondent H believes that it is important to evaluate the quality of their service offering and said that the sales force mainly does this. According to the gap model which is presented by Parasurman, Zethnal and Barry (1985, p.44) and the first gap: Company perceptions of consumer expectations, customer expectations might not be inline with the company’s perceived executed service quality. The firm is not able to recognize and identify the level of customer expectation. According to Chowdhary and Saraswat (2003, p.106-107) the customer and the service is the centre of attention in a service firm. Most often the service has to be designed for the specific customer were the behaviour and decision-making plays an important role in the company.

Respondent F works closely with the customers and express the importance of keeping in contact with the customers in order to receive necessary feedback. It is very significant to obtain trustworthy customers, especially since I will do anything to find the best solutions for them says F. F arranges meetings with the customers to get a better communication the company also performs a questionnaire two times a year, this to discuss special improvements which the customers demands. This is also done to maintain an excellent relation between Company 2 and their customers. A coording to Burke (1999, p.53), quality control is of great importance inside a service company. There are different ways of enhancing and evaluate the quality inside an organisation, one is to actively utilizing feedback from customers and employees. A coording to Smith (1998, p.119-120) the competition today increases in the service industry, one way to create a “new” or improved service or to uphold a high quality to the offered service is to ad more value to the offered service. This puts more demand on everyone in the organisation to understand the customers and learn how they could ad value, or create a service which suits the customer.

On the human resource area respondent G and H claims that there used to be internal education provided for the employees. It is mainly up to the employees to ask for an additional education and G believes that they would receive it if they wanted to. Respondent F and H says that the company has an educational system but it demands that the employee take the main
responsibility for this to occur. Dessler (2004, p.160) states that management actively should search and locate if there is a need for training inside the organisation.

F often rides in the same car as The manager when they are out meeting customers. At these occasions they have open conversations concerning the company and respondents F claims that this provides with valuable feedback. Respondent G on the other hand argues that the communication between the owners and the employees could be a lot better. G believes that the owner does not have the time to check up on them and instead trust that they are doing a good job. The company does not have any special appraisal system, this is something that respondent H claims are missing at the company. If an appraisal system would exist this would benefit the company with employees who would aim of achieving better results. The mayor problem with this argues H, is the fact that no one has any time to put aside and the aim to achieve even more work. According to Dessler (2004, p.12) For a company in the service sector it is important to look inside the organisation, to make it easier to uphold a certain wanted quality, both concerning personal and product, hence the importance of Human Resource Management Conducting internal education, having well defined and physical evaluations and appraisals, with both own personal and customers, are vital if the organisations wants to be able to develop the individuals inside an organisation.

Conclusion of the analysis:
According to the management the company’s offered service is focused on customer requirements and high quality offerings. The personnel are also inline with the management on the quality orientation but mentions that the quality might have been affected by the rapid growth of the company which has created difficulties due to the heavy work load. According to several respondents there is a need for more feedback and appraisals from the management. The management claims that appraisal meeting occurs on a regular basis. Education and personal development is also something which some of the employees would like to have more of. The time issue when to execute the education worries respondents to a high extent.

Our conclusion:
We claim that the quality thinking permeates trough the entire organisation and all of the respondents have described the importance of achieving a high quality within an organisation. But at the same time there are several factors which affect the offered service quality in a negative manner, many of these factors originates from internal factors such as lack of communication, corporation and feedback to the customers. Also the lack of feedback and appraisals between the employees and the management creates a situation where the quality is not able to be improved internally which affects the overall quality.
10. Summary of empirical theoretical framework and empirical data

In this summary we will acknowledge the different theories used in the thesis and their impact on the gathered empirical material. We start by present the theoretical parts in relation to our interpreted model which we are illustrating below. In relation to our constructed model we continue by presenting the summary of the analysis with relevant models from the theoretical framework.

![Theoretical Framework Model](image)

Organisation and network

The respondents as well as the manager have confirmed a common communication problem within the organisation. Communication is something which Connell (2001, p.220) claims is emphasised in smaller organisations and helps them to easily adapt to changes. According to McGrath & Krackhardt (2003, p.325) leaders within organisations are most often the initiators and deliverers when a specific change is being implemented. Some of the respondents claim that the communication problem is of crucial form and a change is essential to implement in order for the organisation to function well. An entrepreneurial spirit prolongs through the entire company as the company do adjust to specific customer demands. Lindsley, Brass & Thomas 1995, p.646 and Ropo & Hunt, 1995, p.92 claims that facing new obstacles or undertake new ventures are often connected to the level of entrepreneurship in the firm. Several of the respondents indicate of a well functioning organisation, at the same time some of the respondents claims the opposite and claims that you feel alone as an employee at the company. The company is influenced by external factors and is actively working to apprehend the demands of the customers in order to remain competitive.

Mergers and acquisition

Due to the fact that the mergers were preceded during a rather short time period all of the respondents including the management have been affected by the transition. According to Appelbaum et al (2000, p.650,) a detailed and specified plan of how the merger process will take place and which possible new changes which might occur, will simplify the integration process further for all involved parties. Changes which the management wanted to achieve took longer time then premeditated. According to (Appelbaum et al (2000, p.649) it is the manager's responsibility to see to it that the merger is successfully accomplished. There are some key methods which the managers should implement, integration of the employees, acknowledgement of progress and a regular feedback on the achievements.
The mergers have resulted in both negative and positive aspects such as difficulties in customer relations, internal communication, benefits of additional personnel and employment safety. The employees were familiar with each other before the actual mergers which have made the transition easier since they knew and trusted each other mainly on behalf of the management. Still major differences became evident since cultural differences appeared between the two offices as well as differences in terms of work strategies. Fralix and Bolster (1997 p.50) claims that many mergers and acquisitions have a very high failure rate, a shared culture is the most essential part in a functional merger. Buono et al., 1985, p.482) claims that one of the difficulties with integrations of firms, is the compatibility of the diverse business strategies within the organisations.

**Family firms**
The respondents overall opinion of the company is that it is not a family owned company in its rightful manner, but at the same time many of the respondents as well as management views the company to be family related due to its strong cohesion with the Organisation Q family. A great deal of all independent firms can be seen as family firms, as many firms originally were founded by a family and evolve trough generations. (Poutziouris, 2003 p.206) This influence the company on many different areas, some of the respondents claims that it is easier to make decisions and that it feels more secure and a strong cohesion among some of the employees. All of the respondents claim that the company are following upcoming demands on the market and that this vital in order to survive in their business area. Zahra (2004, p.363) claims entrepreneurship is important to reflect upon within a family firm, if this is attained the company can be able to improve their service or products and also increase the productivity and revenue. The company have clear goals which Company 1 is setting on the company once every other month. According to Hoy and Verser, (1994, p.12) A family firm have three intertwined factors, which can create difficulties. The factors consist of the owner, the family and the management.

**Culture**
Management believes that the culture is very strong but some of the personal engagement has been lost due to the mergers. The management strives to proclaim a committed organisation and the willingness to be apparent. At the same time some of the respondents feel that the management have deserted them. Acoring to Lund (2003, p.229) a functional merger is not only depending on the economical outcomes the cultural compatibility is also of great importance. Cultural struggles within an organisation can easily destroy some of the wanted economical benefits, it could also create an unwanted workplace for the employees. The culture within the organisation is experienced differently by the respondents. Most of the respondents do not think that the internal communication is functioning. The management is aware of the communication problem. Several of the respondents claims that it exists a united coherent culture within the organisation, when at the same time a limited number of respondents claims that the culture of the organisation has created
a sense of loneliness instead of a united group. According to Terry and O’Brien (2001, p.272) when different group foundations are being made and when a comparison is done individuals tend to choose to enter the group which is the most agreeable and closest to the individuals' preferences. This group is called the “in-group” the groups which are not chosen and unwanted the individual is called “out-groups”. The basic principle is that the “in-groups” always is seen as more favourable and more superior when the individual compares them against other groups. The personnel believe that differences exist in the culture between the cities of Umeå and Skellefteå. These differences affect the entire organisation and the work environment when internal struggles become evident. Balmer, Dinnie (1991, p.184) claims that merger situations creates tensions when different corporate identities meet as there are problems in declaring which identity is the favourable one.

Quality and HR
According to the management the company’s offered service is focused on customer requirements and high quality offerings. According to Smith (1998, p.119-120) the competition today increases in the service industry, one way to create a “new” or improved service or to uphold a high quality to the offered service is to add more value to the offered service. This puts more demand on everyone in the organisation to understand the customers and learn how they could add value, or create a service which suits the customer. The personnel are also inline with the management on the quality orientation but mentions that the quality might have been affected by the rapid growth of the company which has created difficulties due to the heavy work load. Gummesson (1998, p.11) claims that the employees should adjust their service towards the company’s missions, objectives and strategies. Some of the respondents claim that it is complicated to provide the customer with perfect quality. According to the gap model which is presented by Parasurman, Zeithamal and Barry and the first gap: Company perceptions of consumer expectations, customer expectations might not be inline with the company’s perceived executed service quality. The firm is not able to recognize and identify the level of customer expectation.

![GAP model](image)

Figure 16: GAP model, by Zeithamal and Leonard (1985, p.44, figure 2)

According to several respondents there is a need for more feedback and appraisals from the management. The management on the other hand claims that appraisal meeting occurs on a regular basis. Dessler (2004, p.12) claims, having a well defined and physical evaluations and appraisals, with own personnel, are vital if the organisations wants to be able to develop the individuals inside an organisation. Education and personal development is also something which some of the employees would like to have more of. The time issue when to execute the education worries respondents to a high extent.
The stated theoretical framework consists of a number of different theoretical areas, these areas have differed in magnitude. All of the theories have been of importance for us, but at the same time some of the theories have generated more benefits for us when analysing the chosen organisation. The theory concerning culture, have benefited us with information concerning different individuals behaviour in terms of organisational alterations. The merger and acquisitions theory have together with the culture theory created a strong foundation and an insight in the transpired situation. Further the importance of quality in this specific organisation has made the quality theory relevant when acknowledging the value and evaluation of a service organisation. The communication parts in the network section has in this case study provided and enlighten us with different problem areas. The social identity theory, the corporate identity theory, family firms and the organisational theory have all provided us with valid information, but have to be considered as additional theory to the other more acknowledged ones. Below one can find our illustrated model concerning our chosen theories and in what why our final interpretation and usefulness of them have been. Our first interpretation of them, one can find on page 17 and during the process of writhing this thesis the elucidation of them altered in to this demonstration.

Figure 17: New theoretical framework model, created by authors

Our interpretation of the theoretical framework in correlation with the gathered empirical data has revealed that the organisational change is due to the merger/acquisition as illustrated in the model. Where the cultural aspects in the organisation where found to be of a higher significance as illustrated, where those parts are in the centre of the model, whereas the other theories such as network, organisation, family firm and HR are surrounding the cultural centre core.
11. Final discussion

In this chapter we will firstly present our final discussion with our answer and conclusion to the research question. Further we intend to create valid recommendations for future research within this area. Our second intention is to make this study a benefit for the public avail and present ideas worth considering when facing an upcoming merger or organisational change.

11.1 Discussion

First we once again want to enlighten our thesis statement and the purpose of the study.

How should a small expanding company manage the integration of acquired companies and at the same time maintain a sought identity within the organisation, in order to reach their main strategic objective?

We aim to investigate how an expanding organisation within the logistics industry should manage their organisational transition, from being an originally small company to become a larger one through mergers and acquisitions. From a case study we aim to attain essential knowledge necessary to be able to find relevant answers to how they manage their organisational transition.

**Culture**

The transformation for the studied organisation from a small to a larger organisation has according to us and by the respondents not been achieved without trouble. The premier reason behind the problems originates, according to us from cultural differences. On the basis of the replies from our respondents we have been able to find cultural differences among the two offices in Umeå and Skellefteå, but as we see it there also exist cultural differences inside the offices mainly between the management and the employees.

As we perceive the case, several of the employees still considers themselves to belong to the “former” company Company 1 and has not made the transitional change in a psychological manner. This affects the organisation as it creates a gap between the employees and the management since their ability to strive for the same objectives is lost due to the apparent gap. One of our examples of this is that the management wants the employees to take their own responsibility and create a coherent correlation towards their customers. At the same time the employees experience the fact that they are left alone with many important decisions which affect the company in a wider extent. The employees also find it hard to cope with the workload which negatively affects their work performance. This not only affects the employees stress level but this is also a concern for the company as they by this attain quality losses.

In this area we have discovered major differences between the two offices since we believe that the employees in Skellefteå are more willing and able to take upon their own responsibility whereas in Umeå we believe that they do not “step up to the plate” and take the same responsibility. This might be a result of the fact that the office in Umeå never has been confronted with a situation in resemblance to the situation which has emerged in Skellefteå, where the market suddenly altered. This might have provided them with the ability to solve difficult problems by themselves, where in Umeå they have been more protected and never had to be challenged in the same manner. The results have been that the people in Umeå might to a larger extent been guided by directions from the management. To be able to solve this problem there is a need of cultural transition within the company. Either the management acknowledge the situation in a severe manner and take a more active role, or actively aim for everyone to take the necessary responsibility to accomplish the desired culture.

**Quality**

The quality in the organisation could according to us be improved in different areas. This is inline with the fact that there today are lacks when it comes to internal education and appraisals. These are two important factors which should be utilised when the aim is to achieve high service quality. In order to reach this quality the employees experience a need of this and consider the current situation to be of poor standard. The management on the other hand believes this to
already be present in the company and this is also a major problem according to us, when important improvement areas are neglected. Internally everyone in the company is aware of this fact and eulogizes service quality. A quality issue inside the organisation concerning the communication between the company and their customers are the fact that the customers have difficulties to get in contact with the company. This is something that the customers are willing to accept under a relatively short time period but will not accept this during a longer period of time. By the information which we have received this is a major problem as they are constantly under large work loads and therefore have trouble to both arrange transports as well as satisfy customer needs.

Due to this we recommend the employees and the management to sit down and discuss imperative requirements as it is the responsibility of the management to actively call upon these requests. When creating an atmosphere of actively learning where both the employees and the management work together, you are able to reach the essential objectives concerning quality and learning

Communication, network and organisation
The communication inside the organisation needs to be improved to a higher extent, this when it both restrains the internal communication as well as the communication towards the customers. In order to improve the communication between the management and the employees the role of the manager needs to be evaluated. Due to the responses we obtained from the respondents they emphasized a more present manager in order to have someone to actively discuss ideas with. One solution for this is either that manager is taking more responsibility at the office or creating some sort of support function for the employees, such as group leaders located on each of the offices.

How to improve the communication could easily be done if obtaining additional employees which will reduce the workload on the employees, which will benefit them with additional time to communicate with the other employees. A second alternative is by reallocate the employees based on their specific business areas, having the employees in Skellefteå to work with one business area and the employees in Umeå to be in charge of the other ones. This will hopefully create a situation were it is easier for the employees to interact with each other. The communication with the customers has to be improved in order not to loose important customer relations. One way to improve this is to have a phone support function were customers submit vital information were after the customer information is stored in a data information base. The information is the easily accessible for the employees who are able to make the right decisions concerning the requests. If this system is utilised we claim that the employees stress level would decrease as the phones are not constantly ringing and instead they are more in charge of the service. At the same time the customers will benefit from this when they do not have to be aggravated when trying to get a hold of an occupied employee. When an assessment of the organisation is being made some significant opposition are being found among the employees inside the organisation. Where some claim that the organisation has a good cohesion, when some have the opposite opinion and claims that the cohesion does not exist between them. We claim that this is a problem since this creates an unwanted work environment for some of the employees and by this creates tensions due to this, which will have an effect on all different areas within the organisation. An evaluation of this is hard for us to scrutinize, but state that this is something which needs some serious damage control.

Mergers and acquisitions
In the merger and acquisition process there has been a loss of the wanted cultural identity within the organisation. We claim that this is mainly caused by the management way of handling this process. This fast transition process additional to the lack of communication between the employees and the management did not result in a coherent culture between the two organisations. We claim that this could have been avoided if a greater communication before the actual merger as well as continuous feedback during the process and after would have benefited the company with a more coherent culture.
11.2 Produced proposals from the conclusion of the study

How should a small expanding company manage the integration of acquired companies and at the same time maintain a sought identity within the organisation, in order to reach their main strategic objective?

Company 2’s main objective is to provide the customer with a high quality service within the special transportation area, which is inline with the customers demand. The main issue then is how to create a coherent organisation which strives together towards this main objective. All of the employees have identified this objective, but at the same time are not striving towards this common goal. How to achieve this phenomenon is something we have declared in the prior discussion. We have further created these key points for an organisation which are facing or have been faced with a similar predicament.

The following key points are hereby acknowledged:

- What does the organisation want to achieve by this process?
- Which values permeates trough the organisations, culture, corporate identity?
- Pay attention to all involved parties and evaluate feedback.
- In correlation to the feedback identify group cohesion and inform involved parties about the forthcoming transition.
- Introduce changes from the periphery to the inner circle.
- Aim for a new corporate unity with one united culture, new name as well as a new logo could be beneficiary for the unification of the organisations.

11.3 Further research

Our suggestions for further research for the studied organisation a complete assessment over the perceived quality is vital. This is inline with our perception of the studied organisation we claim this to be very beneficiary for Company 2, to be reviewed by an additional objective outside party.

Another area we claim to be vital to further asses is the correlation between mergers and quality in a service organisation. By this it could be possible to find relevant areas to improve, when going trough a merger without the expense of quality loss. We claim that the merger situation creates stress on the organisation in question and as the failure rate still is significantly high, it is vital for the organisation to still be able to uphold the wanted quality. This should be taken in consideration despite any organisational problems, resulting from a merger.
12. Criteria of credibility

In this chapter the criteria of credibility will be presented, this in order to give an account for our sincere observations of the phenomenon. Our chosen criteria’s are validity, reliability, intersubjectivity and practical applicability. The importances of presenting these aspects are to further create credibility for the study. In scientific studies it is vital to acknowledge the studied phenomenon in order for the study to reflect the reality. (Ely et al, 1993. p. 104)

12.1 Validity

The validity criterion is connected to the determination of trustworthiness of the gathered data in correlation to what is supposed to be examined. (Kvale, 1993, p.145) Further Johansson-Lindfors (1993, p.165) state that an adequate amount of information and data are to be compiled in order to achieve credibility. We conducted nine interviews with employees relevant to our examined study. The chosen employees are considered to be suitable to attain valid results in accordance to our thesis statement and the purpose of our study. We argue that the compiled empirical information gathered from the respondents have provided us with adequate data. Additionally we are aware of the fact that our perceived trustworthiness may not be evaluated in the same manner by others.12.2 Intersubjectivity

Lundahl, & Skärvad, (1992, p. 80) claims that the foundation of intersubjectivity is related to the fact that the result of a study should reach equivalent results when conducted under equal circumstances. We have sent the gathered empirical data to the respondents in order to provide them with our empirical findings and additionally review the responds to limit the amount of misinterpretation. We did not receive any further comments for additional adjustments. We therefore state that we received approval of our interpretations of the empirical gathered data. This is inline with Johansson-Lindfors (1993) view of intersubjectivity as the participated respondents have had the chance to reassess the data.

12.2 Practical applicability and transferability

When conducting a study it is important that it is applicable in a practical manner for additional individuals not only those who contribute to the study. (Johansson-Lindfors, 1993, p. 167) We claim that the practical applicability of this study is resolute to our produced interview template, final discussion and conclusions of the studied phenomena. We argue that the case is applicable to a number of merging or future merging organisations mainly due to the importance of cultural alterations within group formations. Furthermore we state that our analysis is relevant in different areas depending on varied situations which organisations are in.
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**Interviews:**

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Appendix I - Interview templates

Intervjumanual (Personal) (Swedish)

Bakgrund/ Personlig fakta
Berätta lite om vem du är och vad du gör idag?
- Befattning
- Anställningstid
- Ansvar
  - Hur väl är du insatt i andras ansvarsområden? Finns det backup vid ev sjukdom?
  - Vad anser du är en viktig konkurrensfördel för företaget?
  - Anpassar ni er efter kundernas eventuella krav?
  - Hur väl fungerar samarbetet mellan de anställda, är alla medvetna om vad som sker och vilka transporter som bör prioriteras?

Organisation
- Hur trivs du med ditt arbete och på företaget?
- Vad beror det på?
- Vad ingår i dina huvudsakliga arbetsuppgifter?
- Vad är företaget bra på enligt dig?
- Finns det något som ni skulle kunna bli bättre på?
- Vilket var ditt första intryck av företaget (organisationen) då du började?
- Vad är målet mer er organisation? Vad gör er unika?
- Hur fungerar kommunikationen inom företaget? Internkommunikation?

Kultur
- Anser du att det finns en kultur inom företaget?
- Hur upplever du eran företagskultur? Stark/ Svag?
- Hur genomsyrar den upplevda företagskulturen ditt arbete?
- Finns det någon form av gruppering på arbete?
- Finns det någon form av upplevd hierarki internt mellan de anställda?
- I sådana fall hur upplevs den från din sida?
- Upplever ni någon form av förändring efter företagsförvärvet gällande kulturen?

Företagsförvärv
- Hur hanterades företagsförvärvet?
- Hur introducerades personalen i det nya företaget?
- Förändrades företaget i och med förvärven? Hur?
- Påverkade förvärvet dig och ditt arbete?
- Har du lyckats anpassa dig till den nya organisationen?
- Upplevde du någon form av störande moment under perioden kring företagsförvärvet?, som på något sätt förhindrade ditt arbete exempelvis stress etc.

Familje företag
- Upplever du företaget som ett familjeföretag?
- Vad anser du karakteriserar ett familjeföretag?
- Känner du tillhörighet till företaget?
- Påverkar ägandeförhållandet företaget i någon mån?
- Anser du att det är en öppen dialog mellan ägare/ anställda?
- Anpassas företaget efter rådande markandsförhållanden?
- Vilka mål har företaget?

**Kvalitet**
- Vad anser du att företaget erbjuder?
- Vad är företagets äffärsidé?
- Hur skulle du bedöma service kvalitén?
- Vad får kvalitet kosta?
- Hur kontrollerar ni er service/ kvalitén? Chaufförer etc.
- Vad förväntar era kunder av er?
- Använder ni er av någon slags feed-back instrument för att få reda på eventuella brister?

**Human service?**
- Sker någon form av internutbildning?
- Använder ni er av ett utvecklingssystem för individen?
- Får du feedback på ditt arbete och känner du dig uppskattad?
- Får du ta del av eventuella feedback från kunder?
Interview template (employees)

**Background / Personal Fact**
- Position?
- Time of employment?
- Responsibilities?
- How good knowledge do you have of others responsibilities, ability to act as a backup due to sickness?
- What are the company’s competitive advantages according to you?
- How well do the company adapt to customers demands?
- How do the cooperation among the employees function?

**Organisation**
- Do you enjoy your work? / Why?
- What are your main responsibilities and what do they mean?
- What are the company good at?
- What could be improved?
- What where your first impression of the new organisation?
- How is the employees organised in groups or individual, what are the responsibilities?
- What is the main objective for the organisation and what makes you unique?
- How does the internal communication function?

**Culture**
- Do you experience any special corporate culture? Is it strong/weak?
- Does the corporate culture affect your daily work?
- Are there any internal groupings among the employees?
- Do you experience an internal hierarchy among the personal?
- Do you experience any changes in corporate culture after the mergers between the organisations?

**Mergers and acquisitions**
- How where the merger conducted?
- How where you informed about the merger
- Did the organisation change after the merger where conducted?
- Did you get affected by the merger?
- Have you been able to adapt to the new organisation?
- Did you experience any disturbing elements during the time period of the merger?, that affected you work negatively or positive?

**Family firms (differences)**
- Do you consider the company to be a family firm?
- What do you consider characterises a family firm?
- Do you feel belongingness to the company?
- Do you feel that the owner relations affect the company?
- Is there an open dialog between the employees and the management?
- What is the goal for the company?

**Quality**
- What do you consider the company offers to its customers?
- What is the corporate idea according to you?
- How would you judge the quality of the service?
• Has quality a price?
• How do you or the organisation check the quality?
• What do you consider the customers expects form you and your service?
• Do you or the company utilize any feedback system?

**Human service?**
• Do you have any internal education program inside the organisation?
• Do you have any program for further development in the company?
• Do you receive any feedback or appreciation from management?
• Have you been able to receive any feedback from customers?
Intervjumanual (Management) (Swedish)

Bakgrund/ Personlig fakta
Berätta lite om vem du är och vad du gör idag?

- Befattning
- Ansvar
- Anställningstid

Bakgrundsfakta om företaget

- Historik
- Verksamheten
- Vad står företaget för?
- Antal anställda
- Framtid

- Hur ser er affärsidé ut?
- Hur mycket styr kunden?
- Vad anser du är en viktig konkurrensfördel för företaget?
- Hur mycket styr kunden över transporttiderna, vilka krav ställer de på er?
- Anpassar ni er efter kundernas eventuella krav?
- Hur väl fungerar samarbetet mellan de anställda är alla medvetna om vad som sker och vilka transporter som bör prioriteras?

Organisation

- Hur trivs du med ditt arbete och på företaget?
- Vad ingår i dina huvudsakliga arbetsuppgifter?
- Vad är företaget bra på enligt dig?
- Finns det något som ni skulle kunna bli bättre på?
- Hur är personalen organiserad? Hur ser ansvardsfördelnings ut? Inviduellt i grupper eller arbetslag?
- Vad är målet mer er organisation? Vad gör er unika?
- Hur fungerar kommunikationen inom företaget? Internkommunikation?

Kultur

- Anser du att det finns en kultur inom företaget?
- Hur upplever du eran företagskultur? Stark / Svag?
- Hur genomsyrar den upplevda företagskulturen ditt arbete?
- Finns det någon form av gruppering på arbete?
- Upplever ni någon form av förändring efter företagsförvärvet gällande kultur?

Företagsförvärv

- Hur gick företagsförvärvet till?
- Hur hanterades företagsförvärvet? / Lång eller kort övergång?
- Hur introducerades personalen i det nya företaget?
- Förändrades företaget i och med förvärv? Hur?
- Hur upplever du att personalen kunde anpassa sig till det nya företaget? Hur upplevde du att anpassningen gick tillväga?
- Vet du hur stämningen är i de förvärvade delarna? Positivt/ negativt inställda på förändringarna

**Familje företag**

- Upplevs detta som ett familjeföretag?
- Känner du tillhörighet till företaget?
- Anser du att det är en öppen dialog mellan ägare/ anställda?
- Anpassas företaget efter rådande markandsförhållanden?

**Kvalitet**

- Vad är kvalitet för er?
- Vad får kvalitet kosta?
- Hur kontrollerar ni kvaliten?
- Hur väl överensstämmer eran tjänst med kundens förväntningar?
- Vad förväntas av från era kunder?

**Nätverk**

- Vilken typ av relationer finns det inom företaget?
- Hur arbetar ni med era relationer?
- Hur väl förstår ni era kunder?
- Hur viktigt är det att förstå / inte förstå kundens behov?
- Är ni nöjda med erat service utbud?
- Påverkar eran företagskultur eran relation till kunden?

**Human service**

- Sker någon form av internutbildning?
- Använder ni er av ett utvecklingssystem för individen?
- Sker någon utvärdering av de anställda?
Interview template (The manager)

Background / Personal Facts
Tell us who you are and what you are doing today?

- Position
- Responsibility
- Time for employment

Background fact about the company
- History of the company?
- Facts about the company?
- Number of employees?
- Business idea/ concept/ future?
- What is the company able to offer? Goods/ transporting, cargo?
- How much is the customer in control of the service offer?
- What do you think is the company’s main competitive advantage?
- How is the transport planned and arranged?
- To what extent is the customer in charge of the transportation schedules/ timetables? What kind of demands are they setting on you?
- Do you adjust to possible customer demand?
- How well is the cooperation functioning between the co-workers? Are they well aware of which transports which should be prioritised?

Organisation
- Are you satisfied with your work at the company?
- What is this due to?
- What is your main duty?
- What is the company good at according to you?
- Are there areas within the company which needs to be improved?
- How is the personnel organised? Individually/ groups or teams?
- What is the objective with this organisation/ company? What makes you special/ unique?
- How is the communication within the company working? Internal communication?

Culture
- Do you claim that a certain culture exists within the company?
- How do you experience your company culture? Strong/ Weak?
- How is the experienced culture affecting your work?
- Does it control your working style?
- Are there any forms of grouping at the company?
- Are there any experienced hierarchy internally between the employees?
- Do you experience any changes after the merger in terms of culture

Mergers and acquisitions
- How was the merger being performed?
- How was the merger handled?
- Long or short time for the transition period?
- How were the personnel being introduced to the merger?
- Did the company change when the merger was performed? In what way?
- Did the merger affect your work?
How do you experience the employees ability to adjust to the new organisation? How do you experience this adjustment was being executed?

Did you experience any disturbing issues which prevented you in your work? Did you feel any stress during the merger?

**Family firms**
- Is this company perceived to be a family firm?
- Is there any advantages to be an employee at a family firm?
- Do you feel belongingness to the company?
- Does the ownership affects the company?
- Do you regard it to be an open dialog between the owners/employees?
- Do the company adjust to prevailing market conditions?

**Quality**
- What is quality?
- How much is quality aloud to cost?
- How do you control quality?
- How well is your service agreed by your customer’s expectations?
- What do your customers expect?

**Network**
- What type of relations exists within the company?
- How do you work towards your relations?
- How well do you understand your customers?
- How important is it to understand your customer’s needs?
- Are you satisfied with your service offering?
- Does you company culture affect your relationship to your customers?

**HR**
- Are you having any appraisal meetings?
- Do you reward the employees on regular bases?
- Do you have regular employee manager conversation meetings?
- Do you provide you employees with feedback? If so, what kind of feedback?
Appendix II - Empirical data

Respondent A
Background / Personal fact
Respondent A has been working in Company 2 since the beginning of 2003 and is in charge of the administrative duties. This includes, taking care of invoices, correcting prices, updating documents, and handing out prices to customers. Respondent A claims that it is hard to have a complete overview of what everyone else in the company does, but at the same time asserts that it is no problem to handle any administrative duties if the one person who is in charge of it is at home, or absent for any reason. One of the best competitive advantages according to A is the fact that Company 2 are able so solve problems that no other transportations companies are able to solve. Respondent A claims that the company has a very good experience in this area.

When working with the administration, respondent A does not have the ability to meet the customers on regular basis. The few times it happens are when there are demands or requests from the customers, then it can be on issues such as price or invoice enquires. Respondent A claims that the internal cooperation in the company works well. Everyone is located close to each other and due to this the respondent claims that the openness and the possibility for a good communication are in reach. The internal computer system is a good way to see how much there is to be done, in this system they are able to see booked transport, upcoming missions etc.

Organisation
Respondent A claims to be found of the job and thinks it is very challenging and developing. A also feels comfortable with the co-workers and experience appreciation from them. The organisation is very customer oriented and is always able to solve transportation problems for its customers. This in relation to their flexible fleet of vehicles makes them very agonistic towards their competitors says A. The internal communication is one concern which the respondent feels could be improved and claims that it should be possible to that in this area within the company. Respondent A claim that the dialogue between the owners also needs to be worked on, this in order to receive better directives.

The first impression which respondent A got of the company was the good cohesion between the employees. Respondent A noticed the positive atmosphere when going in to the break room, according to A everyone was cheerful and talked happily with one another.

The organisation in the company is divided based on their business areas such as, domestic, abroad, or special-wood and then the administration and sales force help them in different areas such as getting new customers meting the demands of the customers etc. Respondent A claims that the main goal with the organisation is to be very keen and open to new demands and pay attention to what the customer wants as well as the other co-workers. A communicates mainly with the co-workers inside the organisation and externally by using e-mail as well as by oral communication and the intranet. On the intranet they publish news for the company and other important things which can affect the employees.

Culture
Respondent A claims that others outside of this organisation might experience them and their culture in a certain way which they themselves do not see. The unity within the organisation is something that A claims is something that feels special for the company, they do not feel that they are two different companies,

“We are one united company.”

Respondent A does not experience any special group formation within the company except for in the divided business areas. A also claims that the hierarchy is more noticeable within the former company 1, than in company 2 were almost no internal hierarchy can be observed. The major difference after the merger is the old habit of taking care of main tasks by themselves in Umeå. After the merger general duties such as booking a flight ticket is now something that has to be
done through the secretary in Skellefteå. A claim that it was something the employees in Umeå were accustomed to do by themselves. But at the same time it feels like Company 2 and the employees in Umeå does not get that affected but instead ride alongside the company and pays attention to the new changes. Respondent A came from the former company 1 and had been working with the same tasks and with similar customers before the merger. A was happily surprised when the new company was formed, this meant new job opportunities. Before the merger Company 1's special transportation where having difficulties and when the new company was formed did not have any problems in those areas.

**Mergers and acquisition**

Regarding the mergers the company have done during the last year's respondent A claims that the merger with Skellefteå was the one which affected the organisation the most. Mainly because A felt there was a major difference between the two organisations regarding culture and work. The merger created a lot of double work, when everything had to be done twice, this due to the fact that is was to different companies, who handled things in different ways. Examples of the difficulties were that some of the drivers were employed by the former company and some of them by the new one. The merger to create Company 2 was never discussed among the employees at Company 1 before the actual merger, it was a fact which they had to accept and adapt to when that day arrived. One of the problems which arose when the merger with Skellefteå was final was that the customers had different agreements with both companies in Umeå and Skellefteå. Legitimate problem arouse, when the assessment based on which of them should be valid?

The most difficult things with the merger which A experienced was the fact that the customers still was booking the service with the old price from the former company. The customers did not realise that the old company did not exist and did not know what kind of company 2 were, but when the situation was explained to them they usually accepted it in a positive manner. The merger with Malå did not affect A's work to a greater extent, except for some of the duties which went to Malå. The different owners also affected the company, in the beginning it was more of an “us against you” spirit, although it was getting better as time went by.

**Family firms**

Respondent A characterises a family owned company as a company that has a good connection within the organisation and that is renewable. Respondent A claim that in the way that you notice that Company 2 is a family owned company is the fact that it is easier to make decisions and that feels good. It is also easier when you know each other within the company and you feel belongingness to one another. But one thing which A experience is that Company 1 is better when it comes to make events or happenings for the employees outside of the work.

According to respondent A the company follow upcoming demands on the market. One example is the new computer system which will be implemented and will help the company in keeping control of upcoming tasks. The fact that the company always tries to help the customers with transport solutions makes them very flexible and adjustable to the different requirements.

"You have to adjust if you want to remain in the game says A !"

There are certain economic aims which the company follows, but those are more related to Company 1's objective than towards Company 2. The respondent claims that they receive some commendation now when it is going well for the company.

**Quality**

According to respondent A the company offers good service quality with the motto “nothing is impossible to solve” and this is shown when the customers regularly crave their service. A also feels that they have a good reputation in the business as they receive many request and questions from other companies. The offered quality is regularly checked by a customer survey and by the sales force that has the most interaction with the customers. The employees can take part of the surveys to see the results, claims respondent A. A also states that they get feedback from customers by telephones calls or E-mails, this usually occurs when they are not satisfied with the
service. It is important to understand the different needs from different customers since they usually differ to a great extent.

**HR**

Respondent A says that they are offered internally based education by the company. Not that long ago the employees were asked by the director, if there was some special education which they wanted to participate in or needed. But A claims that there isn't any time to attend such courses, even if A would want to, in order to make the job more effective.

**Respondent B**

**Background / Personal fact**

Respondent B is in charge of transports and is a transport coordinator. B is also in charge of contacts with the customers, making deals, selling transport solutions and setting prices towards the customers. Respondent B has been working with Company 2 since the beginning and before that, employed by Company 1 with the same kind of duties. Respondent B feels that there is extensive cooperation and work sharing and therefore experience a familiarity with the other people’s fields of responsibility.

Respondent B says that the company’s specialisations on complex transports along with their local support but also a direct and personal service, instead of a call-centre, are to be seen as key ingredients to their success and regarded their competitive advantages. On the question on the customer demands and influence, respondent B claims that most are set by the customer. Although, B also states that they always try to have a dialogue so that problems are dealt with so that both parts can benefit from each transport solution.

Respondent B claims that the group of employees is very cohesive seeing as the majority has been involved since the founding of Company 2. Respondent B also mention that the computer system works as a good indicator on how much there is to do.

**Organisation**

Respondent B feels very comfortable at work; much thanks to that B finds the job extremely stimulating through the varied assignments and considers this to be quite unique and interesting. The excellent solidarity in the company (Company 1 included) contributes to make the whole experience even better.

"If you have a problem, there is always a solution. If you ask someone to help, you never have to feel that you are stuck and in the end you will reach your goal. That is the way it is."

Respondent B feels that the company are equipped with the right resources to solve a number of transportation problems since they have a vehicle park that enables their business concept, "nothing is impossible". The customers can feel secure and if any problems would arise, help is only a phone call away. Respondent B states that the communication between the drivers and the office could be improved. Respondent B came from Company 1 and did not have any special feelings about the merger. B only felt that it would be fun and interesting with new customers.

The company is divided into multiple sections based on their branch of activity. There are often two people responsible, one in Umeå and one in Skellefteå. These two are both responsible for the activity and that the trucks are rolling. Malå has the head responsibility when it comes to transports of wood. The organisation schedules are located at Company 2. The respondent claim that the communication works well and that it mainly consists of communique trough e-mail or verbally. There are also plans to invest in a new computer program that would work in the same way as a chat-room. This should help increase communication further according to B. With this program you would have instant contact between Umeå, Malå and Skellefteå. Today the employees spend much time on the phone and sends mail via Outlook.
**Culture**

Respondent B has not observed any difference between the two companies, both are quite compact. B states that Company 1 has a special culture due to the amount of time it has been existing, and with all the different drivers and people that has helped create it. Respondent B does not experience any internal hierarchy between the employees.

Respondent B feels that the culture in both Umeå and Skellefteå are quite rigid, there is a feeling that both companies has done things in their respective ways and no one are willing to change their behaviour.

"We think that we are the ones that are doing it right, they think they are. It has always been that way". But who is to say what the right way is?

Respondent B felt a greater cultural difference between Umeå and Skellefteå when the two were merged. This much because of another view on how a company should be managed. In Skellefteå there were more individual secretaries and the respondent felt a stricter hierarchy that inhibited the workflow between the sections. There were no changes in this, neither when Company 2 was founded or when Malå was acquired.

"There will always be problems when one finds one self in this predicament, which is to tell the other what way of doing things is right or wrong?"

**Mergers and acquisition**

There had been cooperation between Skellefteå and Umeå before, but with the merger came another form of teamwork. The persons within the two companies came to look at another in a different way. Respondent B didn’t notice any special introduction with the merger. It has mainly been a matter of uniting Company 1 with the other company. The acquisition of Malå passed without notice. The staff already knew about the company that merged with Company 1 in order to create Company 2.

Respondent B said that from being only two persons that worked in ones section the merger with Skellefteå created a collision. B points out that they still run two different computer systems, one for Company 1 and another for Company 2. This creates problems with sending invoices and sometimes Company 1 gets things that should have gone to Company 2 and vice versa. This also creates confusion among the customers who have hired Company 1, but then receives an invoice from Company 2. This will however be taken care of with the implementation of the new computer system that will be in use from the beginning of 2007.

The only problem that the merger created was the problems happening within the walls with the newly employed. Problems that arouse were which person who was supposed to do what and in what way. Customers have had the problem of not knowing if they have been in contact with Skellefteå or Umeå, or where the person that they have spoken with currently is. However, respondent B stresses that the problem only has been within the walls.

According to respondent B, the employees are used to do much of the work as a habit, but due to the company’s wish to be flexible much stress has come from unclear guidelines on whom to ask about prices and other inputs. This creates a lot of impatience and tension due to the employees’ unwillingness not wanting to invent the wheel twice.

From the beginning, there were some difficulties associated with not keeping the two companies apart. This came from existing customers who had different deals with Umeå than in Skellefteå. Problems on which price that should be charged and what terms that should apply caused irritation. This also since Company 1 in Umeå was Skellefteås biggest customer.

Respondent B did not have any problems adjusting to the new organisation. B thinks that it might have been more difficult for the people in Skellefteå to adapt to the new rules.
Even though respondent B did not think that the structure to come to a decision in the old organisation was especially long, B still thinks that has been an improvement in the new organisation. This due to the chain of command has been shortened and the time to a decision as well. If there is something special that has to be made, there is a short and effective way to come to terms with it. This creates a special, positive feeling.

“We are a small company and have a lot in common; we have parties and pay a lot of attention to one another.”

**Family firms**

A family business, according to B is quick to do alterations to meet new challenges and have a short chain of command. Respondent B feels belongingness towards the company. B feels that the company and the other employees show a lot of respect. B also feels that if the mother company has decided something, the decision is final. B wants to affect the company so that they come closer to one and other. B stresses the importance of “us” as opposed to “we-and-them”. B thinks that the best way to achieve this is to have an open climate and good communication and should exist on every level trough out the company.

B says that there is an open dialogue between the employees and the owners when there is time. B says that because the company is doing so well and expanding rapidly one thinks that the dialogue is shifting towards the background and is something that they will have to work harder with. Respondent B says that the idea with an open communication is something that lies in the company vision and that they are continuously working with it.

The market is at the moment very stable, which brings a lot of job opportunities claims B. One has to adjust to the current market conditions, one example is the new computer system but also the necessity to update the fleet of vehicles in order to be able to solve new customer demands. The cooperation between Company 2 and Company 1 also brings the opportunity and possibility to use adaptable means of experience and knowledge.

“We work even harder”

The company have clear goals which Company 1 are setting on the company once every other month, states respondent B. Due to these goals we are able to see how, the company is doing. Right now the company is doing very good that we do not have time to think about the old days when it did not go that well says B.

“Back in the old days when the company was showing us poor results we wanted to know the reason behind these figures!”

**Quality**

Respondent B says that the company is offering a transportation trough a specific contract with a high service standard. Most of the transports which the company receive are too difficult to carry out for other transportation companies. The company is offering the service both in Sweden and abroad and B claim that this provides the company with an advantage. The great capacity makes it easy for them to carry out difficult transports with high quality. In the special transport segments we have decided to say yes to most of the transports which other companies turns down. The policy in the company is that if you have closed a deal with a customer this is the one you have to focus on as your priority.

“The service which others can not manage we should handle instead”

The negative aspect with a company which are growing in such a fast pace, is the feeling that we sometimes are growing too much to be able to offer the same service quality argues B. The quality is for the most part good, if the service is actually provided for the customer. Back in the old days we wanted more jobs now we are looking for more drivers to execute the job.

“We have to turn customers down even tough we do not like to!”
The level of the service quality is the foundation of the business and therefore very important. If there are no cheap alternatives available when you execute a service, it sometimes has to be done with the expensive alternative instead, argues B. Respondent B believes that if you have closed a deal with a customer then the service can cost a great deal of money and then the money issue is not the important factor; the service quality on the other hand is.

The quality is very important according to respondent B, the service quality is controlled through web surveys and customers. Respondent B believes that more work could be done in this area and would like to make follow ups of some accomplished services, to see the outcome and receive feedback, but this is something that is hard to implement today when there is no time for it.

Many of our customers come in contact with us over the phone or trough email or fax. Numerous of our customers have heard of the company trough word of mouth and want us to solve their problems. We have a booking system which some of our customers utilise, but the contact is mainly over the phone. Sometimes the customer probably experience us as a very busy company, this due to the fact that we are always on the phone and it can be hard to get a hold of us.

Respondent B claims that the company helps the customers to get in contact with other possible customers, in order to be as cooperative towards their customers as possible. According to B it is important to understand the customers otherwise you do not get any new customers.

"Sometimes you do not understand your customers at all and then you have to tell them to solve it by themselves!"

**Human resource**

Respondent B claims to have been offered to take part of an internal education a while ago. Which B did not take part of. B says that an education in the computer system is something that would be of interest. B is also taking part of health program which is conducted by the company.

"Many times you have to learn it by yourself!"

**Respondent C**

**Background / Personal fact**

Respondent C works both at Company 1 and Company 2. Cs responsibility and main task are to handle invoices and other administration duties. C has the same responsibility areas at both the companies and has been working in this manner for the past two years. Respondent C has the best knowledge in the administration section and would be able to cover up for another person in this area, but in the other departments C does not have the knowledge to help out if needed.

Respondent C claims that the company’s main competitive advantage it the ability to handle specially customised transports and their solid knowledge in transportation. Respondent C claim that the customer is the one who sets the demands and it is their obligation within the company to satisfy them. Respondent C claims that the company’s computer system provides C with important information. The system presents a clear picture of which areas in the company that needs assistance, this mainly concerns the administrative areas.

**Organisation**

Respondent C enjoys the work at both the companies and claims it to be stimulating thanks to the varying tasks. The fact that respondent C works at two companies makes it even more stimulating, as this results in a larger number of different customers. C feels that the company highly value their employee’s comfortable zone, anything that C needs for the job is easily fixed, when asked for.

"You never have to accept a dreadful chair or something else that negatively could affect your work."

Respondent C claims that it is the people within the company which are the ones who provide with the pleasant surroundings. We have a very positive crew at this company claims C.
Respondent C claims that there are always things that the company can improve in, the lack of communication between the different offices are one factor which C thinks is evident to elucidate. C feels more belongingness towards Company 1 rather than company 2.

Respondent C’s first impression of the company was the difficulty to know the roll of the drivers. C could not elucidate if the drivers were a part of the company or if they were an outside hired workforce. C still struggle with the ability to take responsibility for both the drivers and the company, there are a lot of things that have to be matched. You have to do your best because you have eyes on you from all different sections and have to act as a chameleon. But C claims that sometimes it is hard in terms of the social aspect, you feel that you are in the middle between all the subdivided co-workers. The positive aspect is that it is always someone who notices if you are doing anything wrong and can help you says C.

The organisation is divided by responsibilities and placed in either Umeå, Skellefteå or Malå. The staff are divided in accordance to their working assignments which then is divided on the chosen offices. C claims that there are different alignments in the company were everyone has to be a expert in their special section, that is why the company is divided in different parts. In the administration section you are not as closely attached to your specific area and you have the benefit of being more open towards the other sections within the company. You always try to keep yourself updated to be able to help out and not to be totally fixed Respondent C. C claims that the communications between the employees are functioning well and that is mainly done through the intranet, email or verbally.

Culture
The culture within the company is based upon the fact that there are two companies placed in one so to speak. C feels more at home at Company 1, but Company 2 also shares the same foundation values as Company 1. C claims that their good verbal dialog between the employees could be something that affects the company to have a positive environment. People do not complain in the organisation, much of this has to do with the fact that there are too much work to handle and they do not have the time says C. Right now the economy is facing an economic boom and there is a lot to do at the company due to this.

The biggest transition in the cultural aspect in relation to the merger and acquisition is the difference between the offices in Umeå and Skellefteå. Respondent C does not experience any special hierarchy within Company 2 in Umeå, whereas in Skellefteå the experience was quite the opposite. We experience a high structured hierarchy in Skellefteå, in comparison to here in Umeå, where it is a very open climate with no superior whereas in Skellefteå they are very closely tided to their roles as manager and secretary. In Umeå we do not have a special secretary instead everyone are handling the protocol, says C. You really felt that you were not used to have it structured in that way, because you were used of handling this by yourself.

“We think that we have a more modern way of thinking and they are one step behind us, they are locked to their own believes and we are better at exploring new things”

Mergers and acquisition
The first reaction towards the merger and acquisition was that it was a positive refreshing event. The personal was informed about the new company 2, before the actual start, and it where no mayor problems, as most of them already knew each other from before. When it comes to the mergers and how it has affected the work, the respondent answered that it seemed to be bigger differences in terms of work strategies between Umeå and Skellefteå. Respondent C also believed that the people from Skellefteå had a harder time to adjust to the fact they where a part of Company 2 in Umeå, as they had other ways of doing things and a more hierarchal structure. The only mayor problem in Umeå was the fact that the customers had received different prices from Skellefteå and Umeå, this created difficulties when sorting out which prices that should be the used were.

C’s mayor difficulty in terms of the merger was to see the areas and examine were they belonged and to who? In the beginning it felt like they stole our transports, but after a while most people
adjusted themselves to the new situation. People in the organisation now have to think
differently, the reality is that it is one united company. When reflecting of the customer aspect,
the most difficult thing for them has been to know which company they have hired, Company 1
or Company 2, this can create difficulties in terms of the invoices.

The biggest affect of the merger in terms of Cs responsibilities in the organisation was the
complexity of problems surrounding prices on the customers between Umeå and Skellefteå. C
thinks that this problem should have been dealt with from the sales force, especially since many
of the agreements had expired. But otherwise C had no problem when adjusting to the new
organisation.

Family firms
C experiences a company to be a family firm in relation to its size and then preferably a smaller
size company. Respondent C claims that Company 2 is a family firm due to its strong cohesion
its effectiveness thanks the short distance between the management and the employees, than you
can receive quick responds. Also the fact that they call upon birthdays and other special events
even tough Company 1 has a bigger involvement in these areas. Every other year we are
supposed to do things together with each other and every unit area manager has the ability to do
something for the staff during the year, this to create a stronger cohesion. Respondent C claims
to feel belongingness towards the company and right now when everything is going so well it is
easy to feel this and cohesion between one another. Respondent C claims that the dialog between
the managers and the employees needs to be improved, at the moment there is not an open
dialog between them. Respondent C claims that there are smaller fears against each other in the
commencement process of the merger.

The company adjust to the different market demands and this is something that is vital in order
to survive in the business asserts C. Changes are essential in terms of creating future success.
Company 2 is a flexible company has the objective of constant development, some examples are
changes in the computer system with focus on the invoice system which is beneficiary to C. All
the different objectives are set in accordance to Company 1 and they have put out how much of
a profit margin that the company should attain in only a couple of years.

Quality
According to C, company 2 is a very flexible transportation company, who are able to carry out
difficult transport solutions. This is also the company’s business concept declares C. The quality
in the company is hard to evaluate thinks C, but assumes it is good. The quality within the
company is controlled through questionnaires, this in its turn is useful for the management to be
able to develop the company. It is important to receive feedback from your customers, especially
to recognize mistakes and complaints. The management uses the questionnaire but it is difficult
to know why it has been answered in a certain why, is this a general opinion or thoughts from
only one client, and then why not solve it with that person, instead of changing well functioned
areas, argues C.

The customer comes in contact with us mainly through our present customers argue C and the
contact are mainly done over the telephone or email. Sometimes the company search for the
customers themselves through their sales force. C claims that the general opinion from the
customers is satisfaction and the main complaints are that it is hard to get in touch with them.
Every customer are different and you have to adjust to this, for example some of them wants
their invoices on a daily bases.

HR
At the moment an education in how the new intranet is to be used are proceeding and C was also
offered to participate in a preferred course, but feels that it is no time and need for it at the
moment. But one in computer skills would be something that would interest C.

“You do no prioritize yourself! You tell yourself that you can do it later, but later never happens.”
The feedback which you obtain at the company always comes from the customer or the drivers and not from the management claims C. The customers call you back to thank you or the drivers are happy to receive the correct compensation. This is important according to C, because you need to receive some feedback or else you do not know what you have done wrong or right. Sometimes they have co-worker meetings but it has not happened for a while now at the company.

**Respondent D**

**Background / Personal fact**
Respondent D used to work as a driver at Company 1 and now works as a transportation supervisor in Company 2 since the start up. As a transportation supervisor, D is in charge of the financial part of the trucks, arranges transport service and is making sure that the trucks are kept busy. Respondent D claims that it is important to be able to fill in for one another if it is necessary in the company. D says that those areas would mainly be in transportation because the administration part is not one of D's main tasks.

According to respondent D Company 2 is an efficient company that has got good knowledge in transportation solutions and are able to take on difficult tasks with a successful result. Another competitive advantage that the company are able to correspond to is the short decision link within the company. According to respondent D, customer’s requirements have increased over the years. Nowadays the customer is in total control over the demands and the conditions which they set. The transformation is to accept customer demands to its fullest capability, but also to prioritize certain more beneficial customers and to be in total control of their fleet of vehicles. The transportation times have also become shorter which affect the work negatively when it is harder to maintain high service.

Regarding the cooperation within the company, respondent D claims that this is an area that functions very poorly. D feels that the employees are not at all involved with each other. The only one, one could turn to is the other transportation supervisor claims D. This is mainly due to the large work burden, when all of them have little time to assist one another.

**Organisation**
Respondent D feels that the working conditions have become worse within the organisation. D says that the contact between the employees and the joint owners has decreased. D claims that it is really hard to get in touch with the joint owners and nowadays there are not any meetings with the employees.

"You have to sit alone and even make decisions which you are not fully entitled to make!"

Respondent D claims that the company is good at solving problems for its customers that other companies are not able to solve. The company has this capacity since they are able to reorganize their competence in favour for its customers. They have the capability to have the right truck at the right place at the right time and a flexible and pretty large fleet of vehicles.

On the issue on vital improvements that the company should do respondent D feel there is a urgent need for a better communication and feedback from the management, today and during the last few years there has been a few numbers of actual appraisals. Totally lacks of feedback from the management has made the employees tired and worn out. D thinks that the company have been growing too large in a faster pace than it should, in order to maintain beneficial settings for the employees. According to respondent D customers today have difficulties to get in contact with people at Company 2 this depending on the amount of phone calls which the transport supervisors have each day. This also means that it is hard to carry out your work successfully states D, something that has created frustration among both employees and customers.

Respondent Ds first impression when Company 2 was created was that there were no immediate adjustments. But after some time there were new work assignments such as, new driving distances for the chauffeurs and new vehicles it was also more paper and pencil work at the start
in comparison to the former job at Company 1. All of these new changes made D confused. D says that the company have an intranet system which is supposed to function as a way to receive and give information within the company. The negative thing is that you never go in to check the latest information says D. Sometimes you might here that you should use it and sometimes you end up in there but it is not on a regular bases states D.

The company is divided in to three parts, Umeå, Skellefteå and Malå. The main office is in Umeå. In Skellefteå there are three additional transport supervisors which handle the same customers as in Umeå. Every special business area has one representative in Umeå and one in Skellefteå. According to the respondent they have to communicate with their assigned representative in Skellefteå pretty often as they try to arrange the transport assignments.

"You have to have someone to discuss your ideas with otherwise you will wind up crazy"

The company lack to a greater extent when it comes to the internal communication says respondent D. The lack of internal communication within the company is an unbearable situation claims D. You never get to know anything until the last minute. It would be great if you could sit down maybe once a month or at least every quarter of the year and discuss things. If you have something on your mind you could bring this subject up for discussion, simple things such as how we feel in the working environment, how everything is proceeding and developing. But nothing of this sort exist right now, states D. You just keep going, says D. Respondent D also misses the contact with the other employees and thinks the lack of discussion exist inside among all involved parties in the company. The negative affect from this is that the organisation does not get any better.

**Culture**

According to respondent D the experienced culture within the company is that is not united. The company is shattered and there is no real group unity D says. You work alone and you do not cooperate with one another. You suffer a lot from this non cooperation and many important links get lost on the way and the most frightened thing is that it is not getting better. But no experienced hierarchy exist in the organisation says D. We are all equally low under management claims D.

Overall the company has evolved very negatively since it became bigger according to respondent D. Now everybody are working alone and you do not help each other out even if there are vehicles missing from one section. You are afraid of getting misinterpreted by the others and you would think that it would be easy to receive help, but it is the other way around.

"You bust you'r as off all alone and no one helps you out!"

**Mergers and acquisition**

Respondent D argues the fact that there was no special introduction in the merger of the two companies. The merger was something you had to accept when you were transferred between the two companies. The only thing that was mentioned was the new partnership with the colleague in Skellefteå. Respondent D also thought that it was hard to understand who you worked for in the beginning of the transfer. One day I was at Company 1 and the other at Company 2, and the most frightful thing about that was that this information was given to me by others who knew about it, everyone except for me! The information in the company does not exist and a lot of unnecessary work results due to this, says D. Respondent D claims that the work has gotten to be very affected of these changes in an unconstructive way. One take care of ones own business you do not cooperate and you are only doing your given duties.

**Family firms**

Company 2 is not a typical family firm in accordance to respondent D´s view of the company. This is mainly due to the fact that it is partly owned by Company 1 and that you hardly ever see the manager says respondent D. D believes that the managers no longer are active with the employees something that negatively affects the organisation, when it lacks to a higher extent in both communication and feedback. It is hard to do a good job claims D. D claims that it is not
good to only have one family who owns the company. But D adds that it also was not a good idea to divide Company 2. D claims that the company has grown to be too big for its own benefit. D claims that it should be easier to come to a decision in a family company and the cohesion should be greater but this is not the case in this company and right now the cohesion does not exist at all. D says that the cohesion used to be present in the company when they used to sit down in the morning for a coffee break and discuss their ideas.

"You have to ventilate your ideas it is very important, this in order to feel that you can affect the company in a positive way and you feel belongingness to the company."

The characterisation of a family firm according to D is a smaller size company with only one family who is the owner. The goal for Company 2 used to be set by Company 1, and the employees used to be monthly informed concerning the results. D says that it used to be easier to influence the company in ways of efficiencies when they could see in a clear picture how they company was doing. But now days the most important thing according to D, is that things are running as it should and the managers are not interested of hearing things of improvement from the employees. Respondent D claims that the company do adjust themselves according to the present market conditions and they change themselves actively according to customer demands.

**Quality**

Company 2 offers transport solutions with special trucks for special needs, this often regards height and weight. The business concept is also based on the assignment of finding solutions for special requests in transports. Respondent D claims that the most difficult part is to find suitable trucks to fit the customer request and the ability of having the right amount of time to arrange a car that will fit in to their concept.

Respondent D says that the company do provide their customer with a good service quality but at the same time it is hard to meet up with the customer's expectations and being available for them, one example is on the phone. It is very important to understand the customers in order to survive says D. Respondent D claims that it is complicated to provide the customer with perfect quality, the cost of having specialized trucks for every transport is very expensive. D believes that it demands advanced planning, to be able to provide the best possible service.

The customers get in touch with the company mainly over stationary and mobile phones, when some employees have both you usually are occupied most parts of the day says D. Some of the time requests also come from Email. D believes that their customers for the most part comes in contact with them through other customers, but also from their competitors when they themselves are not able to provide a service. Customers get to be irritated when you are not accessible to them and they want you to be more available in one way or another. The phone calls have increased now especially as we are not as many that are working here now than we used to be. Respondent D is aware that the company do run different quality checks, for example service quality questionnaires. But D says that the employees never take part of the results of the questionnaires.

"We never sit down and discusses what the customer thinks about us!"

**HR**

It does not exist any internally education in the company claims respondent D, you have to learn everything by yourself and learn from your mistakes. D says that they where offered internal education for the first time in two years just a week ago. D had only half an hour to make a decision about it. There is no chance to come up with a decision in only five minutes says D.

D claims that it would not be worth the hassle of taking part of an education, it would only make the stress level higher due to more work pilling up ahead of you. The only one who gets to suffer is you, especially when you do not know when this education would take place? During working hours? I would need a course in how to cope with stress says D. It does not make your job any easier when you never get any feedback from your boss and not a single token of appreciation, not even a pat on the shoulder; instead your boss comes in every now and then throwing out
some pieces of paper and walks out again. You want to be able to talk to your boss, to be able to sit down and discuss things that matters.

**Respondent E**

**Background / Personal fact**
Respondent E works as a transport supervisor and is responsible for a certain number or trucks in the fleet of vehicles which are to be used, this to make it profitable for both the company and the drivers. E was hired in January 2006, earlier E worked at another transportation company with similar responsibilities. Respondent E feels that there is no problem filling in for others if it is necessary, especially in the areas concerning transportation offering and customer service.

Respondent E claims that the company’s main competitive advantage is their wide service offering, this is due to their local touch. E claims that the customer gets a more personalised service due to the small size of the company. The customers also have the ability to attain a better possibility of getting in touch with the ones who are responsible for the planning of the transportation.

Upon the question on the customers and their demand respondent E claims the customers are more or less in charge, and it is up to E and the other employees to make their request to become visible. E claims that therefore it is very important that they are as clear as possible and give an answer as quick as possible and turn down customer’s wishes.

E claims that the internal cooperation within the company is very difficult to maintain in a positive manner. E claims that it would be of great help if the employees could discuss different ideas and solutions with one another, the only time that happens is when you discuss things with your partner in Skellefteå. E has a partner in the Skellefteå office who also handles the same type of trucks. The only problem then is to actually have the time to make the call as there are many calls coming in and which are prioritised.

**Organisation**
On the question if respondent E enjoys ones work, E claims that it has become clear that this might not be the right job, mainly because of the constant stress level at the company. The other reason of why E is not satisfied at the company it that they have to sit occupied on the phone the whole day, it never stops ringing. E claims that the company is very good when it comes to solving transportation problems and the providence and process of making a difficult transportation easy. Respondent E claims that there are many areas of improvement within the company, but the right now the main focus should be to increase the working staff. Today’s situation points at an enormous working overload which has caused a high stressful level.

“Everything which can decrease the stress level in the company would be of great improvement.”

Another area which needs some special attention is to better be accessible for the customers, as they customers always complains about the fact that it is hard to get in touch with them, especially when the phone is occupied all the time and then it is obviously difficult to get trough says E. E claim that it has been a big transition, in comparison to former jobs, were E had a better contact with the owners and felt to be of importance for the company.

“If you ask someone here something, no one give you a proper respond mainly because they do not care!”

In the beginning and the first impression which E got from the company occurred when respondent E was hired in January of 2006, then the situation in the company differed from today’s situation. As the respondent was hired in January, which is a slower period there was time for an adjustment period and to be accustomed to everything. It was easy to get to know the other employees and to be able to feel a part of the company claims E, but in late spring things stared to happen and the fast phase has not been reduced ever sense. According to respondent E the company is divided among three offices, Umeå, Malå and Skellefteå. Respondent E has more contact with the Skellefteå office since it is there which the partner is situated. Respondent E
claims that the partner in Skellefteå is the one who is sharing the working assignments and helps with the transport planning.

Respondent E is aware of the fact that there exist an internal communication network within the company, but E says that the employees do not use this tool. Respondent E claims that an open communication with the managers is something that the respondent misses a lot and thinks it is terrible considering that this gives no opportunities for personal development based on constructive feedback. Mostly of the internal communication is with the other transport supervisors, but overall the communication at the company is functioning very bad, this because of the high workload says respondent E.

**Culture**

Respondent E's experienced culture in company 2 is that everyone is working alone. E says that you have to do everything on your own and sometimes that give a sense of vulnerability and exposure. This affects the job in a negative manner, claims E. But at the same time respondent E does not experience any hierarchy within the company. E claims that due to the merger and acquisition it may take some time until everyone can cooperate.

Respondent E does not have any experience of the mergers and acquisition, since E did not work at the company during that period.

**Family firms**

Respondent E claims that a family firm is characterised by a relatively small organisation with strong cohabitation. Respondent E claims that it feels like that there are only two people that are working at the company and that are E and one of the other transportation supervisors.

"You never get to hear anything! You do not feel like an important part of the company."

Respondent E claims that there is no dialog between the owners and the employees and claims it to be a certain difference in comparison between former jobs. It is important to have a dialog between the owners and the employees in order to develop the company successfully.

Respondent E claims that it is of importance to adjust the company according to the prevailing market conditions. You have to follow customer demands and at the same time try to check the market for the constant changes. Respondent E claims that the financial goal of the company is primarily, set by Company 1. E says that once every quarter they have a very diffuse review concerning the whole company, but all the smaller pieces in the company is not something which is taken care of. E believes that the managers are too busy to care about the smaller pieces and instead focus on the whole of the company. The financial meetings are often focusing on Company 1 and not on Company 2, say respondent E.

**Quality**

Respondent E claims that the company mantra is that nothing is impossible and that everything can be arranged. This asserts especially to demanding special transports and time measured transports. Company 2 have a great ability of meeting customers request thanks to there high knowledge and flexible fleet of vehicles, of high quality, says respondent E when the strengths within the company is being discussed. A transport solution is a very time consuming project and you do not even have the time to finish your project until you have to take upon the next one.

It is hard to estimate and judge the quality of the service claims E, this is related to the very limited time which they have. To be able to examine how satisfied the customers have been with the service it takes time and capacity, something that is hard because of the extensive workload. Respondent E claims to be stressed and short mouthed against the customers in certain periods, this due to the stressful environment. Most of the communication between respondent E and the customers are made over the phone, but there are also contact trough Email. First and foremost respondent E believes that their customers get to hear about them trough already established customers.
Respondent E was asked if an internal education was to be of interest, but E claims that this was not enough time to ponder over the different alternatives. E was not sure of when to have the time to do it, the managers are not very clear of how the education process would be performed and right now it would be impossible to find time for it. You feel that you can contribute with an important value for the company but at the same time you do not get any appreciation or feedback claims E.

The company were recently down to Jönköping to be able to bound and connect with each other and that was a lot of fun according to E.

Respondent F

Background / Personal fact
Respondent F works as a sales manager with a primary focus on the company’s international customers and is also working as the on site manager for the office in Skellefteå. Respondent F used to work in a smaller section of Company 1 before the merger, which also was situated in Skellefteå since 1999. F’s main responsibility at Company 2 is to find new customers witch suits the profile of Company 2

F claims that Company 2 has there own approach and want to separate themselves from the former company, Company 1. The drivers have a more important role in Company 2 but also more pressure to produce and perform says F. According to F there is a great demand for better involvement from all personnel who are surrounding the company.

Organisation
Respondent F claims that the company’s competitive advantage is the local connection to the northern parts of Sweden and the fact that this does not mean that the service has to be local. The customers are not the one who has to fight for themselves instead the company is there to help them.

F has been working in the transportation industry for many years and during this time the communication has changed to a wider extent. Today the ability to use mobile phones and the overall speed of a high tech business world has created a situation which demands quick decisions and answers, as well as more uncertainty. There is an overall shorter time between a booking of a transport to the actual delivery of the service and to obtain the final result.

Culture
The company is according to F more than only a transportation company and the general opinion is that it is a company one should be proud of working at, even the drivers should feel special.

“The company works hard to maintain a culture where everyone should be able to stick out and be listened to and respected.”

The company is in general very influenced by the entrepreneur culture which owners have got but also their beliefs. This is of great importance and a valid benefit as organisation Q has long time experience of the industry in question. There are not only demands on the employees but also on the lorry drivers, which should achieve some criteria’s, such as be willing to listen and react and come with ideas to help Company 2, which in the long run also helps themselves argues F.

Both Company 2 and the lorry drivers needs satisfied customers and as Company 2 could be seen as a mediator between a customer and the driver who manages the service, both Company 2 and the driver has a common interest.

F claims that the employees have one choice, weather to except the culture or not and then leave the company. No one will benefit of having people who do not understand the reason behind this special culture.
“You can complain or you can go somewhere else.”

This mutual interest is something F claims to be of importance, as this provide with the ability to produce more profits for all involved parties. Company 2 should listen to the drivers but the drivers should also listen to Company 2 when they come with suggestions on the vehicles.

Respondent F claims that there is a very noticeable hierarchal structure within the company and the culture differs to a great extent only if you compare Umeå towards Skellefteå. Skellefteå is an old industrial community whereas Umeå is a service society. The order of precedence is still of importance in Skellefteå while it is a more open business climate in Umeå claims F.

“I am aware of the fact that we have a strong order of precedence here, but I have not done anything about it.”

**Mergers and acquisitions**

F was working at the company when the merger occurred and also where responsible for handling the transfer in Skellefteå. Even if the culture differs between the two companies the process was not difficult to make, this since the employees were aware of the approaching merger.

According to F there have been a problem when there have not been the same commitment between the employees in their way of acting and producing within the company.

The internal communication within the company is something that needs to be worked on according to F. Mainly the fact that there is three different offices with different structures who are doing more or less the same things creates great tensions. There is no right location for the company but there is a need to create a mutual understanding. It should be one organisation and not three. F would like to create sections where people with the same responsibilities are gathered so that they easily can help each other and not stress the others. Something F feels today can be a big problem since it is easy to be affected by others and their stress.

**Family firms**

Respondent F think that the company has its special characteristic and own uniqueness as a small company usually have, but at the same time with the same benefits as a big company with major resources and control. The benefits of the smaller company is the ability of making fast decisions but without the alternative of “hiding” among others and instead be able to take responsibility.

“The owner relationship, organisation Q does not provide the company with the diversity which it needs.”

“It is a very open climate, where you do not have to be afraid that someone is looking over your shoulders.”

The company has strong visions and strategies which provide respondent F with a feeling of security. Something else the respondent reflects upon is the ability to completely be in control over the work which F is performing and feels that there is great support from the management concerning this. According to F it is important to clean out your desk and by this, not to be surrounded by unfinished business. This as you have more important things to focus on such as, adapting to customer needs and demands. This is also helpful when setting the work tempo and it is up F and the other employees to follow the customers. F claims that there is a mayor focus on the customers something that benefits F’s work.

“It is important to clean out your desk, when you have time for it, this in order not to be swamped with work.”

The fact that the customers are setting the working pace creates a very stressful situation according to F. But it is also the fascination of the special branch in the discipline of logistics, which makes it hard not to take it easy and still manage to do it until you are 65 years old says F, which is not meant to be for everyone.
The company have learnt throughout the years to adjust to the ambient demands that are present on the market. This is something that seriously affects Company 2 when it comes to updating the fleet of vehicles states F. F claims that the situation of today makes it easy to change supplier or reallocate production due to cost savings. This makes the dialog between Company 2 and their customers very essential since they should try to find the optimal solution where both parties are able to make money, argues F.

According to F it is important to find reliable customers and then build up a trustworthy relationship where both parties reach a mutual understanding and have a common trust to one another. The industry is constantly under development, with new environmental rules and new machinery. It is important to be at the top but company 2 is not a company that strives to lead the development says F.

“No that would cost too much in the long run, instead we let others come up with the solutions and when we see that they work, we are interested of buying them.”

There are also laws concerning maximal length of a semi-trailer, where changes could affect the needed trucks, on example is that there are today special laws concerning trucks which are entering Norway. These laws is something that always has to be incorporated, when arranging a transport, and it is important to have trucks that only pass that kind of routes as it makes it easier to control.

Also by getting the drivers to focus on the whole picture is an important factor for Company 2 according to F, as this helps both Company 2 and the driver. This might not concern buying a new truck or get a paint job for 100000 SEK instead, they could putt that money on a special accessory that creates a value and results in more work, and makes the truck more useful.

Quality
Respondent F works closely with the customers and express the importance of keeping in contact with the customers in order to receive necessary feed-back. It is very significant to obtain trustworthy customers, especially since I will do anything to find the best solutions for them says F. It is imperative to find the right customers for the company, who fits in to the Company 2 profile of special transportation solutions. F states the fact that it is better to have a small number of customers to be able to focus on them to a higher extent, than to provide a lower service quality to a high number of customers. Also the importance of finding new suitable customers is something F stresses highly.

While F arranges meetings with the customers to get a better communication the company also performs a questionnaire two times a year, this to discuss special improvements which the customers demands. This is also done to maintain an excellent relation between Company 2 and their customers.

“We have a clear focus and an aim of having close customers as our friends”

There is often a small margin of error between a successful or unsuccessful delivery of the service which Company 2 provides according to F. If a transport is delayed with one hour there is a risk of large fines as this delay carry great costs for the customers. Therefore it is important that both the driver and the employees at the offices at Company 2 are aware of situations on the roads and the specific demands the customers have put on the required transport. A driver should call to the customer if something happens and explain the present situation, the driver must also inform the office, so that they can talk to both the customer of Company 2 and explain the problem which the service has been affected by. The reason for this is that there often are two different companies that will be affected by the problem in the delivered service.

This is today something that Company 2 is good at according to F, there are also almost no unsuccessful transportations, something that is important for a company that wants to be able to satisfy the customers according to their special needs.
Human resource
Respondent F says that the company has an educational system but it demands that the employee take the main responsibility for this to occur. F often rides in the same car as the manager when they are out meeting customers. At these occasions they have open conversations concerning the company and respondents F claims that this provides with valuable feedback.

Respondent G

Background / Personal fact
Respondent G works as a transport supervisor and is responsible for the fleet of vehicles, that are functioning for the area within Sweden. H has been working at Company 2 since the merger between Umeå Company 1 and Skellefteå Company 1 and has been working at Company 1 for the past twenty-six years.

The main focus for G is on the designated area within the company and states that there is no time to help or assistance others in the company. Respondent G aim at the same time to work as close possible with the personnel which are located in Umeå and who shares the same business area. G claims to have daily contact with the business associate in Umeå and argues the importance of it.

According to respondent G, Company 2's competitive advantage is their flexibility and their capability of helping and solving their customer's difficulties. The company's historical experience and the well-grounded knowledge that is rooted within and also provide with a great advantage. Another advantage is the network and contact with other companies and haulage contractors, which provide them with a cutting edge. One has a gigantic network in your phone book states G.

"You have a phonebook filled with names and numbers to colleges and drivers, which comes very useful whenever there is something that needs to be arranged."

Organisation
Respondent G feels as a part of the company and is very fond of the work. G believes that the co-operation between the employee's functions well in accordance to the present situation, with a very high work pace. The employees do not have the time to communicate with each other and the problem arises with the lack of it and when the same work is done twice. G claims that it is also hard to get in contact with the other colleagues, especially with the ones who are not located in the same office. G argues that this is mostly due to the fact that they are more or less constantly talking on the phone.

Respondent G argues the great feeling when the providence of a service and transport has been of a successful nature. Then the correlation between the other employees and the customer are very satisfactory. Respondent G claims to be used to work late and overtime in accordance to a well-rooted positive value system.

"My values and believes are closely connected to the "mother syndrome" I work constantly day or night until the work is done!"

Culture
There is no hierarchy in the organisation according to respondent G, and not any groupings. The environment within the organisation is instead very isolated according to G, this have lead to a stressful environment. One negative difference which have occurred after the merger, is the fact that there are no help to get inside the company, argues respondent G.

"Nowadays it is harder to discuss and find solutions with colleges."

Respondent G claims to have the directors' trust and support, since they are aware of the employee's ability to be successful in their work.
Mergers and acquisitions

Respondent G and the other employees were informed about the merger over night. The first impression at the start of the new organisation was according to G very positive. Both of the owners from organisation Q, The manager and his sibling were well known by G since many years, which made the transition smoother. But respondent G was against the change in the new computer system, this since they had to work with two different systems depending on the situation. This is something that will change, but has been a negative part of the merger.

A positive thing with the new company was the fact that the business areas became larger and brought with it, a bigger section of customers. Also the fact that G received more colleges to share the workload with has been a very positive aspect from G’s point of view. Things that affected the work for respondent G at the beginning of the merger, was mainly the question of ownership of the customers, if it was Company 1 or Company 2.

Both Company 1 and Company 2 have according to respondent G made something positive of the merger and created a more solid company.

Family firms

The company is not seen as a family company by respondent G, who also argues the fact that it is hard to discover the real identity of it, if it is a joint company or if it is only Company 1. Respondent G said that the communication between the owners and the employees could be a lot better. G believes that the owners do not have the time to check up on them and instead trust that they are doing a good job.

Regarding the adaptation to changes in the market, respondent G claims that the Skellefteå office is very fast in utilising new methods in order to approach the customer demand. The company as a whole is bound to follow changes in the market and are well prepared for this according to respondent G. But respondent G emphasises and is of the strong opinion that the major changes in the market mainly have been in the Skellefteå region. This has forced them to find new solutions and customers, which have been very beneficiary for them. This is something that G thinks the Umeå office should be aware of and could bring positive reactions in Umeå where they still have not had major changes in the market.

One major aspect, which has to be taken to consideration today, especially if you are a logistic firm, is the environmental aspect says G. Today and maybe even more in the future other ways of transports can become more interesting for the customer even though G is of the opinion that the rivalry will be easy to compete with.

Overall respondent G feels that there is no problem to adjust to changes in the market, but it is important that everyone works together, mainly the sales force and the transportation supervisors.

Quality

When it comes to quality it is important that the customer receives what they pay for says G. The quality standard they set is very high, and everyone should receive a high quality service. In some cases when the time is a major issue the customer are more willing to pay extra for the provided service. G argues the fact that it is important to assist and help both the drivers as well as the customer. But everyone should be pleased and satisfied with the conducted service, this means that there is big pressure on the drivers as they are the main regulator on the service. Respondent G said that it is demanded from the company that they should be on time and have an open conversation with the customers when approaching the site. The respondents also mentioned the importance of understanding the customer and most often aim to help them with more than the transportation. One example of this could be a arrangement of equipment aids.

The quality is according to respondent G very good, and the main way for G to check this is to ask the customers or the drivers.
HR
On the human resource area respondent G claims that there used to be internal education provided for the employees for a while back. It is mainly up to the employees to ask for an additional education and G believes that they would receive it if they wanted to. G says that a bonus system does not exist within the company and there has not been any appraisals done the last year.

Respondent H

Background / Personal fact
Respondent H works as transportation supervisor and has been working at Company 1 Skellefteå for ten years. Respondent H’s main tasks involves transportations abroad and the mainly the Nordic countries with a stronger focus towards Norway.

Respondent H works in collaboration with a person situated in the Umeå office, this as they both works with transportations abroad. The main problem with this collaboration is the lack of a well functioning communication between them claims H. H states that the problem has to do with the fact that they have a very heavy workload today.

The company’s main competitive advantage according to respondent H is its knowledge and the wide variety in the fleet of vehicles. The main advantage with the large fleet is that it provides the organisation with both flexibility and the ability to take on difficult transports. It does not matter if the transport is very large or heavy, we have the ability of solving every transport claims respondent H.

The situation of today shows upon a big shortage of transportation means in Sweden, especially in trucks says respondent H. Due to this dilemma it is very important with a good communicating with the customer claims H. The fact that the customer also is aware of the shortage in transportation means makes it actually easier for us in the transportation business claims H.

“The customer has the power since they are the ones with special requirements and demands, which we as a company have to adjust ourselves to.”

Respondent H claims that in order to provide the customer with an excellent service you have to be able to understand the need of the customer. When you understand the customer, you have the possibility to accomplish the assigned tasks, it is then you will find out if the chosen task is doable based on your ability, says H.

Organisation
The communication within the organisation is very poor and is of urgent need of improvement argues H. Respondent H claims that the only contact with the other employees are done over the phone. Also in this area, the communication does not work out for the best, mainly since the phones are occupied all the time.

I have the ability to speak with the co-workers here in Skellefteå, but my contact person in Umeå is someone who I want to have a better communication with says H.

“The communication between us employees is more or less zero!”

Respondent H is very positive towards the new Intranet chatting program and believes that this will increase the communication between the employees. This is something that is vital for us here at the company, Respondent H enjoys working at the company and is fond of the job. H claims that it is challenging to work with demanding customers and the aim of being first to take the next step within the transportation business. H states that the job means to handle many tasks at ones and the struggle of making all of them to fit together.
Respondent H first impression of the new organisation was a positive reaction, this was related to the fact that H already knew the manager and some of the other employees in Umeå. H claims that it was not a big surprise when the merger between the two organisations in Skellefteå and Umeå was conducted.

Respondent H believes that the organisation in Umeå benefited a lot by merging the company in to one. One of the main reasons for this thought was that the office in Skellefteå already had a very solid base of customers, which Umeå now also received. H claims that in order to make the merger work out in the best manner, it is important not to create an us Vs them situation. It is crucial to give and take between each other in order to overcome negative situations.

Respondent H has not identified any big differences in the company after the merger was executed. H argues that many of the duties you are bound to do unaware of the environment, this due to the fact that you by hand know them so well. The greatest difference which respondent H has noticed is that there are fewer co-workers to share and discuss your ideas with.

**Culture**

Respondent H claims not to experience any hierarchy inside the organisation, there is neither any special grouping between the employees. Respondent H says that there is not that much contact between the offices in Umeå and Skellefteå but states that in Skellefteå there are no formations which influence the work.

**Mergers and acquisitions**

According to respondent H has the merger provided with both positive and negative impacts. In the beginning of the merger there were problems of how to identify where the customers belonged: if it were to Company 1 or Company 2. This problem was solved after a while, argues H but where at the time very difficult, time-consuming and probably a bit annoying for the customers says H. Another stressful issue which H experienced was the mayor uncertainty of were the company would be located, H and the other employees did not know if they were to stay in Skellefteå or move to Umeå. One other problem according to H was the question of whom they where working for was it The manager or Company 1 it might be easier to just belong to Company 1 argues H.

Positive aspects with the merger is the fact that H have more colleagues now than before and are also experiencing the work to be more challenging nowadays with more demanding customers.

An actual benefit of the official merger is that there will be one new employee something that respondent H experience to be necessary. As of today there is a large work burden on us here in Skellefteå, mostly because you have to be available all the time says H.

"You are more or less available any time of the day, it is almost sickening."

**Family firms**

Respondent H’s view of the company is that it is a family firm. H claims that their boss the manager does not feel like a superior towards them as employees. H believes that due to the fact that the manager has been working closely alongside with them for many years with the same kind of duties as them, have created this view of him. H argues the benefit of an open communication with the manager and also that H has been given a lot of freedom in the way of handling the job.

"We trust each other."

Respondent H believes that the company has a good history and ability of handle changes in the market. One of the biggest problems according to H is how to handle the payments from the customers. When it comes to charging the customer, there are always problems because they are also trying to cut their own expenses argues H.
The company is according to H one of the leaders in this specific market, this when being able to perform hard or difficult transports. The company should never stop offering this kind of service says H especially when they are able to overcome these kinds of obstacles.

**Quality**
Respondent H believes that the quality of the company is of high standard and claims that this is due to the company's objective of always aiming to achieve a perfect result. The fact that the company also keeps their promises to their customers creates high quality according to H. Respondent H also argues the importance of keeping the contract with the customer and also the importance of not giving the customer the wrong signals. One of these examples could be not to manage the transports to quickly, if a transport is due on a certain date the driver should not be there several days before the deadline instead the aim is to be there as scheduled or a little bit earlier.

H claims not to have the time or ability of evaluating the quality which the company is offering, but believes that the service were successful if the company or H does not here anything else from the customer or the driver. Respondent H believes that it is important to evaluate the quality of their service offering and said that the sales force mainly does this.

"It is important that the company do not believe they are better than they are in reality."

**H R**
In the area of human resources the company does not have a special appraisal system, this is something that respondent H claims are missing at the company. If an appraisal system would exist it would benefit the company with employees who would aim of achieving better results. The mayor problem with this argues H, is the fact that no one has any time to set aside of trying to achieve even more work. Internal education is not something that is offered to the employees says H.

"If you want to take part of any education, you yourself have to take an active role in achieving this."

H states that the one really positive thing with the company is the fact that there have never been any problems when it comes to actively better the work areas for the employees. H says that there have never been any financial reasons for not getting the workplace improved and this is something that has not changed even after the merger.

**The manager**

**Background / Personal fact**
The manager has the position as management director at the company and has the main responsibility over the company. The manager is also active in customer relations mainly concerning contracts and agreements. The respondent has been working at Company 2 since the beginning, prior to this he was active in organization Q, which later on was one of the companies that were merged into Company 2.

The main focus of the company is to solve complex transportations of materials such as reinforced steel or other industry components, for example cranes and industrial machines. The company also transports other smaller freights often to a higher value such as capital goods. The respondent loves his work, and said that as he is the one of them which has built this company from scratch not only Company 2, but also organisation Q, he feels that this is what he wants to do.

"Why would you work with something you do not like?"

The respondent is working on the future strategy of the company and is also the representative of it. The respondent acts as a discussion partner with the sales force, but also with all of the other employees in order to help the process of the company to run smoother. In the recent year of
2006 the manager has taken a step back in order to evaluate the employees and to see how much responsibility they take on their own behalves when they are not assigned a specific task. According to the manager this has been done in order to better understand the employees, but also to recognize any organisational problems.

The respondents is very enthusiastic concerning the future, there is a regenerate for northern business according too him. The manager believes that the customers of today are more driven to stay and expand in the northern parts of Sweden.

**Organisation**
The selected part of the organisation in Company 2 consists of nine employees who are located in the two areas, of Umeå and Skellefteå. The Umeå office is the head office which is responsible for the administrative duties as well as the transportation planning and sales. The Skellefteå office is mainly responsible for sales as well as transport planning.

The organisation is divided in three different business areas: business areas, dispatch, special transport and domestic. The transport planning are conducted through the transportation supervisors who are working in pairs. One of them is located in Umeå and the other in Skellefteå. The employees have a partner in the same business area in order to have someone to share and exchange ideas with as well as the work load states the manager.

Company 2 business concepts is to be the small company positioned towards special and complex transportations, with a main focus on the size of the freight and nurturing of the service and punctuality and with immense resources. The company’s offered service is focused on the size and the complexity of the freight with the objective of being a perfect partner for the customers.

According to the manager the customers have a big influence in their requests, when it comes to the outcome of the expected service. Customer demands often include arrival and pick-up limitations often concerning time. The manager argues that it is important to come to an agreement which complies both with the company as well as the customers. According to the respondent, the company do not see themselves as competitors with DHL or BTL, this as these companies are too big to adjust to customers special needs, when it comes to certain transportations problems. The customers of Company 2 often hands them a time schedule in advance something which assist both parties to easier find suitable transport solutions and the planning for the same. The respondent says the company strives to obtain an active discussion with the customers.

The company’s competitive advantage is according to the manager, the expertise of finding suitable transportation solutions for complex logistic problems and also their ability to conduct successful assignments.

The respondent also pointed out their core competences and specialties which the company aims of proclaiming. He continues with an example of a person that goes to an ICA grocery store to buy steel nails, instead of buying it at a hardware store. This example states the fact that customer demands differ, depending of the need of additional knowledge and quality in the purchase decision.

According to the respondent, the cooperation between the employees are working well, but there could be improvements on some areas. The manager says that he would love to have a situation where everyone takes their own responsibility for everything and not only there own specific area. To enhance the cooperation the company will introduce a computer based “chatting” program.

The communication inside the company is often of the informal kind. They have financial meetings every month for all employees and then additional meetings with the sales force every two weeks; this part is undergoing an evaluation process at the moment. According to The
manager the overall communication within the company is very open and this not only surrounding work related issues,

“It is important to have an open communication and I personally encourage my staff to always speak their mind!”

According to the manager the company could progress and develop the organisation in different areas, for example to a have closer connection among the employees and have meetings more often. Another thing that he believes could be improved is the communication between the employees. The respondent feels that although this ought to be done it is not easy to implement as there often is too much work to be done. The company has also tried to use the knowledge of their own workforce and implied a mentor program as some of the employees has a vast experience, and tried to match them with personnel that have less experience in pairs. According to the respondent it has been hard to implement this idea and to make it function well, mostly because some of the employees are not used to work in pairs and instead prefer to work alone. It often has been these employees which have had problems to adopt the new changes according to the manager. But at the same time they have never been pressured and forced into the organisational change, it has more or less been a method of guidance in order to more successfully approach their new business associate.

The ambition of the organisation is according to the manager, to have a well functioning organisation that has the ability to offer the customers services of high quality.

Culture
The culture within the organisation is focused on personal engagement and on the liability of the workforce, the manager believes that this has been lost, as the company has grown. The culture in the company is according to the manager very strong, mainly due to the historical strength and the fact that the culture is strongly linked with the actual business. The respondent views himself as part of the company culture the culture in Company 2 is something which the respondent originated from organisation Q and by that time was to be successful.

“You mediate the company culture with your own personality!”

The company culture also entails the importance of long-term engagement between them and the customers. The respondent believes that is important that the employees understand the importance of “word of mouth” and the significance of personal engagements.

“I do not want my employees to hide I want them to be focused and be willing to take place, and show commitment.”

According to The manager he have not identified any special groupings within the company, the only thing that he mentions, were the fact that the employees are divided into groups depending on there business area.

Mergers and acquisition
Although the mergers were preceded during a rather short time period the process to implement the situation was continuous. The employees had many questions asserts the manager, and acted quit cautious, but the respondent said that it worked out well and as they focused to have an open dialog problems was easily solved.

“I try to solve the problems from the merger as they occur.”

The manager claims that the fact that the people who were involved in the merger already knew each other benefited situations when problems occurred. Another thing that affected the company after the merger was the fact that parts of the workforce had there own ways of achieving their results. This way of working was not inline with the manager’s beliefs and was something that he changed into a unanimous way of working.
One benefit subsequent to the fusion of the companies has been that the new company have obtained the possibility to reject certain customers. The reason behind this was the fact that they requested more than they offered, which did not benefit Company 2.

The respondent have identified some negative impacts following the merger, one of them was the ability to control the larger workforce which had been created. The changes which the respondent wanted to obtain took longer time then premeditated as well as the effects.

**Family firms**
The respondent believes that the employees views the company as a family firm, much due to the strong culture and influence the respondent and his brother have had on the company. But at the same time he himself does not see it as a family firm.

The company is partly owned by Company 1 and organisation Q but when it comes to the decision making the manager and his brother are the main influencers and are in charge of Company 2. This has resulted in a situation where the culture is heavily dependent on their values which they have brought from their old company.

**Quality**
According to The manager Company 2 is a quality oriented company and are to be viewed as an important and excellent business partner. Company 2 has been working hard to become a company which is easy to work with, this is based on the fact that they aim to be perceived as a small company. This is achieved by a horizontal organisation with the ability to provide with quick responds.

“The key is to be able to give the customers swift and correct answers to their problems.”

The respondent experience the word quality as something connected to honesty which is something the manager believes is vital for him and his organisation. Honesty to The manager also includes occasions when one has to turn a customer down in accordance to the company’s values, if they are not able to provide the required service.

The company looks for long-term focused customers, and works hard with solving and adjusting there own fleet of vehicles to be able to follow the demands. Also working close to your customers and to have a close connection in order to trust and nurture them is a vital factor for the manager.

“Tо be successful, the manager says it important to solve the customer’s problem and adapt to new challenges.”

To be able to adapt to the market, the company strives to be active on the market. The respondent said that the sales force focuses on current customers and collects information from them to be able to adjust current market demands. The company uses the sales force to evaluate the service quality of the company as they often interact with the customers. Company 2 also to conducts a web based questioner where customers are able to answer questions concerning offered service. By having this close contact with the market the company can quickly change and adjust the organisation to fit the demands.

According to The manager it is easier for them to provide a higher quality of the provided service thanks to the narrow segment which they are working in.

**HR Human resource**
The manager claims to have appraisal sessions were he and the employee discusses the future of the employee, concerning education personal and personal development. At these meetings the manager verbally suggests what he thinks is best for the specific employee but he/she is also provided the ability to speak ones mind. These educations are then offered trough Company 1. When it comes to evaluations of the employee’s performance within the company, the manager claims to provide the employee with the results on regular basis.
Appendix III - Company 2’s Questionnaire on their customers (Swedish)

- Du blir väl bemötta när Du kontaktar oss.
- Det är lätt att beställa transporttjänster av oss.
- Det är lätt att få tag på rätt person när Du kontaktar oss.
- Våra fordon är lätta att känna igen.
- Våra fordon är rena och snygga.
- Att använda oss är en garanti för att uppdraget genomförs på ett för rationellt bra sätt.
- Stärker du ditt företags värde genom att använda company 2?
- De personer du kommer i kontakt med är serviceinriktade och representativa.
- Vi är bra på att hålla våra leveranstider.
- Vi levererar på rätt plats.
- Vi hanterar godset på bästa sätt.
- Tiden från att Du ringer transportledningen tills Du får svar är kort.
- Tiden från att Du ringer annan tjänsteman tills Du får svar är kort.
- Våra offerter är välutformade och lätt att förstå.
- Våra fakturor är välutformade och lätt att förstå.
- Vi uppfyller Dina kundforväntningar.
- Vi hanterar avvikelsen på ett bra sätt.
- Våra tjänster är väl anpassade till ditt företags behov.
- Missnöjda kunder blir väl bemötta.
- Vi håller avtal och överenskommelser på ett bra sätt.
- Uppföljningen av uppdraget sköts på ett bra sätt.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hur upplever du vårt varumärke, Company 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Bra</td>
<td>Bra inställning hos vår kontaktperson</td>
<td>Bra det är lätt att boka transport</td>
<td>Varumärket Company 1 framgår inte när det gäller ”affärsområdet” Company 2</td>
<td>Bra</td>
<td>Väl fungerande</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egen kommentar, ris eller ros.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bra på det stora hela, tyvärr har det varit några transporter på sista tiden som inte kommit fram i tid. Det skulle vara bättre om sådan information kom från er i stället för från kunden.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Återkoppling från transportledare saknas många gånger</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>OBS! Jag har relativt liten erfarenhet av företaget så här långt.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finns det något annat som ni vill ha hjälp med?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Namn och telefonnr. om du vill att vi ska kontakta</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Inte just nu!</td>
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**Obs:** Jag har relativt liten erfarenhet av företaget så här långt. Måste meddela a i tid om inte man kan få tag i bilarna.