AIM FOR THE MOON AND YOU MIGHT REACH THE STARS

HOW DOES A HIGH GROWTH COMPANY WORK WITH VISION IMPLEMENTATION?

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Executive summary
The background to this paper is that many new founded companies have a problem to achieve such a growth rate that they manage to stay alive their first five years. Only a few of the new started company is able to achieve a rapid growth rate in their early lives. Why is this? And can a vision be the answer? The answer to this is yes, a vision can be the answer. But how shall the vision be implemented in the organization in order to work? With this background a question were formulated:

“How do small, high growth companies work with their vision?”

The study is a case study of a small company in Sweden; company Alpha, who has had a growth rate of over 100 percent per year over the last six years. The company was chosen because of its size and its almost unique way of achieving a high growth rate.

From several theoretical references a model were created. This model focuses on four different dimensions that are important in order to work and use a vision within a company. These four aspects were; vision development, vision articulation, and vision communication and vision implementation.

The conclusion of the paper is that rapid growth companies work with visions as a tool to attract personal, and stakeholders. They also work with it in a way that the vision becomes a management tool, used for controlling and showing the direction to the employees, making their work, and decision-taking easier. This is a way to make the employees more secure in both their own actions and what to expect of the company. The paper also shows that companies’ works with smaller visions, department visions, in order to easier implement the vision in the day-to-day work.
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Introduction

This first chapter of this study starts with a general background in the field of growth. This is followed by a problem discussion which will lead to the problem definition and the purpose of the paper.

1.1 Background

In 2006 over 44 000 new companies were founded in Sweden. Out of these companies approximately 60 percent will achieve such a growth rate that they are able to survive the first five years (www.scb.se). This shows not only that different businesses develop different growth rates; it also shows the importance to succeed with achieving a high growth rate to stay alive, especially for small companies. The fact that it is harder for smaller companies to stay alive is confirmed by Hoffer (1985). There have been many studies over the years trying to locate the different factors that influence the growth rate of the company. Some of the different factors that have been connected with a high growth rate is; the entrepreneurs willingness to grow (Andersson, 2006), the establishment of a professional management (Hoffer, 1985), and first-class strategies and goals (Kolvereid & Bullvag, 1996).

Another factor that has a positive influence on the growth rate of a company is to have a clear vision (Carter & Jones-Evans, 2006). This factor, the vision, is something that has gained more and more of the researchers focus/interest over the last couple of years. Today most companies, small local organizations, as well as big multinational companies have stated visions for their business (Hitchcock, 1996). It has also been suggested that companies must gather their core competences around a vision in order to reach a high growth- and development rate for the company.

1.2 Problem discussion

All companies, from the big global company to the small company next door, have a company vision (Hitchcock, 1996). And even thou it has been shown that a company vision have a positive impact on the growth rate of the company, it has been revealed that it is hard to implement the vision so that it is recognized by the company employees in their day-to-day work (Ibid.). It is remarkable that such an established and researched tool for growth is so hard to determine on how to work with in order to get the best results of it. It is also remarkable that so much focus has been made on the theoretical and practical effect on the vision but so few studies have been made on how to implement the vision in the organization and the day-to-day work. The focus on this paper will therefore be to examine and analyze how a company with a very high growth rate uses and work with their vision in the organization as a whole, and in the day-to-day work of the company. The interest of this paper is therefore not how the vision contributes to the growth rate of the examined company, but how a company with a high growth rate works with their vision in the organization. Since the visions role already has been established by earlier authors, the findings of this paper will show other companies how one of Sweden’s most successful companies (graded by growth-rate) use and work with their vision both over time and in their day-to-day business and over time. The aim of the paper is that it could be possible, to some extent, to be used as a guide for other companies or entrepreneurs on how to use and work with the vision in their organization in order to get out the most of the visions.
1.3 Problem definition

*How do small, high growth companies work with their vision?*

1.4 Purpose

In order to be able to answer the formulated question from the problem definition section three different purposes has been set for the paper. These purposes will guide the reader to the final answer of the question and work as a guide so that the reader understands the subject.

The purpose of this paper is to:

- **Describe the practical meaning of a vision for a company.**
  The meaning of this purpose is to give the reader a small introduction on what the practical meaning of a vision is for an organization. This will be described in the beginning of the theoretical framework chapter.

- **Explore what in the vision affect the company’s growth.**
  Earlier in the introduction section it is stated that it has been confirmed by other authors that a good vision has a positive relation with growth. This purpose is meant to give the reader a small introduction to these studies in order to show the importance of visions in organizations. The exploration of what in the vision that affect the company’s growth can read in the theoretical framework chapter.

- **Analyze how high growth company works with their vision.**
  The last and most important purpose of the paper is to answer the problem that has been defined earlier “How do small high growth companies work with their vision?” This purpose will be answered in the analysis chapter and is the foundation of the conclusions of the paper.

1.5 Disposition

- **Introduction**
  The introduction chapter begins with a background of chosen subject. This is followed by a problem discussion that leads to the problem definition and the purpose of the paper.

- **Theoretical framework**
  In the theoretical framework the different theories in the field of vision are presented. This chapter is the foundation for our data research and it will end with the presentation of our research model.

- **Methodology**
  The methodology will start with an explanation of the chosen research design and method for the study. This will be followed by a discussion about chosen literature for the theoretical framework, what company and respondents that have been chosen, and why these were chosen.
Empirical results
The Empirical results section will begin with a short presentation of the chosen company. The chapter also includes our interviews and the secondary data that is relevant for the paper.

Analysis
The analysis chapter will connect the theoretical framework of the paper with the empirical results. The analysis chapter will work as a base for the conclusion of the paper.

Conclusions
Here the conclusions of the research are presented. It is also in this chapter where the formulated question from the problem definition will be answered.

Future research
In this, the final chapter, the authors of the paper gives their point of view, and suggestions of future research that would be interesting.
2 Theoretical framework

This chapter describes different theoretical aspects around the vision theory. The chapter begins with a section that means to describe what a vision is. This section is followed with what the vision is meant to contribute with from a growth perspective. The chapter ends with different views of problems that can surface when applying the vision process in a company.

2.1 Vision in a growth context

This study is not made in order to see if there is a connection between growth and a first class vision. This connection has been made by several authors e.g. Baum, Locke and Kirkpatrik (1998), Kantabutra and Avery (2007) and Vyakarnam, Jacobs and Handelberg (1999). The study will instead focus on how high growth companies use their vision in the day-to-day work. But in order for the reader to understand the importance of this chapter will start with a short section where the vision is put in its growth context.

There are many factors that will contribute to achieving a foundation of growth for a company. Example of such variables is to have an intention to grow (Andersson, 2006), a founder/entrepreneur of the company a willingness to grow (Ibid), and to have a professional management (Hoffer, 1985). Besides these factors, it has also been shown that first class strategies, goals and visions have a positive correlation with a high growth rate (Kolvereid & Bullvag, 1996). Comparing the three later factors for growth; vision, strategies, and goals they are all connected and it may be hard to separate them from each other.

A goal for a company can be described as something that the company wants to achieve in a somewhat soon future. The goal shall be easy to remember, inspiring, motivating and possible to achieve (Le Pla & Parker, 2002). Comparing this with the vision, the vision is more what the company wants to be and this in a distant future. The vision, in similarity to the goal, shall be inspiring and motivating, but in comprehension it is not necessary to reach the vision (Urde, 1997). The strategy on the other hand is the plan on how to reach the goals or vision. The strategy includes what means, financial-, and human recourses, that shall be used in order to reach these goals or visions (Ibid).

2.2 What is a vision?

A vision is, according to Bolderick (1992), the beginning of all business. It is defined as; a clear image of a desired future state that the members of an organization or a company can identify themselves with (Siu Loon Hoe, 2007). This definition is supported by several researchers and authors of the subject; e.g. Urde (1997), McLean (2006), and Normann (1975). McLean (2006) also states that the vision shall include the different values and a philosophy for which the company would like to be recognized and connected with. The vision is created so that all the members of an organization can share the same view of what the company wants to become in the future (Bolderick, 1992). Further the vision should be connected to the company’s business idea. While the business idea tells the company in what field of business they should be working, the vision tells the company how the company shall grow and develop. The vision can be seen as a plan that can be shown to employees and stakeholders that shows what the company should strive to become (Normann, 1975) or as described by Foster and Adere (2007) as something that offers direction to the organization.
and is a big part of rising the organizational success. The biggest difference between a vision and a goal is that the vision is not set to be absolutely reached, instead the vision is more seen as a source of inspiration, and a challenge as of what the company shall strive to become (Normann, 1975; Urde, 1997). Bird (1989) describes the vision as a star that guides the company on its way in to the future.

The purpose of a vision is, according to Sui Loon Hoe (2007) to create a clearer purpose for the company’s existence, and to promote necessary changes that the company needs to go thru in order to reach the desired state that is stated in the vision. The vision is the answer to the fundamental question; what do we want to create?

2.3 Why is a vision needed?
The founder, or entrepreneur, of a company can use their business vision in several different areas. For example; the vision can be used to find ways to lower costs within the organization, prepare the business plan, to socialize employees, and/or help the founder to handle emotions, and feelings within the company (Rockey, 1986, cited in Bird, 1989). A vision is, according to Ericsson (2004) the management’s most important instrument when it comes to affect and guide managers and other personnel of a company. Collin and Porras (1996) believe that a vision has four different objectives. It is their opinion the vision should be created to; guide, inspire, control and free an organization.

This view is however far from the only view on what a visions purpose is. Roos, Roos and von Krough (1998) Believes that the purpose of a vision can be explained with three different aspects, or dimensions of the vision.

First of the three dimensions is a legitimate dimension of a vision. The company behind the vision should try to place themselves in a broader, and often more social, context. In this dimension the vision describes how the company and its employees shall behave towards, and in interaction with, external partners. This dimension also has the effect that a company can identify gaps between the present state of the business and the desired state of the business. Knowing what the company is today and compare it with what the company wants to be in the future helps the management to understand where they need to focus the development of the company in order to reach future goals, and/or develop the company in the right direction (Normann, 1975).

The second aspect that should be comprehended within a good vision is the ambition level of the company. This dimension includes, except the company’s level of ambition, also where the main focus of the company’s business lies. A correct formed ambition dimension within the vision will frame the organizations strategies, ideas, and goals. All together this will explain to the organizations members how the company vision shall be reached.

The third and final aspect of a vision is that the vision shall unite the employees of the company’s identification with the company and the company strategy. The purpose of this is to make the employees identify themselves with the company and thereby create a higher commitment and motivation among them.

If the vision is greatly understood and shared by the members of an organization they will create a feeling of being a part of the company and therefore boost the motivation of the members. The day-to-day work will feel more meaningful for the employees of the company.
(Ericsson 2004) and it adds coherence to the different activities in the organization (Baker & Sinkula, 1999). Urde (1997) agrees with Ericsson and says that visions make it easier for the members of an organization to put themselves, and the company in a greater, more meaningful context. This makes those who share the vision emotional connected, and bound together by a shared aspiration of what to achieve (Baker and Sinkula, 1999). This connection that is created between the company and its employees makes the employees want to build a strong and good relationship with the company (Bolderick, 1992). Also, since the vision shows what the company shall strive against, it becomes easier for employees to take correct decisions.

Urde (1997) states that one of the most important factors of the vision is that it create a higher level of motivation for the employees in the company. Urde has support by many other authors, and motivation is often seen as the foundation of the vision, and key factor to make the vision successful (Kantabuntra & Avery, 2007). The high level of motivation helps the company to strengthen their focus on reaching and achieving goals set by the company’s management (Urde, 1997).

The vision helps the entrepreneur of a company to prone, exploit, and manage, both financial-, and human resources. A good vision also helps with the, often hard work, to attract financial-, and human resources, as well as other resources (Bird 1989). The vision is used by the management to find out what resources that are needed in the company. The management can let the vision guide their and other employees gathering of knowledge. Simply by letting the vision describe the wanted future state of the business, employees understand what kind of knowledge is needed in order to reach this state. If the company succeeds with this, almost all new knowledge will be a knowledge that will develop the company further and this will minimize the risk of gathering non useful information in the company (Ibid).

An example of this can be if the vision says that the company shall become an international company. The vision now encourages employees to gather knowledge about foreign markets, cultures, and languages. Since the vision is seen as a tool that can help the company to collect the right knowledge, it can be also seen as a big part in the company learning process (Ibid.).

2.4 Leadership thru visions
One of the purposes with the vision is to guide the organizations members, and it can therefore be seen as a way of leadership. To use leadership that has it foundation in a strong vision is supposed to give companies the power to compete in a constant and fast changing environment (Avery, 2004). An entrepreneur in a company uses the vision to gather all employees’ behavior and connect it to the company vision. This is needed in order to reach great and fast results in the growth of the company. Leaders can also use visions in order to promote changes in the company’s business (Bass, 1985) and as a way to find and attract the right competences to the organization (Kotter, 1999).

2.5 How is a vision created?
Most companies are founded from one or more person’s ideas, or visions, on an unexploited opportunity on how they can make money. Shared visions have their origin in personal visions, and it is when the personal vision is used and communicated in the right way that it can become a shared vision (Senge, 1990). It is important that the personal vision becomes a shared vision in order for it to have a meaning for the organization. The personal vision do not
create feelings, such as togetherness, motivation, and a deeper feeling of identification with the company, until it becomes a shared vision, and thereby is recognized by all of the organizations members.

It is important for companies to understand that a shared vision is not created over night. Even though the company believes that they have a good vision on paper, they need to understand that the vision, as well as the company is a process (Ibid.). In order to keep the vision process alive the management of the organization needs to realize the company’s ability to affect the environment, and not just the other way around. Normann (1975) underlines Senges believes of the importance of a process view of a vision. He points out the fact that the vision shall describes the company’s future desired state, and means that if the vision is not changed over time, this should be seen as a weakness of the company. If the company do not understand and work with their vision as a process, the written vision will soon lose its purpose and value.

In order to develop an effective vision the company behind the vision needs to consider and follow five steps or pointers (Senge & Starkey in Hodkinson, 2002). The steps that are necessary is, according to the author the following; encourage personal visions, communicate and ask for support, see the vision as a process, mix extrinsic and intrinsic visions, and, finally, make a distinction between positive and negative visions.

Encouraging personal visions is the first step for an effective vision development. As described in the “What is a vision?” section all visions that becomes shared visions have starts out as personal visions. This step means that it is important for a company to encourage employees to have visions of their own. These visions must be collected and taken under consideration to see if they can be used together with the greater vision of the company. This step is seen as an important aspect in order to have a high level of organizational learning within the company. Also, when sharing their personal thoughts, the personnel feel that they are being listened to, and that they are a contributing part of the company (Ibid.).

The second step; communicate and ask for support states that it is important that not only the lower management talks about the company vision; also the founder/owner and the top management must speak about, and act according to the company vision in order to make the vision shared by the whole organization. A true leader doesn’t just take his employees on a journey, he lets them be a part of the journey and help him change the course when necessary (Vyakarnam, Jacobs & Handelberg 1998). It is also necessary that the communication is clear and frequent in order to be successful. The communication should focus on building and continue develop relations round the vision.

The third step of in creating a vision is the importance to see the vision as a process. In order to be able to create a vision that can be shared by the whole organization it must be seen as a process to create a vision. New members will arrive to the organization, and standards and attitudes will change over time as well as the state of the company. It is important to be able to do changes so that the company can be the best it can (Senge & Starkey in Hodkinson, 2002).

The fourth step of the model discusses the importance of mixing extrinsic and intrinsic visions. It is important that the vision of the company do not just tell the employees to be the best. Doing so will create a culture where mistakes will not be accepted, the company’s employees will be stressed, and it is a great chance that the culture of the company will be a
closed and inbound culture. Instead the vision shall try to build a culture that is open and encourage thoughts and innovation (Senge & Starkey in Hodkinson, 2002).

The fifth and final step is to make sure that there is a distinction between positive and negative visions. According to the author there are two fundamental ways to motivate the members of the organization. These two are; fear, and aspiration. Fear, which is a result of negative visions, can lead to remarkable changes over short time periods, but in the long run, these visions leads to egoistic thinking and will promote the single person, not the company (Hodkinsons, 2002). This can be seen as a contrast with the aspiration achieved with positive visions which leads to a source of learning, development and growth. This will be good not only for the single person working within the company, but also for the company in general.

Other authors, such as Cummings and Worley (2005) has a more simple look on how to create a vision, or the vision process as they call it. Their model is a three step model and includes the vision process, the choice of the visions content, and finally, the implementation of the vision in the company.

Their look on the vision process can be connected with the two first steps of Senge and Starkey’s (in Hodkinson, 2002) model and can be summarized with that a vision can either be made from scratch and then developed by the company, or it can already exist within the company and it is only to find it and bring it up to the surface. The process then continues with that the company sits down and finds out what values and purpose they wish to have. Also Kantabutra and Avery (2007) supports Senge and Starkeys (in Hodkinson, 2002) view of how a vision is created and summarizes the process in the four steps; develop, articulate, communicate, and implement. In this model the vision shall be communicated not only in a clear and frequent way, it shall also be communicated in a way that reaches the touches the organizations members on a personal level so that the employees shall become greatly affected by the vision and make them involved in the process of trying to reach the vision (Kantabutra & Avery ,2007).

The special way of communicate the vision is also discussed by Harzec (2007). He believes that in order to have a successful learning a person needs something more then only information. The company needs to deliver the information in a way that the employees can identify themselves with. The information needs to feel meaningful and motivating to them. If this is not the case there is a big chance that the information will be ignored and discarded. It is also of big importance that the vision is not just communicated thru words. It is as important, if not even more important that the vision is communicated thru actions. The management of the company needs to act according to the company vision in order to get the rest of the organization to believe and identify them-selves with the vision.

2.6 Problems with the vision process
First of all it is necessary to have a good communication platform in order to implementation the vision in a company. It is hard to communicate the vision in such a way that it has the wanted effect on the employees, and for it to become a shared vision by all the members of the organization (Kantabutra & Avery, 2007). Especially the bottom level workers may have a hard time to share the vision with the management. The workers at the bottom level in the company often feel that the vision belongs to the company management, and not to them. They have a hard time to find the connection with the company vision and their day-to-day
work, and it is essential to have a great communication system in order to reach and motivate also these employees (Hitchcock 1996).

In order to succeed with the vision process it is also needed that, in the cases when the company is driven by more than one man, that the high top management share the vision. That a company is lead by more than one person is often the case (e.g. Bird 1989), and this pointer is therefore essential in order to succeed in the hard work of creating a shared vision in a company. If the highest top don’t share the vision it is very hard to create a vision that can be shared by the whole organization.

2. 7 Summary of theoretical framework

In this paper the vision is defined as the desired state of the business in the future. This means that it is more than just a goal for what the company wants to be, it is a philosophy of how the company wants to act and drive its business.

The process of how to create a vision is in this paper based on Kantabutra and Averys four step model, but it is also influenced by other authors, such as Senge and Starkey (1996). In this research the vision process is therefore summarized in a four step model; develop, articulate, communicate, and implement. It is with these headlines that the authors of this paper plans to investigate and answer the formulated question of the paper. Below will each step be described and followed with thoughts on how the dimension may be used in answering the problem definition of the research.

2.7.1 The research model

The model is containing four steps;

- Development
- Articulation
- Communication
- Implementation

Step one; development of the vision

The purpose of this dimension is, in this paper to see how the management did unite around the existing vision. Was it one man’s vision or were there a discussion among several individuals. Why was this vision chosen, and what did they expect of the outcome of the vision. Has the vision been altered over the years, and if how have it been altered. Were there any problems when developing the vision, or was the vision already inside the company at the begging.

Step two; articulation of the vision

How did the company succeed in putting the vision to paper? Is the vision formulated in a way that in can engage and motivate the whole organization? Has there been a development of the written vision, or has it stayed the same all over the years?
Step three; communication of the vision
How have the company chosen to communicate the vision to its members? Has the vision reached the whole organization, and is the leader of the company following the vision himself? Does the company work continuously with keeping the vision alive among the employees? Has there been any problem with communicating the vision?

Step four; implementation of the vision
How has the overall work with the vision gone? Is the vision encouraging the whole organization, does the employees feel motivated by the vision, and have the vision had any effect on growth, organizational learning, employee motivation, etc within the organization? Is the vision used by the leader to lead the company, and is the vision used as a tool for knowledge- and resource gathering by the management?
3 Methodology

This chapter explains the approach and line of action in the paper, the chapter also explains why the study has been done in this certain way. The chapter begins with the discussion of chosen design for the research. This will follow with a revision of our references and the structure of the literature review. The last step of the Methodology chapter is to describe our thoughts around our interviews and how the interview process is done.

3.1 Research design

This study is done with a qualitative approach; this approach is good when trying to describe nuances about a specific subject. The qualitative design demands that the researcher focuses on a few numbers of units in his research, and puts his focus on the depth of the research instead of the width of the same (Jacobsen, 2002). Kvale (1997) agrees with Jacobsen and states that the qualitative study is a study where the researcher can find delicate experiences and thoughts from the researchers day-to-day work, described in the respondents own words. Further, the design for this paper is a descriptive design. The descriptive designs objective is to describe characteristics of the chosen population (Zikmund, 2003). The descriptive design is very much connected with the key words of this paper objective; describe, explore, and analyze.

The advantages of the qualitative study, that will be advantages also for this study, is, first of all, that it puts openness in focus. Because of this focus on openness, high importance is being put on showing the unique details for each and every respondent (Jacobsen. 2002). Another advantage of this form of research is that it has a high level of flexibility. The flexibility makes it possible for the authors to change, and elaborate with the studies formulated question along with the research process (Jacobsen, 2002). In this paper this is seen as a high advantage because of the, from the beginning, limited knowledge about the researched subject among the authors of the paper.

Even though there are some great advantages with the chosen research design, there are also some disadvantages that need to be addressed. First of all this design is, because of it is a method that demands a high level of information in order to reach the depth, and to find the thoughts of the respondents, a very time demanding option, and this indicates that the researcher must settle with a few number of respondents. Few numbers of respondents can make it hard to generalize the study for a big population (Ibid.). However, in this case, it is prioritized to go deep and analyze thoughts and nuances of visions over to be able to describe how the vision process work for a very large population.

3.2 Method for theoretical framework

In order to achieve a higher knowledge about the vision concept, and the theories connected with it, several references were looked upon. The theoretical framework consists of both books, and scholar articles, but the main focus is concentrated on articles. This to be able to use the latest information about the subject, and the fact that visions has become a more and more interesting subject in the most recent years (Hitchcock, 2006).
3.3 Chosen company
The chosen company for this study has chosen to stay anonymous throughout the paper and it will therefore from now on be called Alpha. The company has been chosen for its, since its founding, rapid growth rate. Another aspect that is interesting is that the founder of Alpha has had, since the beginning, a vision for what he wants to achieve with his company. The company has over the years get several awards for being a high growth company, or a gazelle company as it also is called. Finally, Alpha has recently started to expand, not just within Sweden, which has been the case before, on an international market. This gives the chance to see connection between the vision and the internationalization process in order to achieve yet higher growth rate.

The fact that this study is a case study, and therefore focuses on only one company, will make the study deeper than otherwise. Together with the qualitative approach that has been chosen, the case study approach gives the opportunity that through deep personal interviews, by a close relationship between the researcher and the respondent to achieve an open minded discussion about the concept of visions and this concepts connection with growth.

3.3.1 Chosen respondents
The respondent for this research paper is a manager of Alpha. The respondent has, in similarity to the company chosen to exploit the right to anonymous, and the respondent will therefore be called Westwood. The respondent has a close relationship with the founder of the company and is therefore believed to have a high knowledge about the vision process in the company.

The respondent was also chosen because he, as a manager, is affected by, can affect, and uses the company vision in his day to day basis. The study will be based on an interview that was conducted with Westwood in 2009, but there will also be references to an interview that was conducted in 2007 for a growth project.

3.4 Collection of empirical data
There are four different ways of collecting data for a qualitative research; individual interviews, group interviews, observation research, and document research (Jacobsen 2002). The collection of empirical data has, in this study, been done by two different actions; personal interviews and secondary data collection through document research.

3.4.1 Preparation for the interviews
After that the company for the study had been chosen we contacted it in order to try to set up an interview with someone who would fit our needs. We had earlier already had an interview with Westwood (for another paper), but we needed to ask additional questions, in order to penetrate deeper in the vision work of the company. Alpha was very obliging and an interview was booked on Sunday the 1st of March.
3.4.2 Interview guide
The interview guide that has been constructed for this study is based on the four different dimensions in the vision process; develop, articulate, communicate, and implement. The guide is of big help during the interviews because it helps the interviewer to follow a line of argument throw-out the interview, and helps him to keep focus on the subject. According to Jacobsen (2002) an interview can have a structure that is based on either openness or closeness. A interview that is based on open-ended questions focuses on finding out details, and thoughts of the respondents, while the closed-ended questions is more often used with success when trying to describe the characteristics of a certain population. The interview guide in this paper follows certain themes, has specific disposition and gives the respondents the opportunity to open ended answers. The open-ended questions will, hopefully, give this study the specific thoughts of each end every respondent. The questionnaire for the study can be found in appendix 1 (the interview conducted in 2009) and appendix 2 (the interview conducted in 2007).

3.4.3 Interviews
The interviews used in this paper are personal interviews. The personal interview is best used when the researcher wants to; examine a few numbers of units, know the lone respondent has to say, and/or know how the respondents interpenetrate different phenomena (Jacobsen, 2002). The interviews have taken place at the company’s head-office in Stockholm and took approximately one and a half hour.

During the interviews we used a digital sound recorder in order to save the interview for a later review. By using a sound recorder, more time could be spent to interact with the respondents and get the best results. Of course the respondents were asked if the interview could be recorded before we started to record the interview. We also asked the respondent if it would like to be anonymous, this was, as described earlier, the case.

3.4.4 Observations
When conducting the interviews observations tried to be made as well. The respondent and the company offices were observed to see if anything could be read out of this. Jacobsen (2002) says that observation is a good way to see what the respondent does, and not just what he says that he does.

3.4.5 Secondary data collection
Even though this study is mostly based on primary data, secondary data was also collected from internet pages, television programs, newspaper articles, etc. This type of data will mostly be used to describe the background of the company and to work as a support to the interviews.

When secondary data is collected it is very important to understand that some sources may be more reliable than others (Jacobsen, 2002). It is therefore important that the author chooses his/her secondary data with care. In this study, most of the secondary data have been written, or broadcasted, by an independent reporter, and the secondary data collected for this paper should therefore be highly reliable.
3.7 The liability of the study

It is always hard to speak of the liability of a study. Most cases of scientific studies have a high grade of liability. This because of that people of science mostly is more careful then the normal society when it comes to draw conclusions from behavior than the rest of our society. There is however always a chance that the scientist draws too much or bold conclusion (Klausen, 2006). This argument has taken under consideration during the study. One other possible liability problem is the fact that this is a case study. It is not sure that the conclusions could fit the general population, but since Alpha is a great representative company for the chosen population, small companies with high growth, and the problem has been addressed the liability of the study is considered to be good.
4. Empirical results

The empirical results chapter will begin with a small presentation of Alpha as a company. The chapter then continues with empirical data concerning the three keystones in our theoretical model: vision development, vision articulation, vision communication, and vision implementation. The empirical results concludes with the observations made when conducting the interview (2009) and visiting Alpha.

4.1 Company presentation

The company was founded in 1997 by three students in the north of Sweden. Their business idea was, and still is, to provide students as part-time employees to companies when they are needed (company’s homepage). The founder points out that this should not be seen as a threat against the ordinary employees, instead as a complement. At the beginning the three founders, who at this time were students, hired out themselves to different local firms (www.di.se). The respondent says that there were three essential factors within the firm in order for development; believe in your-self, work hard and have fun. Shortly after the start they expanded to other big cities with many students. The company had a global growth strategy from the beginning. The respondent believes that customers buy their product as they have a better product to a better price and emirate an amazing energy. They always want to do more business and losing a business opportunity is not an option for the company (Interview, 2007).

When the company was founded in 1997 the management set up a tough growth goal; they wanted to have a turn-over of approximately 100 million Swedish kronor within a ten years period (www.di.se). Between 1997 and the year of 2005 the company had a growth of 100 percent per year measure in terms of turn-over. In 2005 they had a growth of 236 percent and 2006 the growth where 450 percent (Interview, 2007).

The turn-over this year is approximately 420 million kronor (Interview, 2009). Because of the company’s high growth rate they have been awarded gazelle company of the year more than once. Over the last six years the company have had an average growth of 122 percent, and the last three years the company has grown about 1100 percent (Affärsvärlden).

The respondent whom was interviewed had a good view over the vision process in alpha company. This was believed from the start but was especially shown during the interviews where he talked and understood many specific words such as learning-process and vision articulation process.

4.2 Vision Development

Westwood has no problem stating Alphas current vision, nor has he any problem to remember the first vision of the company; to be a billion kronors company (Interview, 2009). Westwood says that the first vision was developed by the founders of the company, and that there has little, almost none, development of that vision until two years ago. At this state Alpha were contacted by an investment company who wanted to invest a large sum of money in the company and a relationship were created by the investors and Alpha. When the investment company came, Alpha needed to make some changes within the company, one of these changes were that a board were chosen (Ibid).
The New vision of the company is to be; “The world’s largest employer for young people”, an, according to Westwood, bold but good vision. Westwood says that the vision have gone through a great change on several levels. The original vision was more general, and not connected to the business itself. Westwood says that he also felt like the old vision were more of a motivator for the owners, then of the employees of Alpha (Ibid).

Westwood believes that the new vision has been developed by looking at the market, trying to see what opportunities there is. There is a lot of young people out there, and very few companies helping them to get work. The vision today is more connected with the core business of Alpha (Ibid). The respondent point-out that he believes that the vision were chosen to suit the new ownership of the company, he also states that the new vision feels more professional. The new board needed a new and higher, more professional vision. Westwood also states that the company already was halfway of reaching the original vision of the company and that it didn’t were enough motivation for the company with the old vision (Ibid).

At this time there is no development of the new vision of the company. Westwood says that the new board still wants to see, and measure the effect of the vision before they look in to future development. But if/when this is needed Alpha will create a reference group, who together with the board would look in to the development process (Ibid). In connection with the communication of the new vision (read more in the communication section) all department managers had to come up with own visions and goals focused on their own particular area of business. Of course these visions would have to be able to connect with the larger vision of the company. Westwood states that the purpose of these “department visions” is to connect the company vision more with the day-to-day work of the bottom level employees (Ibid).

4.3 Vision Articulation

In the first vision, Westwood believe that the founders didn’t think much about the articulation of the vision. In the new vision on the other hand the words has seen carefully chosen. For example the word “world’s” states that Alpha has an intention of becoming a global company, not just a company within Europe, as it is today. It also shows that Alpha shouldn’t see any limitations in their search for new geographical markets. On the discussion about the articulation Westwood also mentions the word young people. This specific word gives the business a clear focus. The focus is connected with the future, and the opportunity of the market. Overall Westwood says that the vision is written down the way it is to communicate a high intention of growth (Interview, 2009).

According to Westwood the purpose of the company vision is to show a direction for the company. He believes that this is very important, and he states;

“If you don’t know where to go, all winds blow in the wrong direction” (Interview, 2009).

Besides to show direction the purpose of the vision also is to motivate employees, and to attract new employees. Westwood means that the vision is articulated in its certain way to attract and obtain the right personal. The high set vision will scare off people who are not ready to work, and/or have bas self-esteem. The articulation of the vision is also a ground, or
inspiration for the company when typing down employment ads. An example for this is an ad that Alpha used for some time ago, when they were looking for some new managers. The ad was formulated as follow; “We are looking for Sweden’s best and most down to earth manager”.

Westwood concludes the discussion with saying that the confident articulation of the vision has a purpose to attract stakeholders and partners to the company. The respondent states that most companies prefer to do business with companies that have a constant ambition of development and growth over other companies.

4.4 Vision Communication

When asked on how the vision is communicated Westwood says that it was first communicated in August 2008. The board and leaders of the company had called for a two-day growth conference to kick off the new structure of Alpha. The company had gone through some changes and a new board of directors had been added at top level. Together with a new message, “meet your future” the business idea, the growth expectations, the new vision, and more were presented.

“A strong message of success and optimism were given to us, and all department managers were told to put up own growth goals for their specific departments” (Interview, 2009).

Westwood believes that the way that Alpha did choose to communicate the vision contributed to that the employees connected the vision with a positive and good feeling. The respondent says that this way were better and more appreciated than just stating the new vision in a small company meeting.

Today the vision of Alpha is communicated in a more simple way. It is stated on the company intranet, and it is up to the department managers to communicate the vision to the employees. Besides the company’s vision the department managers also, as mentioned earlier, has their own visions to communicate to their employees. Westwood says that he does not see any problem with the current communication. The company vision reaches the whole organization and he believes that the vision is known by employees of the company. He also states that the vision is supposed to be mentioned to at all new-employments, but that this is hard to know if it is a fact. And even if it is mentioned it is hard to know if a particular person chose to receive the information or not. Even though both visions is supposed to be communicated to the bottom level Westwood claims that the middle managers almost only talks about the department vision, and not the company vision, but in general the respondent don’t see any problem with this. Instead the respondent states that; “the smaller visions leads to the realization of the company vision” (Ibid).

The foundation of the overall communication in Alpha is the company’s open office culture. The office has an open space and there are whiteboards where the middle managers, as well as other employees can write down important messages to each other (Ibid).
4.5 Vision Implementation

When Westwood is asked about the implementation of the company vision, and how it is shown in the day-to-day work of Alpha he starts by explaining how the vision is a guide for decision-making.

“The vision is definitively used as a tool, a tool that is kept back of your head when it comes to decision making. An example of this can be that I personally prefer 80 good sellers that 40 great seller, as long as it can be defended profitable” (Interview, 2009).

The respondent continues by saying that; “direction beats class”. Westwood explains the statement that you don’t need to be as good if you have a clear direction to work against. Westwood believes that the vision gives guidelines of the day-to-day work also at bottom level, and show the front-line staff how they shall focus their work. The vision also encourages managers to employ staff with different ethnical background. Different nationalities in the company are only a benefit since Alpha wants to operate all over the world the respondent states. Westwood also thinks that the cocky vision helps to motivate the employees in the company as they work with a company that wants to be something special (Ibid).

Even though Westwood has spoken of many good features of the vision he does not think that the typical employee works with the stated vision as a base for his or her work. But the respondent also states that those who do benefits from it (Ibid).

Westwood believes that the vision helps motivation the day-to-day work, but also that it communicates an clarity, and that the clarity of the company makes the employees to feel secure in the company. The respondent says that the vision tells the employees where the company wants to go, and in what direction they all shall strive to work (Ibid).

Westwood do not believe that the vision guide the learning process of the company. He states that the company does not really have that kind of work, and that they don not have any training or education. The respondent also states that all the department managers know which knowledge that is important to know. Even though Westwood do not think that the vision helps with Alphas learning process, he believes that it is of big help in the hiring process. The now board is one great example of this, the founders has taken in professionals in to order to reach future goals and the new vision (Ibid).

Most people in Alpha believe in the vision and that it will be realized in the future, but not all decisions is decided in line with the vision. Much of this is connected with the present economic situation of the world. The decision that has been taken, and not been in line with the vision, has spread some discord among Alphas employees. But Westwood says; “what can we do? In these times we cannot just shoot from our hips” (Interview, 2009).
5. Analysis

In this chapter the empirical data described in the empirical results chapter is being analyzed with help of the theoretical references from the theoretical framework chapter. The chapter follows the same line as the empirical results chapter and is divided under four main topics: vision development, vision articulation, vision communication and vision implementation.

5.1 Vision development

Alpha has changed their vision over time, so it is clear that some form of vision development has been done in the company. The vision has been changed so that it now-days is connected with the area of business (Interview, 2009). The literature states that it is very important that the vision is connected with the business area. The business idea tells the company in what field they shall be working and the vision how the company shall grow and develop in that particular field (Norman 1975, Roos et al., 1998). The development of the vision will contribute to a higher level of guidance from the vision. The old vision only stated that the company wanted to grow; the new vision instead guides the company internationalization of their business.

Senge (1998) believes that many visions start out as personal visions, as the first vision did when it was stated by the founder of Alpha (Interview, 2007). He continues by saying that if the personal vision is not transformed to a company vision the vision will lose its purpose of motivate, and create a feeling of identification with the organization. Westwood believes that the former vision of Alpha; “to become a billion kronors company”, was not motivating enough for the employees of the company and that the development of a new vision were in place (Ibid.). It seems as the first vision were stuck in the personal state, and newer developed to become a company vision. Therefore the vision was only working as a motivator, directional- and identification tool for the top managers of Alpha. The newly developed vision is the company’s way to formulate a vision that is beneficial, not only for the top management, but for the whole company.

The second vision was developed by a number of people at the top. They looked at the market tried to see were the opportunities were and formed the vision after the opportunity that they found (Ibid.). The different between the developing of the two were therefore that there were more persons, and more effort put-in in the second one. The fact that the new vision has been developed by several people could explain that it has been easier to except as a shared vision, especially at top level.

At present time Alpha does not have any development of the vision. Westwood claims that the management wants to evaluate the new vision before develop it further, bet that they have a plan for how the development team of the vision shall be put together (interview 2009). Senge and Strakey (in Hudkinson, 2002) means that it is important to see the vision as a ongoing process that’s continuously needs development. They believe that the vision needs to be developed in order to cope with the changing environment inside and outside of the company.
Even though there is said that there is no development of the vision at the moment, evaluation of the vision should be seen as a part of the development process. In order to know what shall be developed the company needs to see where and why the development is needed. Also, Westwood claims that recent times forces some decisions to go against the line of the vision. Here is one quite obvious place where the management could see over any further development of the vision.

The department managers of Alpha have also developed their own visions for their particular department. When the visions have been articulated and put to paper the management look at them and if the vision is in line with the company vision the department manager gets a clear to use that vision (Interview, 2009). It is important that the management of a company allows the people in the organization to have visions of their own. This is seen as an important aspect of organizational learning and help to develop the company further (Senge & Starky in Hodkinson, 2002). The fact that Alpha is encouraging smaller visions on the different departments three-out the company shows, that even though Westwood does not see the vision as being under development, so is the case. Hopefully the management is well aware of this and uses the different department visions in their work to develop their company vision.

5.2 Vision articulation
The stated vision of Alpha is; “to be the world’s largest employer for young people”. The articulation of the vision is according to Westwood not any coincidence. Every word has its own meaning in fulfilling the purpose of the vision. But more about that later, lets first look at the general articulation of the vision. Westwood claims that the bold vision has been chosen because it is a good way to attract new employment and stake holders. The respondent believes that the company has higher chance of attracting good people if they show that they are a company that aims high (Interview, 2009).

The purpose of the vision is described as a tool to show the employees the direction of the company, to motivate the employees, and to attract new recourses to the company both when it comes to human capital and financial capital (Ibid.), and the articulation of the vision shall therefore be chosen with these variables in mind. This view is supported by numerous authors. The general view of visions is that it is used in order to guide, motivate, and inspire (E.g. Ericsson, 2004, Collin & Porras, 1989, and Urde, 1997). The view of vision as a tool for showing direction is also supported by Foster and Adore (2007) who states that the vision offers the company direction which is a high factor for success.

Foster and Adores statement can be compared with the quote a quote of Westwood; “direction beats class” (Interview, 2009). Looking at the variables that Alphas vision has been build up against they are all good variables that shall be included in to a vision. The most important variable for Alphas articulation of the vision seems to be the directional variable, something that was excluded in their earlier vision.

The theory also says that the vision is articulated in an intrinsic way (Senge & Starky in Hodkinson, 2002). The author means that the vision should not just tell company’s employees to be the best because this will mostly increase the pressure, not the performance of the employees. Alphas vision is articulated in such a way that is not the most important to be the best, instead the most important is to be the most as long as it is allowed profitable (Interview, 2009). Westwood himself claims that he would rather employ 80 good sellers, than 40 really good sellers, which is in line with the vision (Ibid). This view in the company should help the
employees to cope with pressure, and together with the, still confident vision, motivate them
to do their work.

5.3 Vision communication
The first time that Alphas new vision were communicated the management had called for a
growth conference. At this conference the management tried to connect the vision with a
feeling of success, growth and joy. Horzec (2007) says that it is important that the vision is
informed in a way were it is communicated in more than words. Alpha tried to connect the
vision with a felling and a state of mind on the seminar. They also tried to make the
information feel more meaningful and motivating by this way of communication.

Horzec (2007) continues his discussion with the statement that employees need to be
communicated the vision in a motivation way in order to adopt the vision to their behavior.
This is essential when it comes to make the vision shared by the whole organization and to
make the employees believe in the vision. In Alpha this communication was successful.
Westwood claims that not only do most employees know the vision by words, they also, in
most cases believe in the vision (Interview, 2009).

The fact that most employees still remember and believe in the vision can also be connected
with Hodkinsions (2002) reasoning around the vision communication. He believes that it is
important to connect the vision with something positive. When that is done it is more likely
that the vision will be better imprinted in the minds of the listener. It is also more likely that
the vision will give long-lasting results when the vision is connected with a positive feeling
(ibid). At the growth conference the management of Alpha succeeded with exactly this. They
succeeded with communicating the vision in such a way that it will be connected with
something positive and joyful. This can be one of the explanations of why most people still
remember and believe in the positively communicated vision.

The vision communication of today in Alpha is mostly done thorough Alphas intranet, but it
is also always mentioned at new-employments (Interview, 2009). Much of the
communications at lower levels are also based up-on department visions (Ibid.). As long these
visions are in line with the company vision they help to communicate the company vision as
well. According to the theory the most important part of communication the vision is not
through words or text. Instead the most important factor of communicating the vision is that
the company and the management, as well as managers, lives by the vision (Vyakarnam et al.,
1998). The respondent has his doubts that this is the case; some of the recent decisions have
not been made in line with the vision. He also comments that these decisions has became
concerning to the employees of Alpha. If Alpha only communicates the vision by words, and
not by action a gap will appear in the company business. The employees will have a hard time
to know how to act, and they may believe that the vision is only there for show, to attract
outer investors. The vision will then lose a lot of its purpose and the effect of it will fade. It is
therefore of great importance that the company look over the vision and see if they can act
according to it even in these troubled times.

The open office space that was observed at Alpha (Interview, 2009) can contribute to the fact
that the vision has become a shared vision. Westwood also says that it was the board and
founder of the company that first communicated the vision throe-out the company.
Vyakarnam, Jacobs and Handelberg (1998) say that it is very important that also the board,
management and founders of a company stand behind the company of the vision. In Alphas
case this is exactly the case. Because that the board, managers, and founder of Alpha stands united behind the vision it has been able to get an impact in the company in a relatively short time.

5.4 Vision implementation
Westwood believes that the vision is not used to guide the learning process of the company. But in contradiction to that he also says that the vision is used as a base when hiring personal, and that the vision encourages multi-national employment (Interview, 2009). It is important that the vision guides the learning process of the company as it helps employees to select relevant information and discard irrelevant information (Bird, 1989). This shows that even though Westwood does not know it, the vision helps and guides the learning process of the company. One of his examples, where the hiring process is guided towards employing multicultural employees in order to reach the global state of the vision is one big and clear example of this. Here the vision guides the company to take in knowledge and experiences from different cultures and nationalities.

Another aspect of how the vision contributes to the learning process is that the managers are allowed and expected to create department visions. Westwood also claims that the bold articulation of the vision attracts a certain type of people (Interview 2009). This can also be seen as a guide in the learning process, and is strongly connected with Birds (1989) thoughts in the subject. Also the vision helps, according to Westwood the managers of the company by stating that it is better to hire a few good employees then one great employee (Interview 2009). This together with the intrinsic and positive vision of Alpha shows the employees that they do not need to fear not being the best as long as they work in the right direction. The intrinsic and positive vision leads according to, Senge and Starkey in Hodkinsson (2002) to a long lasting growth and a calmer, and more secure employment culture within the company.

Looking at the overall learning process in Alpha the vision process is very much a guide for this process. The vision does not only help to gather the right type of knowledge for the company, it also helps the middle managers of the company to develop in the right direction while formulation the vision for their own department in their own words.

Westwood find that the vision is motivation people in the company, and even that he does not believe that all people are using the vision in their day-to-day work the people that are using it is drawing benefit from it (Interview, 2009). Looking over all the answers that Westwood has given, the people working in the company is probably benefiting more from the vision that Westwood believes. And even though most communication at the lower level is based on the department visions these also help. It is important that Westwood and Alpha sees the utility gained from the smaller visions as well as the bigger company vision.

5.5 Model overview
The model that was presented in the theory section had a linear form, and described on section to be a base and foundation for the next dimension. When comparing the model with the empirical data that have been collected it is clear that the reality is not as simple as the theory. Westwood states that there is no development of the vision at the moment, but there is an ongoing development process with their vision follow-up work. They also have a plan for how a more active development shall be done. Also the communication is constant in the company. Westwood says that even if the communication is not as grand and special as it was at the
growth seminar in 2007 there still is a constant remember of the vision through the intranet (Interview, 2009). The articulation and implementation is more based on the two other aspects. A new articulation of the vision is rarely done. Westwood say that this has only been made once since the company was founded. The implementation of the vision has a similar pattern. Even though the vision is implemented in the day-to-day work by sub visions, the implementation plan is not changed, used and/or developed as continuously as the vision development, and vision communication.

Looking at company Alpha the first presented model looked like this:

![Model](attachment:vision_model.png)

When analyzing the empirical data with the model as its foundation it is clear that the model only copes with reality to a certain extent. Instead of showing how companies works with the vision process it shows how the different dimensions of the process are connected, aspecisally when the work with the vision starts in the company. There needs to be a development, and articulation of a vision in order to communicate and implement the vision. When the vision process once has started in a company the model should instead look something like this:

![New Model](attachment:new_vision_model.png)

As the new model shows the development and communication of the vision is three factors that is constantly worked with over time. This while articulation only is worked on when the development of the vision is completed or shows that it needs a change.
6 Conclusions

In this section of the paper the problem definition; “How do small high growth companies work with their vision?”, will be answered. This is done by drawing conclusions around the analyze chapter and the purpose of the paper.

The main focus on this paper is how companies with rapid growth-rates work with vision in their organization, but before this question is answered a short section addresses the vision in a growth context. This is done to add an extra understanding to the conclusions and the vision process as a whole.

When looking at Alpha it is clear that a small company can achieve wonders without a good shared company vision as long as they have an excellent business idea, at least to some extent. This was done by Alpha in its early years. At this time they did not have a good vision but they still succeeded to grow. But as the company grows, both financially and by numbers of employees, a clear vision becomes more and more necessary.

This paper has shown that rapid growth companies tend to work with visions, not only to motivate, control, and lead their employees, but also to attract new recourses. Financial institutes, or other companies wants to know what the company strives to be, not only what they sold last year. They do this with a vision that is intrinsic, and positive. This is, according to Senge, and Starkey in Hodkinsson (2002) important in order for the vision to be affective in the long run.

It has also been shown that the most important vision in the day-to-day work may not be the “company vision”. Instead there is a big work of developing sub-visions, or department visions that they are mentioned in the paper. It is these smaller visions job to motivate the day-to-day work, and the company vision work as a guide for these visions. Instead of an employee motivator the company vision works as a learning tool, even if the people within the company are not aware of it or not.

These rapid growth companies needs at some point to start an active work with their vision in order to take the next step with their business. In this work we have not seen, as so many times before that the main thing of the vision is to make it easier for the employees to identify with the company. This may of course be because of several factors but the study has mainly showed that the company instead uses the vision to make it easier for the employees to take decisions; the vision tells them where the company wants to go.

The study has also shown that the day-to-day communication of the vision is mostly done with the department visions. The company visions is always there in the back of the head of the employees but is not mentioned as often. Much of the communication work is much done in the beginning of the vision process, when the stated vision is presented to the company. Here the company has put down a great effort in order to make the vision stick to the minds of its attendance, and be connected with a positive feeling.
The overall conclusion is that rapid growth companies work with their vision in a professional way. They use their vision as a guide for knowledge and resource gathering and to set a certain mood in the organization. Further they allow the whole organization to be a part of the development of the vision, mainly by the usage of department visions. The study has shown that these department visions are the visions that is mostly used in the day-to-day work, and that the company vision is used as a guide for these visions. When it comes to the long term usage of the vision there is some sort of constant development, in this case it is the evaluation of the newly stated vision (Interview, 2009).
7 Future research

In this, the last section of the paper a number of suggestions for future research will be presented. These suggestions and thoughts have been found under the time that this paper has been written and represents other angels, or extensions of this study.

✓ One example of future research would be to look at the importance of visions in a much larger company. Is there any difference in the vision work between smaller companies, such as Alpha, and larger companies who has a much higher turnover and personal force?

✓ A study where the focus is on the bottom-level personals feelings towards the vision should also be interesting. Do the personal really experience all these things that the vision is supposed to give them, or could they not care less about the vision?

✓ One other study that could be made is to see how a vision affects a smaller company, without any interests in growth. Will the effect of the vision still be benefited for the company by making the personal more secure and safe in their decision-making.

✓ The final suggestion for future studies is to look deeper in to the effect that a vision has had on a vision over a long period of time. This is of course hard but it would be interesting to see how a new vision has changed the work in an organization over a five years period.
List of references


Bird, B. J. (1989), Entrepreneurial Behavior, Scott, Foreman and Company, USA


Appendix 1: Questionnaire 2009

Initiating questions
1. What is your position in the company?
2. How long have you been working in the company?
3. What is the vision of the company?
4. How many works in the company?
5. What is the growth rate of the company?
6. What is the turnover in the company?

Vision development
1. How and why was the vision developed?
2. How has the vision been developed over time?
3. Why was this vision chosen?
4. Were there any expectations of the vision, increased motivation, growth etc?
5. How is the vision under development today?
6. Who are involved in the vision development?

Vision articulation
1. How is the stated vision in the company?
2. How has the stated vision changed and developed over time?
3. How did the articulation of the vision take place?
4. Who stated the vision?
5. How shall this vision affect the day-to-day work, and motivation of the employees?
6. Is the articulation of the vision under constant process, and who are involved in this process?

Vision communication
1. How is the vision communicated at top level?
2. How is the vision communicated at bottom level?
3. Who communicates the vision at top / bottom level?
4. Is there any difference in the articulation when communicated between the two levels?
5. Does the communication reach the whole organization?
6. How is the communication formed to enable highest possible motivation and emotional support among the employees?
7. Has the vision communication strategy changed over time?
8. How has the management communicated a change in the stated vision?
9. Is there a communication about the company vision a two way communication?
10. Is the company having a constant reminding communication about the vision?
11. How is the leader / management of the company showing that they believe in the vision?
12. Are the company leader / management following the vision in their day-to-day work?
Vision implementation

1. What role has the vision for you in the day-to-day work?
2. Has the vision any noticeable effect on motivation within the company?
3. What is the purpose of the vision in the company?
4. How is the vision contributing to these purposes being reached?
5. Does the vision guide the organizational learning process?
6. Is the vision giving workers and management any guide when it comes to what kind of information that is beneficial for the company?
7. Is the vision shared by the management?
8. Is the vision shared by the whole organization?
9. Has there been any connection between the stated vision and the development / growth of the company?
10. Is the vision used as a tool in order to gather the right resources to the company?
11. What do you believe is the greatest effect of the vision?
Appendix 2: Questionnaire 2007

When was the company founded?
How much have your growth in terms of turn over pear year been sins the start?
How many employees pear year are contracted?
How many employees have the company today?
Which was the most important factor to growth in the beginning?
Which factor contributes most to growth in the current situation?
How do you think about internalization and what is the reason for not going abroad?
What kind of relation does the company have to your costumers?
Are there any middle managers in the company?
How do you look at middle managers?
Is there any entrepreneur in the company?
Is he/she involved in the day-to-day work?
What is the primary job assignment for the entrepreneur?
In which context does the company have their highest profit?
Are there any growth goals for the future? Which are these goals?
What was the main reason to start the firm?
What triggers the management today to develop?
What is your employees’ offered? (Economical reward, career, education etc)
What is your special growth strategy?
Who contributes with the innovation in the company?
To which markets is your service offered?
How have the historical view of market entrances been and how have it influenced the firm?
Which is your primary business area?