Corporate Special Events

A Strategic Tool in Internal Marketing
to Motivate and Retain Employees

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Abstract

To have a high rate of absence as well as employee turnover is very costly for organisations. Having personnel, who are motivated, inspired and diligent, might assist in avoiding such inconveniences. In today's global and increasingly competitive workplace, events have become a strategic means in many areas for companies to attract and retain both customers and employees. *Corporate special events* (CSE), such as Christmas parties, kick-offs, company celebrations, incentive trips, recognition dinners are one of the strategic tools available to companies that can be used to satisfy the social needs of the employee. CSE also provide an opportunity to communicate corporate policies, strategies and goals to employees, or to enhance the team spirit and the feeling of belonging to the company. Despite the enormous amounts spent on CSE annually, very few companies measure and evaluate the effects and potential benefits of the events.

The main focus and purpose of this thesis was to examine how CSE are used in companies' internal marketing (IM), as a strategic tool, to motivate and retain employees. More specifically we studied what perceptions managers and employees have of CPE; why they are being held, their potential benefits and effects on work motivation and employee retention, how these effects are being measured and evaluated, how they are used in IM, and how they contribute to form an organizational culture. We used five Swedish companies for our case study. In-depth interviews were conducted with both managers and employees in order to consider the two different perspectives.

Keywords: Corporate Special Events, Internal Marketing, Work Motivation, Employee Retention, Organizational Culture, Event Evaluation, Event Management.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF FIGURES

1. INTRODUCTION

We start this chapter by giving a brief introduction to the world of events. Next follows a section addressing three areas of interest to the problem background of this study, i.e. the corporate special event marketplace, corporate special events and marketing, and employee perceptions of corporate special events. Thereafter we identify and describe the problem areas of the study. Finally, we present the research problems, state our purpose, and illustrate the outline of the thesis.

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1.1 Problem Background

"Corporate special events are big business", say the readers of *Special Events Magazine*, and a quick search on the Internet for "internal corporate events" gave thousands of hits, mostly to websites of companies creating different types of events. Undoubtedly the event business is popular. Since the dawn of time, human beings have found ways to mark important events in their lives. In today's increased global competition events have become a strategic means for many companies to attract and keep customers and employees. Moreover, the fact that today's growing industry is the service industry, where the employee is the main asset, has increased the interest in work motivation and employee retention among researchers and practitioners. To have a high rate of absence as well as turnover is very costly for organisations, and having personnel that is highly motivated might prevent some of the withdrawal behaviours (Björklund, 2001). As human beings we take interest in tasks in which we see some purpose and some value behind. In the battle of winning the loyalty of customers and employees event marketing is a relatively new phenomenon compared to traditional marketing channels. The basic underlying idea of using events as a marketing tool is to *create* a value and not only communicate it (Behrer and Larsson, 1998). Today communication is about so much more than merely influencing people; it is about building relationships, creating expectations and in the end a surplus within the customers or employees (ibid).

The term *corporate event* is used for a diversity of "business get-togethers", both external for customers and internal for employees. In this study we focus on events held for employees, and our definition of *corporate special events* should be seen as an umbrella term for various internal corporate events, such as Christmas parties, kick-offs, company celebrations, preventive healthcare activities, and so on.

1.1.1 The Corporate Special Event Marketplace

Despite the popularity of corporate special events there is, according to Lisa Hurley the editor of the *Special Events Magazine*, little hard data on this major industry segment (Hurley, 2002). The first study examining the event marketplace in the US was presented in the magazine last year. More than 1000 subscribers categorized as "corporate planners" were asked a number of questions about *corporate special events* including incentive trips, galas, recognitions dinners, company picnics etc. The result shows that 32% of the respondents staged between 6-19 events annually, 27% staged less and 41% more. The expenditure for these events varied a great deal, but about 20% of the companies spent between $1 million to $10 million. Moreover, this American study shows that the companies' budget allocations for staging corporate special events in 2003 remained the same or increased in about 70% of the cases compared to 2002. However, just about 30% of the respondents intended to measure the RIO (return on investment) of their special events, another 30% considered it though, but 20% clearly stated they had no plans to measure RIO. This naturally raises the question: How can companies spend so much money on something they do not know makes sense?

After a turbulent few years, the corporate special event marketplace in Sweden shows a slight upward trend, although the profits are not as significant as during the "corporate event-boom" in the 1980s, the corporate event industry turnover is still massive (Hermansson, 2003-10-24). It is difficult to gauge the exact turnover since no complete research and analysis, similar to the American study of corporate special events, has been done. However, it is worth mentioning that the Swedish events association "Sponsrings- och Eventföreningen" has close to 300 members (www.eventforening.se). This

membership count indicates that the associated companies and organizations have a dedicated and professional attitude towards the work that they do (ibid).

1.1.2 Corporate Special Events and Marketing

Companies frequently use events, both externally and internally, as a tool in their marketing and communication towards customers and employees. Event marketing is commonly used for product launches, or when a company wants to build or strengthen a brand image or its relations with customers. Events are also often used to communicate corporate policies, strategies and goals to employees, or to enhance the team spirit and the feeling of belonging to the company.

Many event bureaus emphasize the potential positive effects of events in their marketing. One of the hits matching the internet search for "internal corporate events" was "Rave Reviews", a theatrically based corporate communications and special events company with twelve years experience of organizing events for companies of different sizes in the US. According to Rave Reviews, they create "innovative, customized events to motivate, educate and inspire the audience" (www.raverevievs.net). Moreover, they state that "we blend traditional corporate messages with the creativity, humour and emotion of entertainment", and that the result in forms of benefits for the company buying their services will be abundant. Not only will Rave Reviews make certain that the employees will understand the corporate message and what management declare, more importantly they will also make them believe it. Other benefits the company will see according to Rave Reviews are: improved collaboration and cooperation, greater employee involvement, new found creativity, increased productivity, deeper commitment and a better working environment.

A further example is "Evenemangsbyrån", a Swedish company creating corporate special events that states "We want people to understand the value of directed events as a form of communication" (www.evenemang.se). Evenemangsbyrån claims to be committed to help companies or organizations to get more value from their marketing activities, internal and external communication. This is, according to the company, "achieved by leveraging on Evenemangbyråns impressive business knowledge and experience from the

areas of dramatizing, directing and scenery, in order to deliver cost-effective services to the customers".

Rave Reviews and Evenemangsbyrån are only two examples of the myriad of similar companies out there, and naturally, what they promise sounds like music to a manager's ears. However, will companies in reality achieve all these "great benefits" or is it just a marketing ploy from the events organizing company? According to Kathleen Moore, the vice president/global event manager of a New York-based financial services firm, the trend is towards "effective events", and she explains "Now more than ever, event professionals must make it clear that special events are more than fun; they are functional" (Hurley, 2003). This trend is further supported by Colja Dams, the managing director of a German event production firm, who states "2003 will be the year where all communication efforts need to have a reason", and he continues "the special event measures have to come from this reason and – at the end of the day – have to deliver proven results" (Hurley, 2003).

1.1.3 Employee Perceptions of Corporate Special Events

Another issue related to the focus of corporate special events is: Do employees really appreciate those events and other company activities, for example Christmas parties and summer picnics? If they do not, the money spent on organizing such events might be a waste and the "great benefits" for the company will most probably fail to materialise. Almost every company has some sort of annual event, and the purpose is often to build amity among staff. Robert Falconi, the CEO of a defence contractor in the US, is critical of the idea of company festivities and events, and he speaks from his own direct experience when he states, "I do subscribe strongly to the notion of encouraging camaraderie in the workplace. But I think it has to develop naturally over time. I'm not going to bond with someone just because we smack a volleyball around or do the Macarena together" (Falconi, 1997). At one company where Falconi was the CEO he tested the hypothesis that employees would prefer money to spend on their own instead of a company party, and the vote was overwhelming for the money. Unfortunately, this does not develop the relationships between employees, but the point is that if companies want to invest in their employees, they should make sure they spend

the money on the right things. The only way to find out what events the employees would prefer is by asking them. If the dialogue between management and employees is poor sometimes management makes the mistake and presumes that everything is all right. Internal communications is a crucial feature of internal marketing. However, Stershic (2001) stated that few companies proactively apply internal marketing. According to her, this is based on poor leadership, and that management often does not realize the need for doing it, or assume that they already are doing it. They might think, "the firm has an award program and the annual Christmas party, what more do the employees demand?"(ibid).

1.2 Problem Areas and Purpose

Most companies put a lot of effort and money into their traditional marketing activities towards external customers, however, what should be equally important, but is often seen as secondary, is the company's employees – the internal customers. Internal marketing originally focused on employee motivation and satisfaction. Later on it was recognized that internal marketing activities also could provide a marketing opportunity for the company. Today internal marketing is, in addition to previous means, seen as a way of reducing departmental isolation, reducing internal friction and overcoming resistance to change, and it is now applied to any type of organization, not merely service companies (Rafiq and Ahmed, 2000). Work motivation is a central theme in internal marketing, but also a significant research area of its own. Motivation has been described as "one of the most pivotal concerns of modern organisational research" (Baron, 1991: 1, cited in Ambrose and Kulik, 1999). Applying Maslow's hierarchy of needs to human organisations assumes that the social needs will come to the fore, people will want to be accepted as part of a group, to share common interests and aspirations with the group, to experience the bonds of friendship and loyalty (Burnes, 1996). Corporate special events are one strategic tool for companies to satisfy employees' social needs.

Organizational culture is one of the key areas of management and organization studies as well as practice. An important task of managers is to try to manage

the ideas and understandings of their employees. All management takes place within culture on different levels, i.e. on a societal level, an industrial level, and an organizational level. Each organization has its own culture, and this can be a positive force in achieving effective performance. Stershic (2001) stressed that employees perform better when they are reminded of the value they bring to the organization, i.e. to make certain that the internal communication conveys the "big picture", allowing employees to know what is expected of them, how they can contribute to the company, how the company operates and why, the corporate mission and vision, and why some actions are taken and some are not.

Little research has been conducted to investigate the relationship between corporate special events and internal marketing. Thus, we are interested in looking at what functions such events serve for an organization and its employees. To be more specific we feel it would be beneficial to study how corporate special events are utilized by contemporary organizations focusing on their internal marketing strategies. Furthermore, we believe it would be valuable to examine how corporate special events affect employees' inspiration, work motivation and job satisfaction. Subsequently also if management is aware of the potential benefits the events can achieve, and for that reason take advantage of these and use corporate special events as a strategic means. By looking at the internal marketing concept and theories of work motivation and employee retention from an organizational culture perspective, we aim to shed some light on the various issues of corporate special events discussed in the previous part.

In short, most companies invest a lot in events, but they are not always aware of or interested in the effects. Why is that? Since many of the companies do not measure or evaluate the results, neither can they be sure to achieve their goals effectively. Other issues concern employee perceptions of corporate special events. How and do companies know if employees really appreciate company events and parties, and find them motivational. Furthermore, do corporate special events promote a co-operative atmosphere and increase job satisfaction? The issues are many, but we have identified and chosen three focal points to be studied:

1) How do managers and employees perceive corporate special events concerning:
   a) The reasons for holding them?
   b) Their potential benefits and effects on work motivation and employee retention?
   c) Their use in the internal marketing?

2) How are the potential benefits concerning work motivation and employee retention of corporate special events being measured and evaluated?

3) How do corporate special events contribute to forming an organizational culture?

These research problems lead us to the purpose of the thesis project. The main focus and purpose of this study is to examine how corporate special events are used in companies' internal marketing, as a strategic tool, to motivate and retain employees. The intention also is to reach a deeper level of understanding of the use of internal marketing strategies and tools. Accordingly, using an organizational culture perspective on internal marketing contributes to interpreting the purposes and goals of holding corporate special events.

1.3 Outline of the Thesis

To facilitate the reading we have chosen to illustrate the outline of the thesis in the figure below (see Figure1). Chapter 1 introduces the reader to the background and the problem areas of the study, and points out the purpose. Chapter 2 explains the procedure of the thesis work, and presents the methodological approach used. Chapter 3 provides a theoretical framework, including the theoretical concepts of: event management, internal marketing, work motivation, employee retention, and organizational culture. Chapter 4 describes the empirical findings from the case companies. Chapter 5 analyses the empirical results related to the theoretical framework.

Finally, Chapter 6 concludes the research, and our recommendations and suggestions for further research are given.

Figure 1: The Outline of the Thesis
Source: Own elaboration

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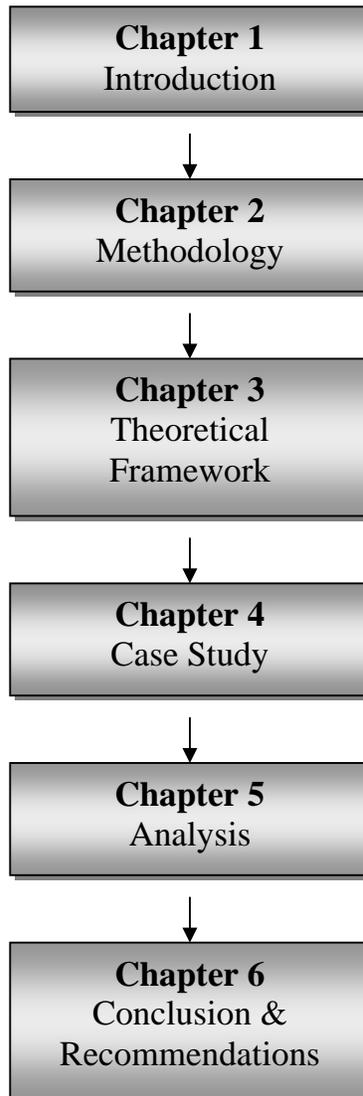
2. METHODOLOGY

The term methodology refers to the way in which we approach problems and seek answers (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998); it applies to how research is conducted. Our assumptions, interests, and purposes shape which methodology we choose. This chapter covers the process through which our research was carried out. It describes and discusses steps taken and methods used in our thesis. The research conducted was primarily based on the objectives stated in the previous chapter.

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2.1 A Qualitative Study

In order to reach the objectives of our thesis project we accomplished both a literature study and a case study. According to the available literature there is not much research conducted on corporate special events, keeping that in mind, we consider our study as experimental research, which can further be developed through qualitative or quantitative methods. For the empirical part qualitative techniques were used to collect, process and analyse the necessary information.

Qualitative methodology refers in its broadest sense to research that produces descriptive data - people's own written or spoken words and observable behaviour (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998), for instance *interviewing* and talking with key target people (Pyke, 2003), and it deals with explanatory concepts (Robson and Foster, 1989). Qualitative techniques concentrate less on quantifiable measures, and look at, for example, the reasons "why" someone may approve or disapprove, or like or dislike an initiative taken by an organization (Sang, 2003). Qualitative data analysis is a process of piecing together data, of making the invisible obvious (Morse, 1994).

All data collection methods have strengths and weakness, and so do the qualitative research methods. According to Van Maanen (1984); qualitative data is rich, full, earthy, holistic, and "real"; its face validity seems unimpeachable; it preserves chronological flow where that is important, and

suffers minimally from retrospective distortion. On the other hand, collecting and analysing the data is a highly labour intensive operation, often generating much stress, even for top-quality research staff, and sometimes the sheer range of phenomena to be observed, the recorded volume of notes, the time required for write-up, coding, and analysis can all become overwhelming (Van Maanen, 1984).

2.1.1 Case Study Research

Case studies are in-depth investigations of a given social unit, an individual, group, institution, or community, resulting in a complete, well-organised picture of that unit (Isaac & Michael, 1971). The purpose of case and field study research is to intensively study the background, current status, and environmental interactions of the social unit in focus. Depending on the purpose, the scope of the study may encompass an entire lifecycle or only a selected segment and it may concentrate upon specific factors or take in the totality of elements and events (ibid). Compared to a survey study, which tends to examine a small number of variables across a large sample of units, the case study tends to examine a small number of units across a large number of variables and conditions. Case studies provide useful anecdotes or examples to illustrate more generalized statistical findings; on the other hand because of the narrow focus on few units, case studies are limited in their representativeness (ibid). For our case study five Swedish companies were selected.

2.2 Sampling of Case Companies

Empirical data is the information researchers attain from fieldwork. To study closely the corporate special event market, and its effects for organizations as well as on employees, we thought it might be a good idea to contact companies we knew were working with event marketing. Thus, as a starting point we used a specific corporate special event, *Drakbåtsfestivalen 2003* in Gothenburg, to get in touch with companies. Drakbåtsfestivalen is a very popular corporate event, which is held at many places around the country during summer since the mid 1980's (www.dragonboatfestival.com). In Gothenburg it has attracted thousands of participants and spectators during a week in August for many years. It's a themed paddling competition for companies in the region, focusing

on preventive health care and teambuilding, but as the event site is situated in the city centre of Gothenburg it is also an opportunity for the participating companies to profile and market themselves.

To find out which companies took part in the event this summer we looked at the result lists published on the event website. Due to the time limitation of our thesis project, it would have been impossible to include all of them. Hence, we randomly picked ten companies from the lists to contact for interviews. The companies were first contacted by a phone call, and then we sent the contact persons an e-mail explaining more in detail who we were, the research topic, why we intended to study the specific area, and also what benefits could be attained from such research. From the pool of contacted companies, five showed interest to participate in our study, and were willing to provide us with information on corporate special events held in their organizations. The five companies were: *Skanska*, *KappAhl*, *Peab*, *Nordea* and *Renova*. The selected companies come from different industries, both production and services. In section 4.1 they will be further described.

2.2.1 Sampling Method of Case Companies and Interviewees

Deciding about the sampling group and how many companies or persons to interview is always difficult. Taylor and Bogdan (1984) suggest that it's not the number of the people but the potential of each "case" which aids the researcher in developing theoretical insights into the area of social life being studied. Qualitative research is not about "counting heads" it is there to find out the depth and breadth of ideas (Pyke, 2003).

The sampling method of our study can be considered as a combination of two non-probability methods, *convenience sampling* for the selection of companies, and *judgment sampling* for the selection of interviewees (Kinnear and Taylor, 1996). In a convenience sample everyone who meets the criteria for the study, are willing to complete all questions, and are available when they are needed is selected. From such a sample, we cannot measure sampling error, and make any definite or conclusive statements about the results. However, that is not the intention with our study. As Kinnear and Taylor (1996) state, "convenience samples can be most easily justified at the exploratory stage of research, as a

basis for generating hypotheses", and since we regard our study as experimental this method suits our purposes.

The five companies that responded positively to our request were all included for a first set of interviews. Later, due to time constraints from both our side and from some of the companies, we decided to focus more on two of the companies, *Skanska* and *KappAhl*. Within these two companies, further interviews with employees on different levels were conducted. Based on our desired objects the decision of whom to interview in each company was primarily taken by the manager, our contact person, with whom we have had our first interview. This procedure can be considered as judgment sampling. Judgment samples, or purposive samples "are selected on the basis of what *some expert thinks* those particular sampling units or elements will contribute to answering the particular research question at hand" (Kinnear and Taylor, 1996, p. 412). Again, the degree and direction of error are unknown, but if the expert's judgment is valid, the sample will be a better one than if a convenience sample were used (ibid).

2.3 Data Collection Instruments

Since we have mentioned interviewing as our primary data collection instrument, we find it appropriate to discuss this qualitative technique in more detail. To collect data, in addition to in-depth interviews, we made use of various written information sources provided to us by the companies, such as corporate annual statements, co-worker magazines, and brochures and leaflets describing corporate policies and philosophies. This material together with the primary data from interviews is presented in chapter 4.

2.3.1 In-depth interviews

Robson and Foster (1989) suggest that interviews provide opportunity to listen, observe, question freely and interpret the individual's behaviour. In-depth interviewing can be viewed as a means of face-to-face encounters between the researcher and informants to learn about events and activities that cannot be observed directly. In this type of interviewing the people being interviewed are informants in the truest sense of the word. They act as the researcher's

observer, his or her eyes and ears in the field. As informants, their role is not simply to reveal their own views, but to describe what happened and how others viewed it (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984). Taylor and Bogdan (1984) also point out some weak points of interviewing. They mean that in interviews people say things while they might act differently, furthermore that the interviewers do not *observe* people directly in their everyday lives. However, in our case, mainly due to time limitations of the thesis project, it was not possible to observe people "in action" during various corporate special events, nor would observations have been sufficient for our purpose. Thus, we considered in-depth interviews to best serve our purpose, and aid us in answering our research problems.

In order to achieve a deep insight of the effects of corporate special events for employees and employers we approached the problems from two angles, the management perspective and the employee viewpoint. The first round of interviews was concentrated on managers who were responsible for organizing events for employees. The second round was focused on supervisors or branch managers, and employees at the ground level of the organisations to obtain their perceptions of the role of events.

In view of our research area and related chapters in 'Theoretical Framework', applicable interview questions were prepared. The interview questions for managers were in-depth open-ended since we wanted to acquire as much information as possible, see appendix I. These interviews span from an hour and a half to two hours. The interview questions for employees and supervisors were not as many, and were more concerned with their perceptions of corporate special events, see appendix II. These interviews spanned from half an hour to an hour. The interviews were conducted during October and November 2003. Total hours of interviewing were 18 h, with 17 people altogether. Before the interviews were started, the interviewees were asked straightforward questions about their names and job responsibilities. Robson and Foster (1989) mentioned this process as creating a relaxed atmosphere, breaking the ice and encouraging the interviewees. The prepared interview questions were more to remind us what themes to discuss with the interviewees, rather than a manuscript to be strictly followed. Consequently, other related questions were

asked, particularly when the interviewee did not understand the question or when he or she was not that "talkative". Additionally, after each interview, the interviewees were asked if they would like to add something regarding the topics discussed. They were also asked for permission to use their names as well as the company's name in the research.

2.4 Data Processing

All the interviews were recorded and notes were taken. According to Robson and Foster (1989), groups and individual interviews are normally tape-recorded. The recording also needs to be of reasonably high quality. Each person's voice must be clearly audible so that there is no doubt about what was said and who said what. The recording helped us to concentrate more on the interviewee and to obtain as much information as possible. A tape recording also allows the interviewer to capture so much more than he or she could from memory, since the interviewer's data consist almost entirely of words (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984). The next stage was to listen to the tapes and transfer the information onto sheets of paper, which can, according to Robson and Foster (1989), be thought of as the qualitative equivalent of computer printouts. Later the typed and documented interviews were sent back to the interviewees to minimize the risks of misinterpretation of quotes from them, but also to get their approval to use the data in our research.

2.4.1 Trustworthiness of the Data

There are many potential sources of error that can affect the results. For instance, *personal factors* such as the mood, fatigue, and health of the interviewee, and *situational factors* such as variations in the environment in which the measurements are reached (Kinnear & Taylor, 1996). Additionally, there are factors concerning *data collection* and *data analysis*, such as variations in how the questions are administered, the influence of the interviewing method, and errors made when interpreting the information (ibid). The trustworthiness of the collected data is dependent on the interviewed persons giving truthful answers to the questions. Since the interviewees agreed to answer the questions we assume they had an interest in the research area, and we have no reason to believe that the interviewees did not answer the questions

as well as they could to their knowledge. All of them had worked at their respective company for many years, they were familiar with the internal environment, and had participated in several corporate special events. To obtain high quality information the interviews were conducted at their work, which would make them feel more comfortable than if the interviews were held in another place. However, it needs to be considered that the interviews were only conducted with a small number of people at each case company, which therefore cannot give representative research accuracy.

The reliability of qualitative research lies in the consistence between the results and the collected data. Robson and Foster (1989), suggest that a thorough, detached and interpretive approach to analysis and interpretation of qualitative data will lead to reliable findings with internal consistency. The findings should be repeatable by further qualitative or quantitative research.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Our theoretical framework consists of five main parts. The first part is about event management, including definitions, purposes and potential benefits of corporate special events. This part also draws attention to the difficulties in measuring and evaluating events. The second part concerns internal marketing, its development, basic ideas and application today. The third part focuses on work motivation theories and strategies. The fourth part is about employee retention. The fifth and final part describes the complexity of organizational culture including definitions, metaphors, and manifestations of culture. Additionally organizational culture and its relevance to various business concerns are discussed.

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3.1 Event Management

The world of events covers a kaleidoscope of cultural, sport, political and business arrangements, from mega-events like the Olympics and world fairs to community festivals and corporate meetings and parties. Events constitute one of the most exciting and fastest growing forms of leisure, business, and tourism-related phenomena (Getz, 1997). Their special appeal stems in part from the limited duration and innate uniqueness of each event, which distinguishes them from permanent institutions and built attractions (ibid).

3.1.1 Definitions and Classification of Events

Donald Getz (2003), one of the most prominent researchers within the event management field, provides a general definition of events as "temporary occurrences, either planned or unplanned". He states that for planned events the time and duration are usually fixed and publicized. People know and expect that events end. When it is over, you cannot experience it again. A principle that applies to all events is: "Events are transient, and every event is a unique blending of its duration, setting, management, and people" (Getz, 1997, p. 4).

Depending on the purpose and circumstances, events can fall into more than one category. Planned events can be of very different nature, such as cultural

celebrations, political investitures, art festivals, sport events, business and trade fairs, and corporate events. Events can be further categorized based on their significance linked to for example size ('Mega event'), tradition and image ('Hallmark event'), publicity ('Media event'), purpose ('Cause-related event') or uniqueness ('Special event') (Getz, 2003). Since it is clearly a matter of perspective or preference it is not possible to come up with a universal, standardized definition nor a classification of which types of events are outstanding or "special". Context makes some events special to their organizers or guests. Bowdin *et al* (2001) suggested that the term *special events* has been coined to "describe specific rituals, presentations, performances or celebrations that are consciously planned and created to mark special occasions and/or to achieve particular social, cultural or corporate goals and objectives". According to Getz (1997), *special event* has two meanings: (1) "a one-time or infrequently occurring event outside the normal program or activities of a sponsoring or organizing body", and (2) "to the customer or guest it is an opportunity outside the normal range of choices, or beyond everyday experience".

In view of Getz's and Bowdin's definitions of *special event* and the classification used by *Special Events Magazine*, we see that events set in a business environment include incentive trips, galas, recognition dinners, company picnics, Christmas parties, and so on.

Allen's (2000) classification of various types of events taking place in a business environment consists of meetings, corporate events, fund-raisers, conferences, conventions, incentives and other special events.

For Wettergren & Co, one of Scandinavia's leading event producers, with 20 years experience, corporate events are "to meet, to experience and to deliver a message" (www.wettergren.com). The company's business concept is "to help companies or organizations, based on their needs and requirements, to communicate a message for a product, brand or idea, internally or externally, through event marketing". Examples of internal corporate events they organize are: family oriented outings, themed corporate parties or kick-offs, activities promoting teambuilding, personal development and communication.

To us *corporate special events* is an umbrella term for various organizational proceedings involving employees. When we use the term *corporate special events* it encompasses the range of all corporate arrangements and activities previously mentioned. The *customers* or *guests*, in Getz's (2003) definition, in this case are the *internal customers*, i.e. the *employees* of the organization where the event is held.

3.1.2 Purposes and Potential Benefits of Events

Depending on the type and size of an event it has different impacts on for example, economy, society, host community, environment, individuals, and various social and cultural aspects. The impacts can of course be both positive and negative. Concerning the social and cultural aspects of events there are many potential benefits. For instance, events can foster identity or a sense of place, constitute a platform for inter-group interaction and improved understanding (i.e. social cohesion), increase co-operation and voluntarism, preserve traditions and values, and additionally they are an important element in the social and entertainment calendar (Getz, 2003). Corporate activities, such as meetings and special events can also build and reinforce morale among employees. King (2001) stresses that keeping up morale takes a lot of work and a lot of time, and when a company has started to plan events etc. they need to continue. If the planned events stop it is likely that the productivity and even revenue will drop off. Moreover, she emphasizes that the events should be spaced far enough apart so that employees look forward to the next and take pleasure in participating.

Naturally, different types of events have different purposes. It is important to consider why you are holding an event, what your goals and intentions are, and what you hope to achieve. It is also essential to make sure that all employees are able to participate (King, 2001). Allen (2000) argues that to justify the costs of an event its objectives should be clear and significant. Moreover, she states that the objectives will affect how the event is planned and set up. She gives some examples of different objectives for corporate events, for instance, employee or client appreciation, award dinners, bringing suppliers and staff together, product launches, public awareness, company milestones etc. Furthermore, she mentions some objectives for incentives, such as creating

one-of-a-kind events to recognize increase in sales, bring top sales forces together to discuss future strategy or enlist the support of family and partners.

Hermansson (2003) of the event bureau Wettergren & Co states, that according to her experience the most common reasons for companies to hold events are to motivate employees, form a binding spirit between new employees, find new arenas for all employees in which they can validate themselves, present a new boss or manager, or simply to have great fun. Of course there might be several other reasons for holding events, the examples put forward here should only be seen as an illustration of the great variety of purposes for organizations to hold corporate special events.

3.1.3 Measurement and Evaluation of Events

Measurement may be defined as "the assignment of numbers to characteristics of objects or events according to rules" (Kinnear & Taylor, 1996, p. 221). It is the characteristics of the objects or events that are measured, not the items themselves. Measurement error is present when the characteristics of the number system do not represent the relationships present in the phenomenon being measured (Kinnear & Taylor, 1996). The measurement task in social sciences is typically more difficult and involves lower scales of measurement than those found in the physical sciences This has to do with the fact that in social sciences there is no natural zero point and equality of differences are not obvious (ibid).
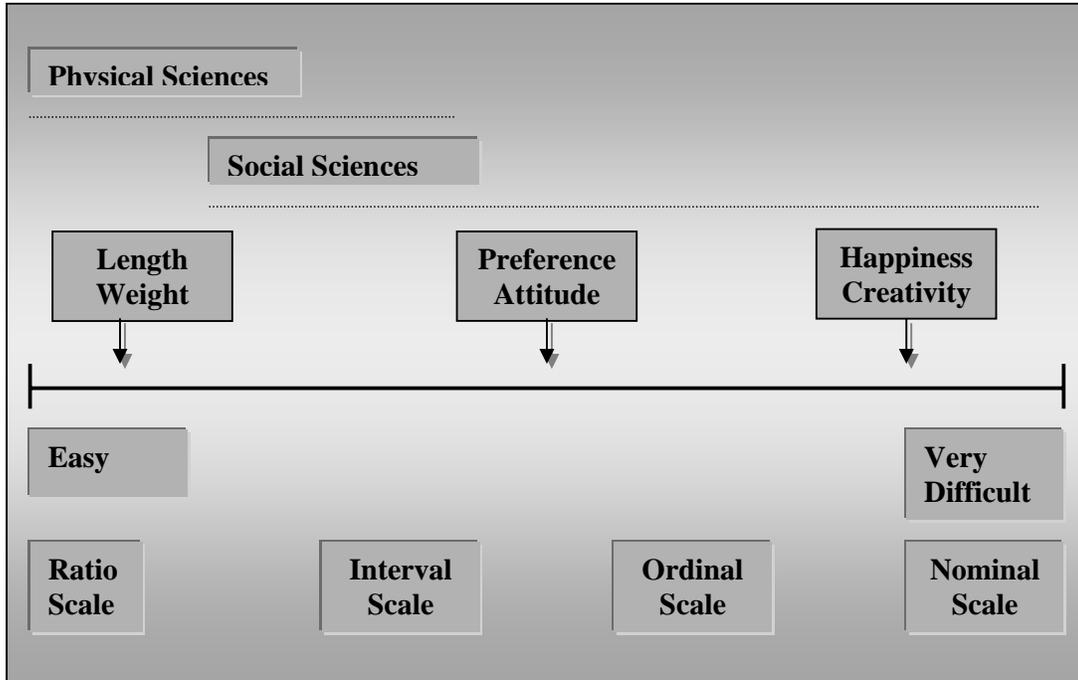
Figure 2: Difficulty of the Measurement Process
Source: Kinnear & Taylor, 1996.

Why is it so difficult to measure the effects of corporate special events concerning for example work motivation? A key problem area relates to the domain of the phenomenon studied, namely, the behaviour of people. Moreover, the measurement task is complicated by the many concepts or constructs that pervade the field of research. A *construct* is defined as "the mental abstraction formed by the perception of a phenomenon" (Kinnear & Taylor, 1996, p. 229). Many constructs exist in the minds of individuals and do not have observable physical references, for instance, predisposition, attitude, preference, image, happiness, creativity and motivation. Generally, these constructs are difficult to measure, and since corporate special events deal with many of them, they are not easy to measure, and consequently not the effects, they result in.

Evaluation is the way to constantly learn more about the organisation's environment, the intended and unintended outcomes of events, and ways in which to improve management. Some of the practical reasons for evaluating events pointed out by Getz (1997) are: determine the worth of the event or its

programs, measure success or failure, identify costs and benefits, and identify and measure impacts. *Evaluation* means "the subjective determination of worth, to place a value on something", yet it often employs quantitative measures and techniques (Getz, 1997, p. 331). In the end the manager must reach a decision based on part science and part experience. Was the event a success? Should we continue holding it? Was it worth the money? Without evaluation we do not know if our actions achieve desired results, and therefore we do not know what actions cause what effects.

Effectiveness and *efficiency* are two terms frequently used in evaluation. Effectiveness is a measure of goal attainment, and efficiency is a measure of resources (Getz, 1997). In business, revenue generation is a very common measure, but when the desired output is an intangible, such as increased work motivation after a corporate special event, problems arise. How can it be measured precisely, and what kind of expenditure is reasonable to achieve this kind of social goal? Gets (1997) stressed that observations have several advantages over surveys for evaluating, for example, how people behave under different circumstances. For evaluating the atmosphere or ambiance of the event he suggested a combination of direct observations and visitor comments, since "everyone associated with the event will likely have a valuable opinion on the overall effectiveness of the atmosphere, or at least on specific factors that create the atmosphere" (Gets, 1997, p. 334).

3.1.3.1 The "Quantum Leap" Effect
As already mentioned Donald Getz is a reputable researcher within the field of event management. Although much of his research is conducted in Canada, on mega events and event tourism, it is applicable to other related areas. His models and frameworks can and are being adapted to similar scenarios and local situations. One of Getz's models illustrates the "quantum leap effect", see figure 3 below, in tourism demand, which destination managers/marketers in any economy generally want to see. Getz (1999) explains, "Combing the halo effect, increased capacity, community pride and support and improved organizational capabilities, destination managers frequently hope that a mega event will result in accelerated demand or a new, higher plateau in terms of volume.

The expected jump in tourism has been called the 'quantum leap' effect". Further, the quantum leap effect and the related scenarios all assume a temporary peak in demand around the event.
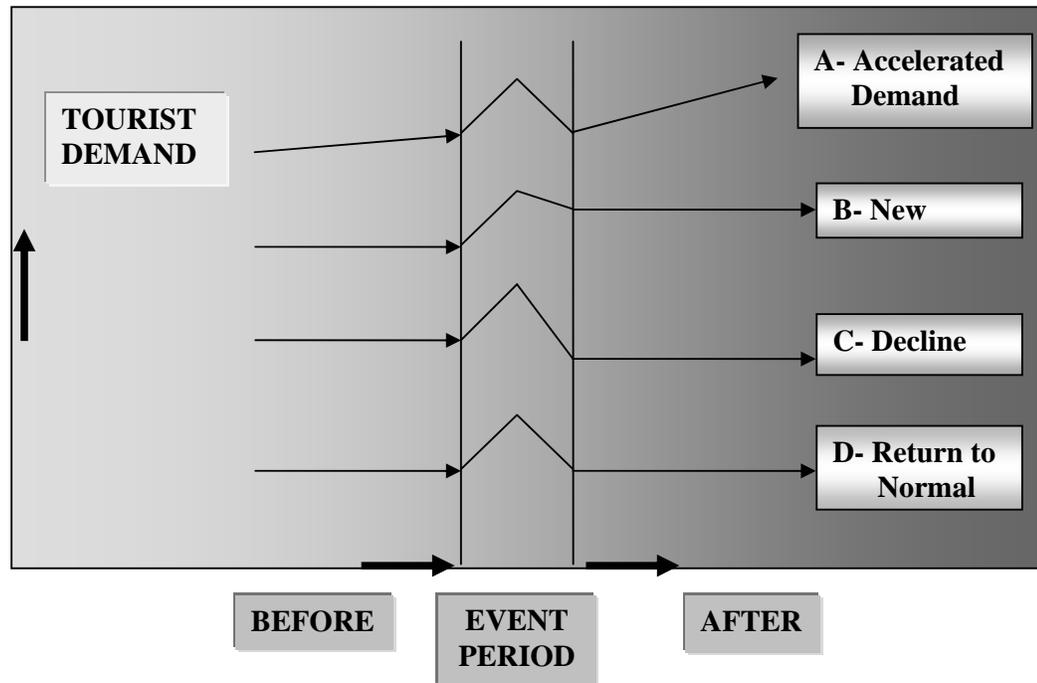
Figure 3: Quantum Leap and other Scenarios for Mega Events' Impacts on Tourist Demand
Source: Getz, 1999.

In (a) the event is followed by a higher rate of growth than was expected prior to the event. In scenario (b) there is no growth before and after the event, but a higher demand is achieved. Scenario (c) shows an actual decrease in demand after the event, and in (d) there is a return to normal after the temporary peak. The effects can be seen on a national, regional (host community), or local (individual host) level. When it comes to corporate special events, it is assumed that they also will result in a temporary peak around the event. For example concerning their potential effects on people's general attitudes towards the organiser of the event.

3.1.3.2 The Life Cycle of Events
Every living thing has a lifecycle, and just as people grow old, mature, and eventually die, so too might individual product brands (i.e. specific events),

classes of product (e.g. festivals based on genre of music), or an entire category of products such as music festivals. All products and projects face different stages from inception to demise. The typical *product life cycle* has five distinct stages: product development, introduction, growth, maturity and decline (Kotler *et al*, 1996), while the *project life cycle* normally has four phases: conceptual, planning, execution, and termination (Cleland, 1999). The life cycle concept has also been applied to event programs (Gets, 1997). A program can be said to have a beginning, a period of growth, a peak, and decline in terms of attendance.
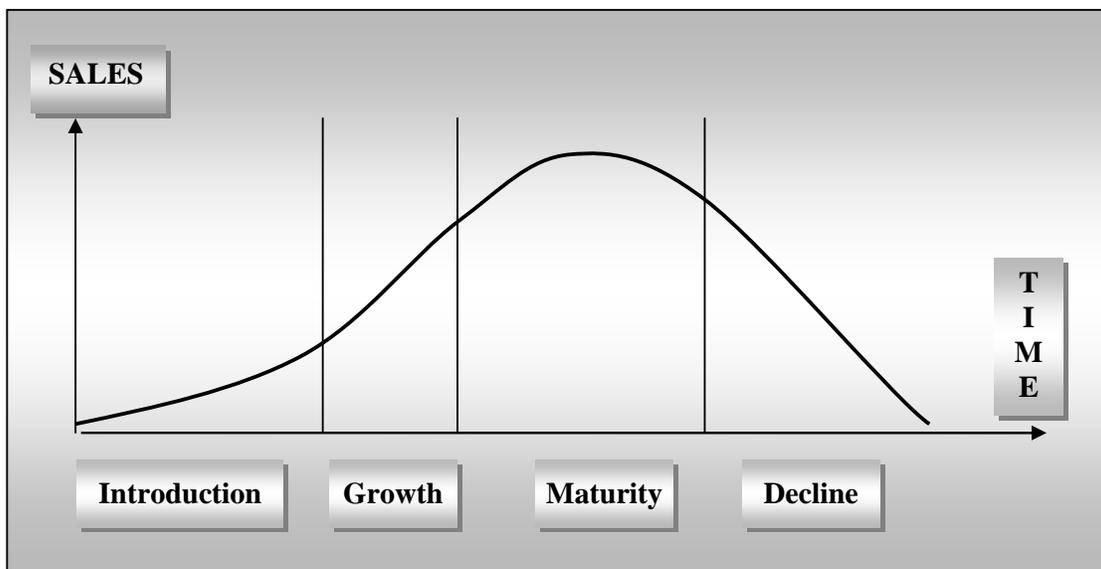
Figure 4: The Product Lifecycle
Source: Kotler *et al*, 1996.

The products life cycle is a widely referenced marketing concept that purports to explain these changes and provide appropriate strategic responses, although it is certainly not accepted as "law" (Getz, 2000). Moreover, Getz (2000) suggests that even if there is no certainty involved with the life cycle concept, there are enough related issues to force organizers, managers and other stakeholders to give serious thought to how decline and failure can be prevented, or how success (however defined) can be sustained over time. Different strategies can be adapted through continuous research and evaluation of events. Further, because many events are substitutable, potentially yielding

the same social or cultural benefits to the population, the failure or decline of individual events is not necessarily a problem (Getz, 2000).

Furthermore, Getz (2000) argues that the planner or manager of events must determine what forces and trends are most important (and these shift over time), and how the information will be collected and used. Ideally, the indicators will cover economic, social, technological, cultural and political factors - some of which will be found to be more important that others. Consequently, strategic thinking and planning based on knowledge of the life cycle and related concepts will prove valuable. However, it will not necessarily protect against internal failures due to organizational culture or incompetence. Sometimes events will fail, and others will have to be drastically altered to avoid extinction. In other cases, managers might want to anticipate ultimate decline and plan their own, timely demise.

3.2 Internal Marketing

3.2.1 The Development and the Basic Ideas of Internal Marketing

During the early eighties the cross-disciplinary nature of services marketing research was becoming increasingly evident in the literature, and stemming from the services marketing discipline, the *internal marketing* (IM) area became a specific research topic (Fisk et al., 1993). According to Rafiq and Ahmed (2000), Berry *et al* (1976) were the first to propose IM to be the solution to the problem of delivering consistently high service quality. Although the literature on IM grew rapidly during this period, very few organizations actually applied the concept in practice. One of the main problems contributing to this was the lack of a single unified concept of what is meant by IM, and yet there is still much discussion over its definition and scope (Rafiq and Ahmed, 2000). However, despite the confusion of what IM is, what it is supposed to do, how it is supposed to do it and who is supposed to do it, a careful examination of the literature over the last 20 years, conducted by Rafiq and Ahmed (2000), indicates the existence of three separate yet closely intertwined strands of theoretical development of the IM conceptualisation. They term these development phases: (1) the employee motivation and

satisfaction phase, (2) the customer orientation phase, and (3) the strategy implementation/change management phase.

Two basic ideas underlie the concept of IM, and seeds of both ideas emerged in the early services literature. The first one is that internal customers must be sold on the service and be happy in their jobs before they can effectively serve the final customer. This idea suggests that marketing tools and concepts, e.g. segmentation and marketing research, can be used internally with employees (Berry, 1981). The second central idea is that "everyone in the organization has a customer" (Grönroos, 1981). It is just not contact personnel who need to be concerned with satisfying their customers. Everyone in the organization has someone whom he or she must serve.

The fundamental premise of IM is that satisfied employees, or well-served internal customers, will lead to satisfied customers, or well-served external customers (Fisk *et al*, 1993). Gummesson (2000) supports the notion that "to have satisfied customers, the firm must also have satisfied employees" (George, 1977, p.91). He summarizes: "An employee's ability to influence and satisfy the needs of others inside the organisation is considered an antecedent to external customer satisfaction. Only if internal customer relationships work can the quality of the outcome be excellent, thus creating satisfied, or even better, delighted external customers" (Gummesson, 2000, p.28).

3.2.2 Viewing Employees as Customers and the Focus on Employee Satisfaction

In the early development phase of the IM concept the focus was upon the issue of employee motivation and satisfaction. Berry (1981) defined IM as "viewing employees as internal customers, viewing jobs as internal products that satisfy the needs and wants of these internal customers while addressing the objectives of the organization", the term internal marketing entered popular discourse. The use of marketing techniques in the personnel area is also indicated by Sasser and Arbeit (1976) by their way of viewing jobs as products and employees as customers: "viewing their job offerings as products and their employees as customers forces managers to devote the same care to their jobs as they devote to the purchasers of their services".

It was thought that by employing an IM approach the effect would be more satisfied customer-contact employees, which in turn would lead to greater customer satisfaction. The primary tool for achieving employee satisfaction in this approach is the treatment of employees as customers. For example, Berry and Parasuraman (1991) state: "Internal marketing is attracting, developing, motivating and retaining qualified employees through job-products that satisfy their needs. Rafiq and Ahmed (1993) propose a number of potential problems with this conceptualisation of IM. One of these problems was that unlike external customers, employees might have no choice in the product they are being "sold", and may not want it in the first place. Moreover, the needs of the external customers could be seen as secondary, to those of the organisation's own needs.

3.2.3 Interactive Marketing and the Focus on Customer Orientation

The second major step in the development of the IM concept was undertaken by Grönroos (1981), who recognized that buyer-seller interactions not only have an impact on purchasing decisions, but also provide a marketing opportunity for the organization, and that contact-employees in services become involved in what he termed "interactive marketing". In this view, it is not sufficient that employees are motivated to perform better, but they must also be customer-oriented and sales-minded. Furthermore, the aim of IM was to achieve effective co-ordination between contact staff and backroom support staff. Grönroos (1985) extended his original definition of the IM concept to include the use of "marketing-like" activities. George (1990) was of the same mind, and stated that employees are "best motivated for service-mindedness and customer oriented behaviour by an active marketing-like approach, where marketing-like activities are used internally".

3.2.4 Internal Marketing as a Means for Strategy Implementation

In the third phase of the development of the IM concept the emphasis was on the role of IM as an implementation tool to achieve organizational goals. Winter (1985) was one of the early ones to stress that the role of IM is that of: "aligning, educating and motivating staff towards institutional objectives … the process by which personnel understand and recognize not only the program but

their place in it" (p. 69). It was believed that if strategies are to be implemented more efficiently, internal conflicts must be overcome and internal communications improved. Later Joseph (1996) argued that there are a number of clear similarities between consumer marketing and internal marketing: both are based on the concept of exchange and both necessitate efforts that help to influence, update, and change behaviour. Moreover, he stressed that no marketing plan could be considered complete unless it includes strategies for reaching and winning over its internal customers.

3.2.5 Internal Marketing at Present

As described above the term *internal marketing* was originally coined in the late 1970s for a management approach to building and retaining service delivery competence. Today, the term has been applied to a much broader range of management and social interests. By bringing together a multi-disciplinary set of research contributions from the field of service marketing and management, IM identifies key themes and issues, including a social model of marketing, a human resource management perspective, marketing & service management, organizational development, corporate identity, image and communication (Varey and Lewis, 2000).

Rafiq and Ahmed (2000), argue that there are five main elements of IM, and that there is a need to generalize the conceptualisation of IM beyond the services context to a more widely relevant area of application. They propose the following *definition*, where the five elements are included: "Internal marketing is a planned effort using a marketing-like approach (1) to overcome organisational resistance to change and to align, motivate and interfunctionally co-ordinate and integrate (2) employees towards the effective implementation of corporate and functional strategies (3) in order to deliver customer satisfaction (4) through a process of creating motivated and customer oriented employees (5)" (Rafiq and Ahmed, 2000).

3.2.6 Internal Marketing - A Metaphor for Management of Organizational Culture

In service marketing and service management, in which *internal marketing* is an important part, the topic of organizational culture appears to be of particular

relevance. The concept of internal marketing is about selling the image and the service of the organization to its own employees first, who then adapt an orientation, which makes them effective marketers of what they believe in. Alvesson (2002) means that "managerial efforts to shape, maintain and strengthen a set of meanings, ideas and values around what a company stands for and the products/services it offers can sometimes be seen as simultaneously affecting organizational culture and conducting internal marketing"(p 84). Thus, internal marketing could be one metaphor for management of organizational culture. Alvesson (2002) ads that, "the 'metaphor' is at least relevant for conscious, perhaps manipulative work with those aspects of meaning patterns relating to customers, products and markets"(p.85).

The use of culture theory in organization and management literature and research will be further discussed in part 3.5. First we will address some central themes of work motivation and employee retention theory.

3.3 Work Motivation

3.3.1 What is Motivation?

Motivation theories may be new but the issue of motivation is as old as mankind. As human beings we take interests in tasks in which we see some purpose and some value behind. We do things that we enjoy and that we think have more benefits than cost attached. We do things towards which we are driven. It can be said that motivation is a force that energizes our behaviour and makes us do things in a certain way and move towards specific goals. Rudolph and Kleiner (1989) define motivation from a workplace perspective: "Motivation is the development of a desire within an employee to perform a task to his or her greatest ability based on that individual's own initiative". It is believed that everyone has this inner drive, and it is the job of the managers to trigger their employees' inner motive to achieve the desired goals of the organisation. Theoretically it may be easy to define what motivation is, but in order to implement the theories one must first understand human nature and needs, which makes it more complex and difficult to put into practice.

One may say what exactly is work motivation? Pinder (1998) describes work motivation as "a set of energetic forces that originate both within as well as beyond an individual's being, to initiate work-related behaviours, and to determine its form, direction, intensity, and duration", (p. 11). This definition recognises the influence of both environmental forces (e.g., organisational reward systems, the nature of the work being performed) and forces inherent in the person (e.g., individual needs and motives) on work-related behaviour and its essential feature is that it views work motivation as an invisible, internal, hypothetical construct (Pinder, 1998). Ambrose and Kulik (1999), point out that "we cannot actually see work motivation nor can we measure it directly. Instead, we rely on established theories to guide us in measuring the observable manifestations of work motivation". Work related behaviours that is often studied to understand work motivation is absenteeism, turnover, number of hours worked, and job performance (Björklund, 2001).

3.3.2 Motivation Strategies

Motivating employees and creating loyalty among them is an essential strategic management task for the organization. Alvesson (2000) points out that this staff retention can be achieved either through the use of pay and benefits or through social and emotional aspects, e.g. developing pride and social belonging. Without payback it is hard to get participation, as McDermott (1999) points out. As time passed new ways to motivate employees have developed. Today some companies believe in incentive awards and some focus on non-monetary rewards that trigger employee's job satisfaction and motivation. Rudolph and Kleiner (1989), developed tools at company level as well as personal level of the manager, where different strategies can be used to motivate employees and keep their moral high.

When we talk about motivational rewards there is a controversial debate among those who value monetary over non-monetary rewards and vice versa. A meta-analysis reported in the Academy of Management Journal drew upon the responses of 2,500 workers in the 19 studies. These studies measure the impact of one or another reward in both service and manufacturing companies. Luthans found that regardless of type of company and reward, organisational behaviour modification improved worker performance by 17 percent. When

financial along with non-financial rewards were used, there was 30% performance improvement in service firms. Performance feedback helped to improve 41% in manufacturing firms, attention and recognition helped to raise productivity by 15% in service industry. "Attention, recognition and feedback don't cost anything…something that can be as simple as letting a worker know you recognise the calibre of his or her work" (Cited by Comeau-Kirschner, 1999). Burnes (1996) considers that employers and employees will come to look for the new and more appropriate ways of rewarding and being rewarded.

Understanding human motivation is essential for managerial success. The manager must predict the kinds of behaviour that result when different motivators are present. To be able to make these predictions managers need to understand the nature of motivation and some of its effects on people. It is even more important is to know how to create situations where motivation can work for managers and their organizations (Timm & Peterson, 2000). Managers can influence motivation by doing the following: (1) Having realistic expectations, (2) Communicating about wants, needs, and goals, (3) Understanding the differences between motivators and maintenance factors, (4) creating a motivational climate (openness between managers and subordinates), and (5) using the reward system (ibid).

Different companies have different strategies to motivate their employees. Herek's (2002) study conducted among sporting goods managers, pointed out some of the monetary as well as non-monetary rewards for employees. According to Mitch Jenner from Just Sports, the employee gets bonuses and gift certificates if they hit the sales over the monthly target. Albert McConnell from Academy Sports has a different approach to motivate his employees. He more emphasizes on sharing information with his employees and asks them while making decisions. Due to this approach, employees' feel part of the success. "If we have complaints about low morale it is because we are not providing enough praise and recognition, or we are not communicating and sharing information very well" (Herek, 2002). Cathy Pryor from Hibbett Sporting Goods has a similar strategy to McConnell's. She puts monthly sales goals for the staff and has monthly meetings with the employees to discuss what's happening in the company (Herek, 2002). Such strategies not only

improve productivity but also make employees feel that they are part of the company. Moreover, in the long run employees may give more preference to organizational goals than their personal goals.

3.3.3 Motivation Theories

Management needs to be able to make decisions in every field including decisions concerning the employees or people working under them. Many of these are purely how to get the fullest efforts from the employees and this is where motivation plays an important role. There are many theories that have been written about motivation and these are some classic ones:

3.3.3.1 Theory 'X' – Douglas McGregor

According to Douglas McGregor theory X suggests that people are lazy; they hate work to the extent that they avoid it; they have no ambition, take no initiative and avoid taking any responsibility; all they want is security, and to get them to do any work, they must be rewarded, coerced, intimidated and punished. To get work done they have to police their staff and monitoring is necessary for them. (Pugh, 1971)

3.3.3.2 Theory 'Y' – Douglas McGregor

This is in sharp contrast to theory 'X'. McGregor believed that people want to learn and that work is their natural activity to the extent that they develop self-discipline and self-development. The leader no longer hankers after power, he or she lets people develop freely, and may even enjoy watching the development and actualisations of people, as if, by themselves. Everyone, most of all the organization, gains as a result. (Pugh, 1971)

3.3.3.3 A Theory of Human Motivation - Abraham Maslow

Maslow's central theme revolves around the meaning and significance of human work. Maslow's theory of human motivation is, in fact, the basis of McGregor's theory 'Y' briefly described above. Maslow (1970) is known for establishing the theory of a hierarchy of needs, writing that human beings are motivated by unsatisfied needs. A person's behaviour is seen as dominated by his/her unsatisfied needs and when one need is satisfied he/she aspires for the next higher one. This is, therefore, seen as an ongoing activity, in which one is totally

absorbed in order to attain perfection through self-development (Steers and Porter, 1975). According to Maslow (1970), there are general types of needs (physiological, safety, love, and esteem) that must be satisfied before a person can act unselfishly. He called these needs "deficiency needs." As long as we are motivated to satisfy these cravings, we are moving towards growth, toward self-actualization. The five basic human needs, according to Maslow (1970), are: (1) Physiological: hunger, thirst, bodily comforts, etc.; (2) Safety/security: be out of danger; (3) Belonginess and Love: affiliate with others, be accepted; (4) Esteem: to achieve, be competent, gain approval and recognition and (5) Self-actualization: to find self-fulfillment and realize one's potential.
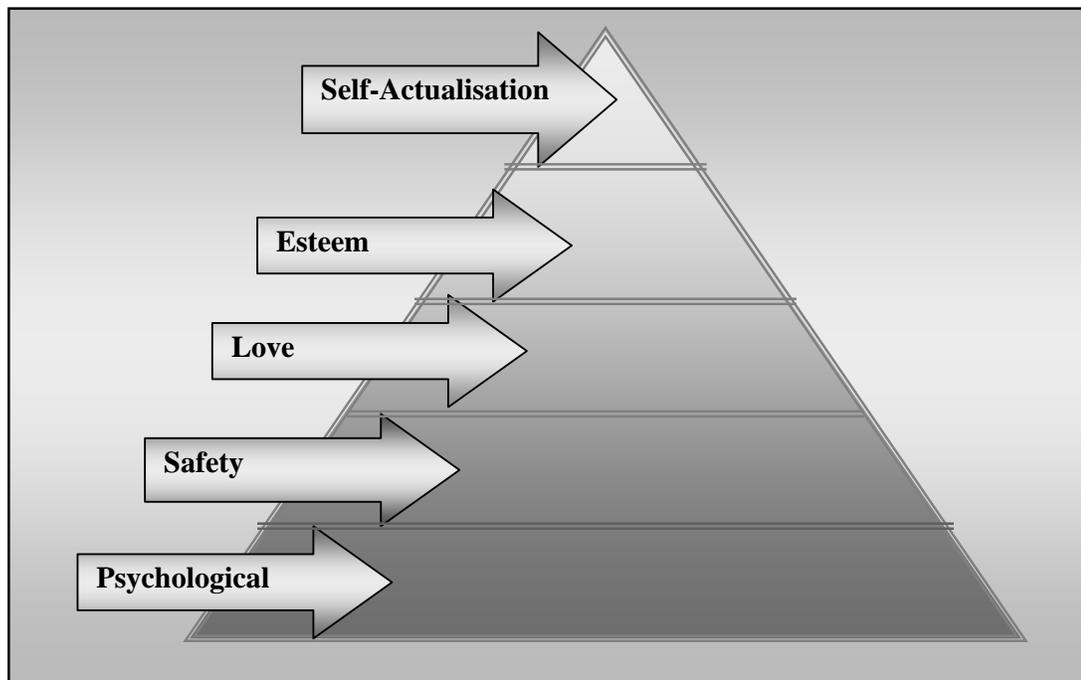
Figure 5: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
Source: Maslow, 1970.

3.3.3.4 Motivation Hygiene Theory - Frederick Herzberg

According to this theory, people work first and foremost in their own self-enlightened interest, for what they are truly happy through work accomplishment. Herzberg suggests that people's needs are of two types: animal needs (hygiene factors) and human needs (motivators). Unsatisfactory hygiene factors can act as de-motivators, but if satisfactory, their motivational

effect is limited. Herzberg has exploded several myths about motivators such as shorter working week; increasing wages; fringe benefits; sensitivity / human relations training; communication (Pugh, 1971 & Steers and Porter, 1975).

3.3.3.5 Expectancy Theory - Victor Vroom

According to Vroom's "expectancy theory" the leadership style should be "tailored" to the particular situation and to the particular group. In some cases, it appears best for the manager to decide and in others, the group arrives at a consensus. An individual should also be rewarded with what he or she perceives as important rather than what the manager perceives. This theory contributes an insight into the study of motivation by explaining how individual goals influence individual performance. (Pugh, 1971 and Steers & Porter, 1975)

3.3.3.6 Achievement Motivation - David McClelland

McClelland (1968) argues that the need of achievement is an essential factor to get motivation. This need of achievement can be described as setting up goals or objectives, and working with them until you get the desirable outcome even if it takes a long time and some risks to achieve that, but this makes people even more determined to accomplish the goal. Achievement-motivated people are concerned more with their personal achievement rather than the rewards of success. They do not reject the rewards but they are not as essential as the accomplishment itself. Money for them is a means to measure their performance and compare their achievement with those of other people, and they don't seek money for status or economic security. (Steers and Porter 1975)

To sum up, the theories discussed above show that people have inner motives, needs and desires that drive them. Different authors have different approaches, some believe in monetary rewards while others suggest non-monetary rewards. The answer lies in understanding their inner motives and then providing them with appropriate rewards.

3.4 Employee Retention

By looking in a dictionary we are given that the word "retention" has synonyms like preservation, maintenance, withholding and custody. Not just the meaning, the concept of retention has different perceptions for the employees and organizations. In this part, we strive to look at the issue through the lens of employees and management.

3.4.1 Employee Perspective

The reason to leave an organization may vary from person to person and from organization to organization. In his article "Focus on Talent", Tayler stated, "people join organizations for things such as pay and benefits, but they leave for other reasons" (Cited by the Editor of HR Briefing (2003). Satava (2003) discussed a similar issue and suggested that very few employees leave a job without a good reason, which can be personal (external) or work related (internal). Personal reasons include for example, a spouse's new job in another city or a wish to have more time for family and friends. Such reasons are beyond an employer's control, but a company can do something about internal issues, which provide the main impetus for staff to move on (Satava, 2003). Although different authors approached retention differently, their research considered both monetary and non-monetary elements to keep the employees. The editor of Personnel Today (2003) argued that pay and benefits do matter, however, employees are more concerned with the level of fulfilment they get from their jobs. Wilson (2003) emphasized that employees want to know what to expect every day, and stated, "employees expect a fair day's work for a fair day's pay". Pennington (2003) further developed the idea by stressing, "people want to work in a place where they can succeed and feel their contribution is appreciated". Moreover, the editor of Personnel Today (2003) stressed that employees feel that working with an understanding supervisor or manager is important.

Pennington (2003) emphasized the weight of creating a good working environment. She stated that employees are happy and stay in environments that promote laughter. This contributes to higher moral, improved productivity, and creates lower stress. Having fun is not just playing games or dressing up on

holidays. The ability to be relaxed and enjoy oneself creates a bond between team members. King (2001) also gave emphasis to the importance of building and enhancing work morale. She stated that keeping up morale takes a lot of time and a lot of effort. When you start planning activities, meetings, and so on, they need to continue. Moreover, she stressed that if the company stops holding events, they will find that both productivity and revenue may decrease. According to King (2001) the activities do not have to be done every day. They should be spaced far enough apart so that everyone looks forward to them and enjoys them. Also everyone should be able to participate in the events.

3.4.2 Managerial Perspective

As most of us heard, it costs less to retain an employee than to replace an existing one. In fact, the American Management Association estimates that the cost of replacing an employee is equal to 30% of his or her salary (Brown and Alleyne, 2003). The Editor of Personnel Today (2003) cited a similar finding on cost of replacing employees. The cost of replacing an employee ranges from 29 to 46 percent of the person's salary. This figure includes the cost of advertising, travel, interviewing time (spent by managers), lost productivity and other associated expenses. On average, the cost of replacing a manager is three times that of replacing a non-manager.

Many organizations are under the impression that if they provide competitive pay, better health care, or other benefits it may retain employees. However, Woodard-Chavez (2003) argues that the common misperception with most incentive/motivation/recognition programs is that it is always about money. She stressed, "Every one of our staff has economic requirements, but when it comes to retention, you cannot buy their love so to speak. The money is only one component of the package - not the entire package so to speak".

There are a number of authors in favour of benefits and incentives to retain employees, while others are supportive of manager's strategies and skills to keep the employees happy and working efficiently. Forte (2003) argues that a manager has a great ability to impact the way an employee feels about his work environment. In fact, "people quit people before they quit companies". Employees are generally first dissatisfied with their manager and the way the

manager deals with the employees, before they find fault with the company. Woodard-Chavez (2003) argues that employees might leave the organization for better pay if they are not happy. On the other hand, they will probably stay with the organization even for slightly less pay if they are happy with their work.

Concerning employee turnover reasons, Satava, (2003) found that employees leave due to an inadequate career path, management style, and lack of fulfilment. Taking into consideration the significance of retention in different industries he suggested that from all the factors influencing staff retention the easiest thing to change is how employees are supervised. Overall, a company's employees want fair pay and opportunities to learn, advance and experience a feeling of accomplishment. They want to work for well-managed organizations and their efforts to be meaningful to others. Further, he pointed out some A to Z strategies or factors through which partners and managers can put an effort to improve the working environment. Some of the factors are Acknowledgment, Balance-Communication, Development, Education, Helpfulness, Justice, Laughter, Motivation, Opportunity, Promotion, Recognition, Supervision, Training and Willingness.

Other authors have also suggested some strategies to keep the rate of retention high. The editor of Personnel Today (2003) suggests that organizations should focus on making sure that the people they hire are a good match for the job and the work culture. One way to help keep staff onboard and happy is to recognize them for their hard work and dedication to the organization (cited by the editor of Club Industry, 2003) Organizations that understand retention and its causes will experience a competitive edge. Every time a position becomes vacant, an organization becomes less capable of meeting its goals (cited by the editor of Personnel Today, 2003).

3.5 Organizational Culture

3.5.1 The Complexity of Organizational Culture – Intellectual Disputes

The body of literature that focuses on organizational culture is large and diverse, crossing disciplinary and methodological barriers. In spite of the scant

empirical literature, the notion of culture has been the focus of conceptual research and debate for many years. Culture has been discussed widely in the scholarly and managerial literature (e.g. Peters and Waterman, 1982; Schein, 1985) and various definitions and conceptualisations of the construct have been advanced. In the early 1980's there was a "corporate-culture boom", which stimulated the growth of popular managerial interest in organizational culture. Corporate culture was viewed as a universal tool for competitiveness and "excellence" (Peters and Waterman, 1982), and it was argued that if an organization could build a sufficiently "strong" culture it would result in improved productivity and profitability (Martin, 2002). In recent years many of the cultural claims from this period have been shown to be somewhat oversimplified and exaggerated.

One of the most significant issues that divide researchers examining organizations from a cultural viewpoint is Smircich's (1983) distinction between studies of culture *as a root metaphor* for organizational life and studies of culture *as a variable* (Alvesson, 2002; Martin, 2002). Studies that assume culture can be treated as a variable draw upon a more traditional, objectivist, and *functionalist view* of social reality. From this approach culture is treated like any other organizational variable, for instance size, structure, technology, demography and strategy, to predict outcomes such as productivity and profitability. Cultural studies that abstain from functionalism generally prefer a *symbolic approach*, focusing on the symbolic meanings associated with cultural forms including rituals, humour and physical arrangements (Schultz, 1995). Instead of considering culture as something that an organization *has*, researchers who see culture as a root metaphor stress that the organization *is* or, rather, can be seen as if it is a culture (Alvesson, 2002).

However, the two approaches, using culture as a variable or as a root metaphor, are not the only two possibilities, but rather represent extremes along a continuum. Consequently, many researchers do not easily fit into either category and therefore take more or less consciously a middle position. For example, working strictly with culture as a root metaphor may lead to the reduction of everything to symbolism. Conversely, studying organizational culture as a variable may be fuzzy since culture *is* a metaphor that in itself is

vague, intangible and ambiguous. "Variable metaphors" for corporate culture could for instance be "tool", "obstacle" or "control mechanism". (Alvesson, 2002)

3.5.2 What is Culture?

Culture is a tricky concept as it is easily used to cover everything and consequently nothing (Alvesson, 2002). Schein (1992) mentioned that while talking with friends and members of organizations, he noted that, they agree "it" exists and that "it" is important in its effects. Further colleagues said they do not use the concept of culture in their work, and when he asked them what it was they did not use, they could not define "it" clearly. So what is culture? Who makes the culture? Who puts the basis and criteria for the culture? Who is involved in culture? And is it possible to study culture? Schein (1992) suggests that cultures basically springs from three sources; (1) the beliefs, values, and assumptions of founders of organizations; (2) the learning experiences of group members as their organization evolves; and (3) new beliefs, values, and assumptions brought in by new members and leaders.

Any cultural study needs to be based on a definition of culture, but there is no common agreement on definitions. However, most researchers of organizational culture agree that shared values, or an organizational value system, are a key element in the definition of culture (Wiener, 1988). Both *cognitive* (ideational) and *material* aspects of culture have been conceptualised.

Moreover, most organizational culture researchers have adopted one of three theoretical perspectives; the integration, differentiation, or fragmentation viewpoints. The *integration perspective* focuses on consensus throughout an organization, and culture is that which is clear; ambiguity is excluded, i.e. culture is something that is seen the same way by most people, no matter from which angle they view it (Martin, 2002). One definition of culture that is consistent with the integration perspective is: "[Culture is] the pattern of shared beliefs and values that give members of an institution meaning, and provide them with the rules for behaviour in the organization" (Davis, 1984, p. 1). Many definitions will also define culture as that which is distinctive or unique about a particular context, which the following definition is an example of:

"[Culture is] a set of understandings or meanings shared by a group of people. The meanings are largely tacit among the members, are clearly relevant to a particular group, and are distinctive to the group" (Louise, 1985, p.74).

In contrast, some definitions stress conflict between opposing points of view rather than that which is shared. From this viewpoint, the *differentiation perspective*, consensus exists within an organization, but only at a "subculture-level", and differences are inevitable and desirable (Martin, 2002). From the third point of view, the *fragmentation perspective*, the relationships among cultural manifestations are not clearly consistent (integration) or inconsistent (differentiation), instead they are ambiguously related to each other, and there are multiple views of most issues. From this perspective consensus is momentary and issue specific, and ambiguities are usually not viewed as abnormal, escapable, or problematic (Martin, 2002).

Schein (1992) stresses why one needs the word *culture* at all when we have so many other words such as *norms, values, behavior patterns, rituals, traditions*, and so on. According to him the word culture adds two other critical elements to the concept of sharing. First, culture implies some level of *structural stability* in the group. He meant that although culture is less conscious, less tangible and less visible, it is still not only shared but also deep and stable. The other element that lends stability is *patterning or integration* of the elements into larger paradigms. Culture somehow implies that rituals, climate, values, and behavior bind together into a coherent whole. This patterning or integration is the *essence* of what we mean by "*culture*". By looking at the above integration of various elements, Schein (1992) suggests a definition of culture of a group as, "A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems" (p. 12).

Schein's (1983, 1984, 1992) conceptualisation of culture is perhaps the most useful. Schein (1992) suggested three *levels* in which culture can be analyzed, where the term *level* refers to the degree to which the cultural phenomenon is

visible to the observer. The three levels are artifacts, espoused values, and basic underlying assumptions. The first level contains the visible *artifacts* such as the organization's architecture, work practices, and technology. These represent the surface level of culture and are the easiest aspects to define. The second level contains the *values* that govern behaviour; these elements can be analysed by identifying the manifest and espoused values of culture. The most difficult level of culture to penetrate is the third level, which contains the *underlying assumptions* of the organization's workplace. In gaining and understanding of culture, all three levels require investigation.

3.5.3 Metaphors for Culture

What culture refers to is multidimensional and complex. In order to use the concept of organizational culture "with an analytical bite" it must be given a distinct meaning (Alvesson, 2002). In using a *metaphor for culture*, the culture concept is narrowed down and a clearer distance is created between it and the organization. To be more specific culture has in various ways been further "metaphorized". Two very common metaphors of culture are "culture as compass" and "culture as social glue".

3.5.3.1 Culture as Compass

One frequent metaphor for culture is the compass. For instance, Wiener (1988) discusses the direction-pointing capacity of the shared value system, which he sees as the central part of organizational culture: "By definition, individual values serve a guide to a person's intentions and actions. Similarly, organizational value systems provide guides for organizational goals, policies, and strategies. Thus, the nature of the values is a crucial factor in the impact that culture will have on organizational effectiveness. If the prevailing values support appropriate goals and strategies, the culture is an important asset. Conversely, the wrong values can make culture a major liability" (p.536). Alvesson (2002) argues that "wrong" values are therefore like a defective compass, and they indicate the "wrong" direction, and consequently people will not get where they want to go. "Right" values, on the other hand, are associated with a well-functioning device.

3.5.3.2 Culture as Social Glue

The social glue metaphor is perhaps the most common view of culture (Alvesson, 2002). The central idea here is that organizations are integrated and controlled through informal, non-structural means, such as shared values, beliefs, understandings, and norms. Culture in this sense contributes to the avoidance of fragmentation, conflict, tension, and other miseries; organizational life is seen as characterized by consensus, harmony and community. According to Alvesson (2002) there seem to be two major versions of the social-glue-metaphor. One is more pragmatic and assumes that consensus and harmony are not only possible but also natural. This can be called the integration approach (Martin & Meyerson, 1988). Ray's (1986) version emphasizes the control aspect and, rather than suggesting consensus as something organically produced, talks about corporate culture as a strategy for achieving social-glue-like effects. He views culture as the last frontier of control: "the top management team aims to have individuals possess direct ties to the values and goals of the dominant elites in order to activate the emotion and sentiment which might lead to devotion, loyalty, and commitment to the company" (Ray, 1986, p.294). In this second version the glue is viewed as fragile, in need of maintenance work, and not always capable of holding an organisation together (Alvesson, 1993).

3.5.4 Manifestations of Culture

When researchers study culture, they most often study manifestations of culture, and usually a cultural study describes a manifestation in context, giving interpretations of its meaning in that context. Martin (2002), describes four types of cultural manifestations; (1) *cultural forms*, which sometimes are referred to as artifacts, such as rituals, organizational stories, jargon, humour, and physical arrangements, (2) *formal practices*, such as pay schemes and hierarchical reporting structures, (3) *informal practices*, such as norms, and (4) *content themes*. A content theme is a common thread of concern that underlies interpretation of several cultural manifestations.

3.5.4.1 Rituals and Corporate Special Events

Research on cultural forms are still a relatively unexplored area, nevertheless important since these cultural forms can provide important clues to what

employees are thinking, believing, and doing. *Rituals* have been described as a "celebration of the mundane" (Martin, 2002). A ritual consists of a carefully planned end executed set of activities, carried out in a social context, with well-demarcated beginnings and endings and well-defined roles for organizational members. Another characteristic of rituals is that they are repeated. Moreover, rituals offer an opportunity to show how the functionalist intellectual tradition has influenced cultural theory and research. Martin (2002) suggests a typology of rituals commonly used to mark organizational transitions, for instance, *integration rituals*, which provide an opportunity for employees to strengthen their interpersonal relationships in a context in which the formality of hierarchical relationships can safely and temporarily be suspended. In integration rituals food and alcohol are often involved. A typical example of an integration ritual can be a company Christmas party. *Ending rituals* mark a transition from insider to outsider, for example, when an employee is given a good-bye party by co-workers or when a newly retired employee is given a ceremony and a gift. An annual sales convention or other events that bring recognition to good performance can be seen as *enhancement rituals*, and *renewal rituals* seek to reinforce group functioning by resolving one set of problems while drawing attention from others.

3.5.5 Organizational Culture and Business Administration

Corporate culture is commonly referred to as "It's the way we do things around here" (Deal & Kennedy, 1982). This does not, however, mean formal ways of doing things. Indeed, the crucial feature, which distinguishes the use of culture from other forms of management, is that culture is conveyed to its participants though the expression of sentiments, beliefs and attitudes (Pfeffer, 1981). Thus it appeals to the emotional, non-rational, affective elements within employees, which make corporate culture different from other forms of management.

The culture approach is relevant to a wide set of business concerns. For instance, culture is regarded as a key determinant of success in the implementation of marketing strategies (Walker & Ruekert, 1987), and an important influence on sales effectiveness (Weitz, Sujan & Sujan, 1986), management effectiveness (Parasuraman & Deshpande, 1984) and marketing effectiveness (Norburn, Birley & Dunn, 1988). Since marketing is regarded as

the whole business from a customer's perspective, the marketing philosophy represents a corporate culture, a basic set of values and beliefs, which place a customer at the heart of the organization's approach to strategies and operations (Deshpande and Webster, 1989). Furthermore, culture is a major factor that management might employ to shape the direction of their business (Smircich, 1983a) and it impacts upon the pattern of search for information as well as its appraisal once obtained (Demirag and Tylecote, 1992). Culture also influences productivity, the manner in which a business adapts to forces in the business environment and new employee acclimatization (Schneider and Reichers, 1983). These pervading consequences underline the need for companies, particularly for service companies with their peculiar attributes, to give consideration to the concept of culture in their business environments.

3.5.5.1 Organizational Culture and Control

There are many ways to control an organization. *Bureaucratic control*, for instance, focuses on the manipulation of rewards, which lead to loyalty, which in turn lead to increased productivity (Ray, 1986). The central idea of *culture control* on the other hand, is about the manipulation of the organizational culture, including its myths and rituals, which may lead to more enthusiastic and commitment employees, and in that way increased productivity (ibid). It has been argued that cultural control is simply an addition to other forms of control, which companies have tried to implement (Ray, 1986). However, corporate culture brings forth sentiment and emotion, and this method of control seems to contain possibilities of being extremely powerful in ensnaring employees in a ruling system (ibid).

Limited research has been conducted to investigate the relationship between the organizational culture and employee turnover. Research literature indicates that controlling or managing either employee turnover behaviour or the culture of an organization is extremely difficult. However, it is argued that it is in the organization's interest to attempt to control the culture (Kanter, 1989; Peters, 1987; Peters & Waterman, 1982) and its employee turnover behaviour (Ferris, Youngblood, & Yates, 1985; Organ, 1988).

Legge (1995) argued that in attempting to control culture, managers must try to change at least two levels of culture: the artefacts and the espoused values. Examples of the artefacts of turnover culture would be the myths and rituals associated with short-term employment. To change these artefacts would require management to, for example, encourage stories concerning the rewards to employees for remaining with the organization for a long period of employment. Similarly, to change the second level of culture, the espoused values, management must be consistent in its message to employees. For example, continuing employment arrangements would signify a long-term commitment to employees, rather than the previous employment arrangements that have become common in for example the hotel industry (Whitehouse, Lafferty, & Boreham, 1997).

3.5.5.2 Organizational Culture and Leadership
Schein (1992) argues that the leader or founder brings the idea of new enterprise. He brings more people and creates a group, which shares the same idea and goals. The group starts working in group (organization) and pools money in it. Others are brought into the organization and then all work for the same goals and mission. All share the same learning experience. Without a group there can be no culture. Thus group growth and culture formation are inextricably intertwined, and both are the result of leadership activities and shared experiences. At this point Schein (1992) notes that culture and leadership are two sides of the same coin in that leaders first create cultures when they create groups and organizations. Once cultures exist, they determine the criteria for leadership and thus determine who will and who will not be a leader.

One of the elements of studying culture Czarniawaska-Joerges (1992) found was stories   about present and former figures of authority told to the newcomers. Schein (1992) argues that stories often communicate the values and beliefs of founders or other central characters in the organization who have become symbolic role models. Leaders have power to manipulate such stories and can indirectly send the message they want, but it may not work all the time. He suggests that leaders must be very careful when they communicate with their employees otherwise such stories may have negative outcomes.

3.6 Summary

In this chapter we cover a number of fields of theory necessary for the understanding, interpreting and analysis of the empirical data. The first part explains what events are, their purposes and potential benefits, and why the effects of them generally are considered difficult to measure and evaluate. Here we also introduce two models, which will be applied in the analysis chapter to illustrate changes in work related behaviour connected to corporate special events. The next three parts, internal marketing (IM), work motivation and employee retention, are all closely interlinked fields of managing human resources. The basic underlying assumption of IM is that satisfied internal customers (employees) will lead to satisfied external customers. Today, IM has been applied to a much broader range of management and social interests. Moreover, IM could be one metaphor for management of organizational culture, thus the final part look closer at metaphors and manifestations of culture. The culture approach is also relevant to a wide set of business concerns, for instance organizational control and leadership. Using an organizational culture perspective contributes to interpreting the purposes and goals of holding corporate special events on a deeper level.

4. CASE STUDY

In this chapter the empirical findings of our case study are presented. First a brief portrayal of each company studied is given. Then the perceptions of corporate special events from the management and the employee perspectives are presented separately in two main parts. Each part starts off with describing what kind of corporate special events the companies organizes and holds for their employees annually. From the management perspective the different types of corporate special events have been divided into a number of themes related to their use and significance. Next follows sections about reasons for holding corporate special events, the evaluation of them, how they affect work motivation and employee retention, and their role in internal marketing.

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To attain a deep understanding of what functions corporate special events serve a purpose to for the selected companies and its employees, people working on different levels within the labor force, ranging from top management to "regular" employees, were interviewed. By top management we mean human resource managers or project managers specially assigned to handle event and personnel related matters. By middle management we mean regional managers or managers at a shop level. The employees are skilled workers, administrative staff or sales personnel. This approach enables us to look at the research problems from two different angels, the management perspective and the employee viewpoint. In 4.2 we present the result from interviews with people on different management levels, and in 4.3 the material from interviews with employees on lower levels of the organization is presented. Supplementary data from various secondary sources, such as brochures, leaflets, co-worker magazines, videos and annual reports are linked to the primary data achieved from the interviewees.

4.1 Description of the Case Companies

In order to provide the reader with a general idea of the nature of the studied companies we find it useful to embark on the presentation of our empirical material by describing the five study companies in short.

4.1.1 Peab

Peab is one of Scandinavia's leading companies in the field of construction and civil engineering. The Group runs its operations primarily in Sweden, but also in Norway and Finland. The Group turnover is 19 billion SEK, and the company has 11,000 employees. Peab was set up in 1959, by two brothers, Erik and Mats Paulsson, who then were aged 16 and 14 respectively. One of the brothers is still the CEO of the company.

4.1.2 Renova

Renova is the leading recycling company of West Sweden. Renova is owned by eleven municipalities and operates in a region with about 900,000 inhabitants. In 2002, the company handled 630 000 tons of waste and recycling materials and had a turnover of about SEK 950 million. The company has approximately 730 employees. In its present form the company has been operating for five years.

4.1.3 KappAhl

The KappAhl Group carries out operations in retail sales of ladieswear, menswear, children's wear and cosmetics. By the end of the financial year 2002 the Group owned 241 stores in Scandinavia and Poland. The Group also has branch offices in Asia. The total sales for 2002 amounted to SEK 3,869 million. Today the company is a wholly owned subsidiary of Kooperativa Förbundet (KF), but the KappAhl story started in 1953 when Per-Olof Ahl opened his first store in a basement on the outskirts of Sweden's second city, Göteborg.

4.1.4 Nordea

Nordea is the leading financial services group in the Nordic and Baltic Sea region with approximately EUR 261 billion in total assets. Nordea operates through three business areas: Retail Banking, Corporate and Institutional Banking and Asset Management & Life. The company originates from four Nordic banks, and since December 2001 all operations have been conducted under the brand name of Nordea. The distribution network in the region includes 1,240 bank branch offices.

4.1.5 Skanska

Skanska was founded in 1887 and started by manufacturing cement products in the south of Sweden. Today Skanska is one of the world's leading companies in construction-related services and project development. The company has 76,000 employees and operates in 11 "home markets" of which Sweden is one. The company's net sales in 2002 amounted to SEK 146 billion. Skanska Sweden's operations are specialized in residential and commercial building construction, as well as civil construction projects.

4.2 Management Perspective

4.2.1 Different Types of Corporate Special Events

Ten managers (8 female and 2 male) on different occupational levels were interviewed for the management perspective of corporate special events. Before we start describing different types of corporate special events, we find it relevant to point out that all companies studied stated that it was unusual to hold big events for all employees. The most common explanation was related to the size and structure of the organizations, i.e. that the workplaces and the different departments were geographically spread, but the cost aspect was also mentioned. Consequently most events were organized and held at local level, for instance at the head office, within a region, or at a shop, branch or project site level.

As mentioned earlier, in the methodology chapter, all study companies participated in *Drakbåtsfestivalen 2003*, thus we have focused a little extra on this particular event. For some companies *Drakbåtsfestivalen* was more pertinent than for others, but we will discuss that later. Besides this annual paddling event most companies also had some sort of party or kick-off once a year, as well as a Christmas party or a Christmas dinner, 'Julbord', at a restaurant. Additionally many of the companies made small events and happenings out of different sport and jogging or running activities, such as *Fältstafetten*, *Göteborgsvarvet*, *Våruset* and *Tjejmilen*. For these events, the fees for the participants are usually paid by the companies, and they also treat their employees to coffee and sandwiches, or some fruit at start and finish. Typically, families and colleagues from work are invited to support and cheer

on the participants on these occasions. Family oriented outings, for instance a 'Family-day' at *Liseberg*, as well as company anniversaries, and jubilees or farewell-parties for employees were also frequently occurring events. Moreover, conferences, incentive trips and other types of events combining education or training with food and entertainment were relatively common amongst all the studied companies.

4.2.1.1 Corporate Special Events with a "Preventive Healthcare Theme"

Almost all companies paid a good deal of attention to corporate special events and other activities focusing on preventive healthcare for employees. Renova for example has a project called *Frisk & Sund*, 'healthy and sound'; Peab has a similar project called *Peab fritid*, 'Peab leisure time', but also a sports association for its employees; and Skanska has an employee association organizing various types of events, which are mostly linked to sport activities. The *Peab fritid* project has been running since August 2002. The Regional Manager of Trollhättan, Bengt Qvilleberg, states that the project is now running smoothly in his region, and that the running race event "Kraftprovet" in July was successful. He believes that the program of Peab fritid to create active spare time, and working with preventive healthcare is an essential compliment to other organizational goals to reach the company's ambition to become "the industry's best place to work" (Västbladet, no. 3, 2003, p.14).

A year ago, in order to encourage more people to exercise in the fresh air, KappAhl offered all Swedish employees a pair of walking poles. This event "Walking to wellness", was very well received, and a recent review revealed that the vast majority of co-workers viewed the offer as a positive initiative from the company (Inside KappAhl, no. 1, 2003, p.12). Last autumn the co-workers at the head office of KappAhl completed a questionnaire on issues related to their current work situation. The results revealed high levels of job satisfaction, but also that 80 percent experienced some form of stress. KappAhl has acted on these findings, and the employees are being given the chance to participate in seminars where they learn how to handle stress. "Stress is also a management issue", Helen Fleetwood, the Training Manager at Human Resources adds (ibid).

The employee association of Skanska started, a couple of years ago, creating opportunities for employees working in different departments to meet and get to know each other better. The events and activities organized by the association are sponsored and subsidized by Skanska; the members only pay a small fee each month plus a symbolic amount of the actual cost when they participate in an event. So far this year, the association has organized a sailing trip to Marstrand, a picnic with 'brännboll' for members and their families in Slottskogen, the annual party, and go-carting. Coming up next is a bowling event with food and drinks. Besides these events there are various sport activities going on all year round, like football and bowling.

Within the preventive healthcare projects, in addition to what already has been mentioned, most case companies invest in closely allied areas by subsidizing memberships to gyms and weight -watchers, or by holding classes in yoga & relaxation, 'how to quit smoking', 'how to eat right', and so on.

4.2.1.2 Corporate Special Events Combining "Business with Pleasure"
A further theme that became apparent during interviews was corporate special events combining a more serious touch with something fun or entertaining, such as conferences, incentive trips, and other forms of education and employee development. For Nordea these kinds of events are highly significant. Elisabeth Csepella, HR partner and manager support, explains:

> "Oh, yes, that's very common, it's absolutely the most common type of event we have. Generally the manager and the staff of a particular branch go away for a weekend to a nice place in the countryside, but there is always a connection to the bank business, they are never ever 'just-for-fun-events'. We have this policy that there must be a work related schedule to the event".

Another example of a typical event combining 'business with pleasure' was the *Region day* held by Skanska. Due to reorganizations earlier in the year, the Regional Manager of 'Hus Göteborg', Jörgen Eriksson, found it necessary for everyone (around 170 people, the laborers not included) in the region to meet, and therefore took the initiative to hold an event. The Region day could be seen

as a sort of kick-off for the new organization, it started with a lunch, followed by a site visit to one of the company's projects, and thereafter a meeting at Svenska Mässan to discuss economic and strategic matters on how to proceed forward. The day was completed with a nice dinner at Universeum. Jörgen himself thought the event was "great", and from what he has heard it was also very well received, and appreciated by the organization.

One of Peab's regions held a similar event this summer. The theme of their region day, in which about 120 people took part, was '"how to become the industry's best place to work" (Västbladet, no. 3, 2003, p.14). Amongst other things, they used group work to discuss how to get there, and the day was ended with games and barbeque. The outcome of this event was also successful. According to Bengt Qvilleberg, the Regional Manager of Trollhättan, the workshops resulted in many interesting and creative ideas, which will be looked into during the autumn (ibid).

The theme of an event held by KappAhl Finland this spring was "Happiness at Work", and the purpose was to inspire store co-workers and inform them about current activities. Co-workers from all KappAhl stores were invited to see "Jari on tour", the managing director of KappAhl Finland (Inside KappAhl, no. 2, 2003, p. 15). The event programme included Jari's thoughts, a presentation of the head office, and a multimedia show about forthcoming collections entitled "The Best is yet to Come". After the show everyone was given a T-shirt decorated with the word "Smile" in different languages. The event assured that all co-workers were informed of forthcoming spring activities at precisely the right time, and many were delighted to meet the managing director in person.

4.2.1.3 Christmas Parties, Jubilees, and other Celebrations
The tradition of holding some kind of event around Christmas, either a party or a "Julbord" at a restaurant, was probably the most deeply rooted form of corporate special events. The Christmas party at the head office of KappAhl is an annual tradition for the approximately 250 employees working there. Helen Fleetwood, the Training Manager at Human Resources, describes:

"Our Christmas parties are usually very nice happenings, and there is a lot of hush-hush before. As I told you earlier the different departments organize the entertainment, for the show, and naturally everybody is very excited. For the show, they come up with themes describing characteristic situations and events that have happened in their department during the past year. The expectations are high. We always have a great time! For three years the party has been held here in the building, and they are always on Tuesdays. Fridays, people might want to spend with their families. One department wins "best in show", and the prize is to arrange the show for next year. There is always a special theme to the Christmas parties, this year its Kappahl's 50th Anniversary".

Since KappAhl celebrates its 50th Anniversary this year there have been and will be many other events focusing on this jubilee. The shops will have individual parties, and to organize the events they get a certain amount per employee. For the money, they can arrange a dinner or something else they would like to do, together with other shops or by themselves. At the head office, the staff went to see a show with "Galenskaparna". At KappAhl, it was also common to celebrate and reward successful sales activities with a party in the shop or with some nice prizes. Depending on the magnitude of the activity, the prize could be movie tickets, a dinner, or a trip to another country where there is a KappAhl shop.

Renova held a big party for their employees in May to celebrate their 5th Anniversary. The dress code was quite casual, so that everybody would feel comfortable, and when the employees arrived at the party they all got a wig to put on! Marie-Louice Flach, the Market Coordinator, explains:

"The wigs were in different colors, and the table layers and balloons were in matching colors so that everybody would know where to sit. There was a lot of laughter! The hall was decorated with pictures from the west coast of Sweden, to create an atmosphere reminiscent of a "folkpark" (amusement park), and everybody got tickets for some games, for example dart-throwing, and a drink ticket for the bar. There was a buffet, a live-band, and clowns and magicians mingling around. The whole arrangement was to create a party, which was not focusing on dancing as

the only entertainment during the night, since we have such a high rate of male employees. There was a bar and performing employees, "the Spicy Tomatoes", who were rapping! The idea and the name of the group come from a campaign Renova had earlier this year. During the campaign there were big signs on the refuse collection trucks saying "Vi tar emot hur mycket skit som helst"(we take a lot of shit), plus it looked like people had been throwing tomatoes at the trucks. People also made a lot of jokes about the wigs, and many elderly gentlemen were glad to have so much hair for one night – it was total happiness!"

A big event at Skanska is when they, every fifth year, hold the Jubilee for employees, who have been employed by the company for 30 years or more. As the event is held only every fifth year many employees are gathered at the same time, and their spouses are also invited. The event starts with a grand ceremony where the employees get their gifts, a medal or a gold watch, by the CEO. A dinner party with dance and entertainment follows the ceremony.

4.2.1.4 Drakbåtsfestivalen

Drakbåtsfestivalen is a corporate special event focusing on preventive healthcare and teambuilding, but it is also an opportunity for companies to profile and market themselves. At the beginning of each interview the interviewees were told that the company's participation in *Drakbåtsfestivalen 2003* was the reason they were selected for this study. However, when they later were asked to describe a "typical" or recent event, very few interviewees actually picked Drakbåtsfestivalen. Skanska was the exception. One explanation could be that Skanska is sponsors this annual paddling competition and the other four companies are "only participating". We are aware of the fact that there might be other explanations as well, for instance that we didn't get in contact with the "right" people involved in organizing the event.

Renova and Peab mentioned the event as something they were taking part in, but nothing more. When asked if Drakbåtsfestivalen was something new to the company Helen Fleetwood of KappAhl replied:

"No, we've been taking part in that event for approximately 10 years or something, I think. It's a tradition here at the head office. It's not the shops that take part. I know that some shops in the country on other places where they have a Drakbåtsfestival take part, but not here in Gothenburg. We email the others in the company that they are welcome to come and watch, and then we meet here at the head office before the event, and then we go out and take a beer or something after".

In contrast, Skanska provided us with a more detailed illustration of the event. From the video they lend us, we could see that the atmosphere was very cheerful and spirits were high. When asked Kate Ung, who is responsible for arranging Drakbåtsfestivalen at Skanska, to tell us about the event, she presented the following story:

"Oh, its marvelous! All participants have to register for the event before we go on holidays. They are asked how much they weigh and on what side they want to paddle, this is very important. Then we have seven boats with 21 participants in each. The boats weigh one ton plus the passengers' two tons, so it's quite heavy. It's roughly 300 meters to paddle and it takes about 60 seconds. On the event day everybody meets at the office of Skanska, and the participants get coffee and sandwiches plus their costumes. Every year there is a special theme; this year it was the "Wild West". Two open trucks, where the contestants stand, take us through town and down to the paddling site. It's a fantastic feeling, everybody is happy before the party even has started!"

We were also informed about how everybody was dressed, how the teams/boats were named, and that the No.1 boat is called "Skanska Champion". On this boat the team-members are always the same from year to year. The day Skanska competes is a day where all construction companies are gathered, so they get the opportunity to challenge each other. Since long ago there is an internal competition between Skanska and NCC, the main competitor within the industry, and they challenge each other every year. Kate continued her story:

"NCC won this year. NCC has won four times and Skanska three, I think. We have a challenge prize, a big trophy, so there is a lot of pride involved, but afterwards we have a big party together so there is no rivalry in that sense. We want to arrive together at the party, so we always rent a big boat, which takes all of us, 200-300 people, to the place in the harbor where the party is held. Each person gets a mini-bottle of champagne to start celebrating, and at the party scene you get shrimps, beer and wine. Everyone is so happy! Even if there is alcohol involved, nobody has ever got too drunk or started a fight with anybody from the competing company. The people in Stockholm (referring to the head office of Skanska) cannot understand why we have a party with NCC, but we have such a great time. It's a very special day!"

4.2.3 Reasons for Holding Corporate Special Events

The illustration of Drakbåtsfestivalen shows that this event is very significant to Skanska and its employees. Management higher up in the organization is well aware of its importance. There have been discussions whether to continue with the event or not, but they have taken the decision to still participate in Drakbåtsfestivalen. Lena Sundqvist, HRM of Skanska, explains:

" We have discussed 'is it worth spending all this money, and 'what do we get out of it', but then we just decided 'yes, we will continue', but the decision is based more on a feeling that it is something good, rather than on measurements and calculations. It's a big event and a lot of our employees are interested in participating, and it's a nice party and so on. That's the motive for holding it. The Drakbåtsfestivalen organization says the event is also good for external communication, but we've decided that's not the reason we take part. We see it as an internal event".

Ann Tobiasson's, the HRM of Renova, general view of corporate special events is more or less in accordance with Skanska's:

"We haven't measured or evaluated the effects of the activities we arrange, so we don't really know, more than we know that it's good for the company if we know each other better and get together during other

circumstances than work, and events are a part of that. You build relationships in a different way then, and that will be in the company's favour for future occasions".

When asked "Why do you think companies should organize events for its employees?", all study companies emphasized the weight of various factors concerning the social environment, such as creating job satisfaction and good relationships among co-workers, but also relating to commitment and loyalty towards the company. Principally they stressed the importance of events as a means for co-workers and managers to get together outside work under more relaxed circumstances, to talk about other things than work and to get new influences. The reasons mentioned were for instance: "to increase the feeling of affinity"; "to create a good team-spirit and a 'we-feeling'"; "to get to know each other better"; "to develop one's network and by this means create more business within the company". Other motives frequently pointed out were that events could be seen as "a kind of benefit for the employees, that the company invests in them", and "appreciation from the company to make employees feel they are important". Furthermore events were seen as a means of creating loyalty, "to make people feel involved, that they are a part of the company"; "to make employees feel proud of the company"; "to strengthen the solidarity to the company".

Some interviewees also mentioned a few potential *external* benefits for the companies, for instance that these in-house events signal, "this is a good company to work for", "we want to be an attractive employer", and "here you can have fun together". The events are usually appreciated, and therefore create good-will for the company when employees talk to their friends and family about a specific event. One interviewee emphasized the "symbolic value" of events. That events might have a huge symbolic value to employees, bigger than management sometimes realize, and therefore sort of miss the importance of holding events, is also a factor. She meant that the important things today are "not only the salary and practical things around that, the social environment is very important as well".

4.2.4 Evaluation of the Effects of Corporate Special Events

Since corporate special events apparently seem to possess so many qualities, we found it natural to ask the managers if they had thought of evaluating the potential benefits and the effects of these events, or if they had measured ROI (return on investment) in any form, either quantitative (e.g. productivity, retention rate) or qualitative (e.g. motivation, job satisfaction, 'happiness'). However, despite all the positive things mentioned about events, none of the companies had tried to evaluate an event on its own, or tried to measure the effects before and after they did something. In some specific cases though, events had been evaluated. For instance, after a "team-day" focusing on solving a particular management or cooperation problem within a group, employees had been asked what they felt and experienced during that day. But as Helen Fleetwood of KappAhl sees it these evaluations are only for the short-term perspective, to find out if the event was of any use or not. On the other hand, all companies had some sort of annual co-worker audit, but these surveys were more wide-ranging, focusing on leadership, working environment and job satisfaction in general, and not specifically on corporate special events and related issues.

Lena Sundqvist, the HRM of Skanska, believes that one explanation to how companies can spend so much on corporate special events without knowing the effects is that it is very much a tradition to hold certain events. She clarifies:

> "Employees expect to go to a Christmas dinner or something every year, and they 'should' do something before summer, and I don't think that anyone actually thinks about the potential 'productivity boost' or whatever, it's more or less about that people will feel disappointed if we don't have these events, but we haven't measured it. I don't think we are the only company thinking like this, I think a lot of companies think the same way".

In general, Lena does not think its possible to actually measure the short-term effects of a single event and speculate on, "we will achieve this or that", but she also states that it depends, "if there is a special purpose with the event, lets say that you are in a process of change, and you want to establish a new strategy or whatever, maybe then you can achieve something measurable from that event.

But if you do things just to have a good time together I don't think you can measure the effects just after the event, then it has to be more for the long-term perspective".

Elisabeth Csepella of Nordea stressed that even if events are "nice things to have", the meaning of them should not be exaggerated, and she believes that the effects are very difficult to measure. She stressed, "of course you can feel happy about it or motivated for a short while, but I think what is more important is to keep up the motivation in the daily work, with good management, so that you feel appreciated as an employee".

Malin Connant, the project manager of Peab fritid, believes that it is rather common that companies do not follow up events, because such activities together with other personnel matters are regarded as 'soft values', and therefore generally not prioritized. In most companies and organizations, the focus lies on productivity and costs, and everything else comes second. "However, that is not the case for Peab since I am employed here now", she stressed and continued, "next year we might start to measure what type of events our employees appreciate, how they perceive them, and how they affect them". She also stressed that in her field of work it is important to follow up the events, "you must have some good arguments to be able to continue with your activities, and an annual survey would be a good way to find out what the employees really think about the things *Peab fritid* organizes".

4.2.5 Corporate Special Events, Work Motivation and Employee Retention
Three of the interviewees stressed that the "effects" of a particular corporate special event, pertaining to work motivation, job satisfaction, "happiness" and so on are shortsighted. The effects would typically last a couple of weeks, as long as the memories of the event are fresh in mind and the employees talk about it, but as soon the memories start to fade and the employees do not talk about it any longer the "effects" decline. Thus, according to the interviewees, the effects of corporate special events as a motivation tool should primarily be seen as beneficial for the short-term perspective. However, the new relationships built during an event last in most cases even after this period. A few

interviewees mentioned that co-operation might improve since you get to know more/new people within the company. Malin Connant of Peab stated:

> "I don't think a single event will make 'that' happen (referring to increased work motivation, job satisfaction and employee retention), maybe a chain of events would create that and influence the daily work. *Drakbåtsfestivalen*, for example, is very nice, but a small event in that matter, I think. You know it's over in half an hour; it's a nice sandwich and a beer maybe. But if you have a good think around events in general, and have it as a strategic tool to create a good social environment, and that's of course very important, then maybe you could see some more long-lasting effects. As I see it, the important thing is to keep having them. It's for the long run, to keep up the good spirit!"

According to Elisabeth Csepella of Nordea, her experience is that "the 'effect' of an event would last a week or two after, and then its back to normal again". She continued, "You see, I've been to a very interesting seminar, it was a psychologist called Björn Olsson, and he said that 'motivation is not connected to events its connected to the daily work', so the way I see it events should just be a kind of 'extra spice' to the daily work". Elisabeth does not think it is a good idea to have events "all the time" to keep people motivated. She stressed, "I think that's a kind of 'artificial respiration'. It's like a relationship between a man and a woman, you can't have 'stunts' all the time to keep it working, or? It's the same thing here you need to have a solid base, and events are something you add to that, additionally they cost a lot". According to her, the management in the daily work is much more important for "keeping up the spirit", and also "more frightening and challenging in a way, if you don't have a mature management". However, if the company has the money and the resources, she believes, "holding events is "an 'easy way' to keep employees motivated, that is, if you think that's the way to keep them motivated". Apart from being an "easy way" to motivate employees, Elisabeth also stressed that people often think events are a straightforward way to solve organizational problems, for example, if employees do not get along, and have co-operation problems, but from her experience, the actual problems are not really dealt with, "the 'real' problems wont get solved by a kick-off or something, they will

only be swept under the rug for a while, and things can get worse even. Usually alcohol is involved, and to have these unsolved problems, when you start to drink can be disastrous really".

Most of the interviewees agreed that for the long-term perspective it is necessary to do "other things" as well, and that corporate special events should not be viewed as the "ultimate problem-solvers" for organizational difficulties or the "most excellent tool" for employee motivation. Corporate special events are according to the interviewees "something good", and "something companies need to have", but they "should only be seen as a small part of the whole, otherwise they wont fulfill their purposes". Helen Fleetwood of KappAhl, and Malin Connant of Peab are of the same opinion and stated,

"I believe events are something a company should have, but they're only a small part of all the things you do. To be a good and attractive employer there are other things, which are much more important to work with, for example, the daily routines, the leadership, the work environment, and so on. Of course you should do things that are fun and that your employees enjoy, but you shouldn't forget to work with those other questions as well" (Helen).

"If you have bad management or if you have a lot of reorganizations within the company then it doesn't help to have some 'glamorous events' once or twice a year, the entirety must be good. What I mean is that many things must act together to achieve these things the event bureaus state in their marketing (referring to increased work motivation, co-operation, job satisfaction etc.)" (Malin).

4.2.5.1 Motivation Strategies
The interviewees stated there is a combination of factors motivating employees, "the classic ones", such as appreciation, development possibilities, the salary, good leadership, fair treatment, and so on. The most common strategy to motivate employees was mainly a combination of education and communication, and almost all interviewees emphasized the importance of these in "the daily work". Various types of education, training, coaching and

information programs were mentioned. Nordea stressed the importance of education as a means to provide their employees with the necessary knowledge, and to have a close dialogue between managers and employees for feedback and recognition. Renova primarily focused on increasing the knowledge among employees about the company and its situation on the market, in order to make them understand their importance. KappAhl's philosophy is that "you cannot motivate somebody else you can only motivate yourself". Thus, it is the company's and the management's responsibility to create the necessary conditions for a good working environment. They have formulated a "Human resources philosophy", and guidelines, "KappAhl's soul and the seven cornerstones", which lay the ground for their work. Peab also work with motivation issues on many fronts, they have identified six areas, including working environment, organization, communication, employee development, salaries and leadership. This program, "The industry's best place to work", is their main tool to motivate employees. Skanska also emphasized the role of information when it comes to motivating employees, but highlighted some other factors as well,

> "It's a very decentralized company, and also a company where you literally can see the results. Most of our business is conducted in projects, so its easy to see a start and a finish, and on top of that you see a product, so you feel proud of what you've contributed to produce so to speak, and additionally you can see if you make money on each project. All these factors taken together I think motivate people."

A central motivation factor is certainly money. The majority of the interviewees stressed that of course the salary is important, but it is not the "main thing", for some people it might be, but for most recognition, appreciation and feedback are more essential than money. Lena Sundqvist of Skanska mentioned that the CEO of the company always says, "You should go out and get your shoes dirty", to show your employees they are important. Other interviewees stated,

> "We don't work very much with bonus systems, we think it's better to do things together, because it will give another effect, the money is only for the individual, but an event adds other things."

"The 'daily work' with good management, interesting tasks and a well functioning work group, is more essential than the salary. Maybe if its a selling organization or something, the employees are motivated by more money, but I don't think an employee in general is."

"Of course you must have a salary that you are quite satisfied with as a base, but then I think efforts from the company to create a good working environment are much more important than money."

Elisabeth Csepella of Nordea compared the effects on employee motivation of a salary raise with the short-term effects of a corporate special event, "I'm sure it's the same thing as with events, if your salary is raised you will get more motivated for a short while, but it isn't enough if all the other things aren't there". Two of the companies mentioned competitions as a good way to work with events and employee motivation, "they can be both individual or for the group, and you get different prizes, for example money or cinema tickets, so you can do something together. These competitions are very appreciated". Moreover, some interviewees mentioned that money contra "other things" might motivate people differently depending on the status of their jobs, "managers can probably influence their salaries more than employees, and in that case I think the managers would prefer a sunny trip, or something else, rather than more money, because surely they already have a salary which they are satisfied with". Sometimes the status of the job also decides what kind of 'rewards' the employees will have, for example what kind of bonus systems or incentives they get.

4.2.5.2 Employee Retention Rate
All case companies had a very high employee retention rate. Some of them even stated that it was almost too high, and a problem for them. At Renova many employees had stayed with the company for 20-30 years. At KappAhl and Nordea the situation was similar, and they stressed that it would actually be healthy for the companies if the employee turnover were somewhat higher than present, to get some "fresh blood", and new thinking in the organizations. Elisabeth Csepella of Nordea stressed,

"We should be a reflection of the society in that way, the spread of our employees should be the same as our customers, in different ages, from different cultures and so on, but we are mostly middle-aged women, and that's not good. It will be a huge problem for us soon, when everybody is getting older at the same time and retires".

She also stated that it was a dilemma really to know if they stayed with the company because they thought it was a great place to work at, or if they had no other alternatives. However, from what she could see, working with 18 different branches, people seemed to be motivated and satisfied. Malin Connant of Peab stated that a general strategy to motivate employees and create loyalty is to show that the company has the ambition to be a good employer, and are interested in investing in the social working environment, which events are a part of. Lena Sundqvist of Skanska reflected on the meaning of corporate special events for keeping the employee retention rate high,

"I don't know how important events are in this matter. Well, feeling that you are a part of your company, which events could lead to, I think is a way to… I mean people want to stay in a company they like, where they have a lot of friends, and so on. These things make them more loyal, and that could maybe be the result of events. The basic things are something else though, it's not like 'I can participate in *Drakbåtsfestivalen* next year and therefore I stay with the company', however the events contribute to creating a nice working environment".

4.2.6 Communication, Internal Marketing and Corporate Special Events
When asked "What internal marketing strategies do you have?", the interviewees mentioned they use various training, development and change programmes, and other communication channels, such as, intranets, co-worker magazines, fax news, events and managers, to mediate corporate messages. Most of the companies gave emphasis to the role management play in internal marketing. Usually it was the responsibility of managers at one level to forward the information to managers at the next, and so on, all the way from top to bottom. The interviewees stated,

"There is so much information that the managers have to select the parts they feel are most important to communicate to their employees."

"We think that the information employees find most important, is the information they get from their closest manager, since he or she can adapt it to their situation, and all things aren't as important to everybody."

"The leaders are very important when it comes to communicating internal marketing strategies, our policies and routines, and since they are role-models we have many training programs for them."

Helen Fleetwood of Kappahl stressed the importance of having an internal marketing thinking within an organization:

"Well, we believe that satisfied co-workers lead to satisfied customers, that's something we've been working with for many years, we also talk a lot about 'internal customers'. Here at the head office we only have internal customers, it's the people in the shops, the managers and the other employees, so it's very important to have that thinking. It's only the co-workers in the shops who actually meet the external customers, and our mission is to support them and train them, so they can do a good job".

A difficulty pointed out by many of the interviewees was that information gets lost or stops along the way. One explanation was that not all employees have access to a computer and with that the company intranet. Other explanations had to do with how managers viewed their role as communicators. This is how Lena Sundqvist of Skanska exemplified the problem,

"From employee appraisals we have seen that there is a stop, the information only reaches a certain level, and people feel they don't have the information they need. The knowledge among middle management, seeing themselves as important communicators is a problem, that's why it stops, and we have to work on that. They think, 'well they get the co-

worker magazine, fax news, and so on, therefore they will know everything they need to know', but they won't".

The interviewees could not mention any exact figures on how much money was spent on internal marketing compared to external marketing, nor how much was spent on internal marketing. All of them stated that there was probably a way to find out, but they did not know how. However, most of them had the feeling that the external marketing budget exceeded the internal, depending on how internal marketing was defined, for instance if all forms of training, communication and events were to be included or not. Four of the interviewees clearly stated that corporate special events play a role as an internal marketing tool, one of them stressed, "Of course, I can't say that we shouldn't have events so, yeah, they are a part of internal marketing".

4.2.7 Organizational Culture

When it comes to organizational culture, the previously illustrated examples of corporate special events, the reasons why they are held, and the effects they bring about speak for themselves. In this section we will just add a few things the interviewees mentioned about organizational culture.

The Skanska culture was portrayed as, "male, heroic, task oriented, focused on performance, and full of pride" by one of the interviewees. Moreover, she stated, "the soft things aren't very important, we have to act, and to be fast. And generally people like when they are in the center of a lot of action, to have control, and to be the spider in the web so to speak".

The KappAhl culture on the other hand was described as, "informal, sympathetic, and team-oriented". Many of the interviewees referred to the "KappAhl spirit", which they all mentioned was descended from the founder and the former CEO's business idea. His concept of "value-for-money fashion with a wide appeal" is still to this day the company's mission statement. The interviewed managers also stated that "KappAhl's soul and the seven cornerstones" could be seen as means to try to keep the old/traditional values created by Pelle Ahl. He was the one who for example started to address his subordinates in an informal way, and that "was quite unusual in those days".

At Renova the organizational culture was described as "very friendly and an open atmosphere". The interviewees stressed that using nicknames was symbolic for their culture, "many of our employees are only known by their nicknames, you never say their right names, even if you write about them you use their nicknames, otherwise people wont know who you are talking about. The names usually have their origin in something stupid or funny the employees have said or done, and then they have to "eat" it for ages".

However, irrespective of which company the interviewees worked they more or less perceived corporate special events in the same way. For instance the expectations before an event were usually described to be high, and people were looking forward to the coming event. The atmosphere was in most cases said to be happy, relaxed and friendly. Moreover, interviewees from different companies, different industries even, described some manifestations of culture similarly. For instance, two interviewees explained their humour to be "coarse but hearty", and the language used as typically "Gothenburg-working-class-jargon".

On the whole the interviewees' reflections about organizational culture were of a general character, and not specifically related to corporate special events, i.e. what is culture; how is it 'created'; who 'controls' it; what meaning does it have to an organization, and so on. Some interviewees stressed that their company had a particular organizational culture or "spirit", but they could not really put their finger on what it was. Others stated that there had been a strong culture or a typical spirit, but it was not there anymore. This was usually related to a former leader or the founder of the company. It is interesting to mention that in some cases the opinions of employees from the same company were wide apart in this matter. The view of who created the culture and if it is controllable or not were also diverse. Some interviewees meant that it is the leaders who create organizational culture by setting the "course of action", while others stressed that everybody contributes to create a culture. Some were of the opinion that organizational culture can be controlled or at least influenced and directed, others that it cannot be controlled at all.

4.3 Employee Perspective

Four employees, all female, from two different KappAhl stores, and three employees, two men and one woman, of Skanska with different occupations were interviewed for the employee perspective of corporate special events. To start with, the interviewees were asked to describe what kinds of events were held for them during a year. Thereafter to explain what perceptions they had about these events, and why a company should organize and hold such events. Moreover, the interviewees were asked about what motivated them at work, and how they were informed about company policies, strategies and goals.

4.3.1 Different Types of Corporate Special Events

At KappAhl the number of events organized seemed to vary from shop to shop, at one shop the interviewee stated, "Well, there are a couple of events a year, so it's not that often" while at another shop the interviewee stressed, "I feel there are more events now than ever, it's really something the company invests in". All interviewees mentioned that they have an annual Christmas party or go out for 'julbord' at a restaurant, and that they are celebrating KappAhl's 50th anniversary this year. For the "birthday-party", the employees at one of the shops had been to a music show with "Jerka", a Swedish rock'n'roll-legend.

Additionally, both interviewees from one of the shops emphasized that they "always do something in the spring and something in the autumn". One interviewee mentioned that they occasionally put aside money, both private and from the company, and go on a trip, "we've been to Copenhagen and Prague for example". Another interviewee mentioned events focusing on preventive healthcare, such as *Tjejmilen* in Slottskogen, and an activity with walking-poles, which was "extremely enjoyable!" A third interviewee mentioned a "nice event" with a buffet and a visit to the movies. One of the interviewees also talked about a "surprise-trip", which was a treat from the company and the co-workers, to celebrate her being employed at KappAhl for 40 years,

> "Everything was well planned and nicely arranged, there was a lot of hush-hush before, because I wasn't suppose to know what was going on, and everybody was excited going away overnight on this boat trip. There

was a lot of champagne and laughter! The atmosphere was on top, and usually it is when we get together. You look after each other in the group, and see to it that nobody is left out. For example, when we book a table somewhere, we always ask for a 'long-table', and if they can't arrange that and we have to split up on let's say four separate tables, then we say 'no, thanks' and choose another restaurant or whatever. Anyway, this event was very successful, and people talked about it a long time after".

Moreover, the interviewees stated that the events typically are organized and held shop by shop, but when they now and then are invited to a bigger party or an activity for all KappAhl stores in the region, it is very appreciated,

"Well, we've had both small and big Christmas parties, but now it must have been a couple of years ago since we had a bigger arrangement. I remember it was great fun to mingle with the co-workers from all the other shops in town! And there were a lot of activities, the whole company really made an effort to create a good party. The store managers for example, were dressed up in Santa-costumes, and that was a laugh, I can tell you!"

At Skanska the interviewees mentioned *Drakbåtsfestivalen* and *Fältstafetten* as two central corporate special events. Additionally the annual Christmas party at Burgårdens Gymnasium, a restaurant school, and "roof truss parties" for the different projects were pointed out. Drakbåtsfestivalen was described as a "Fun Competition with NCC" and a "Good Party!", and the Christmas party as a "traditional Swedish Christmas table" for, not all, but "many" project cites within the region. This event was very appreciated by the employees, "Yeah, it's a cool thing! Usually it's held on a Friday evening. You sit there, eat nice food, drink beers and chat with your friends". How the "roof truss parties" are celebrated depend from project to project, and who and how much money are involved, "you can get anything from a sandwich and a coffee at the actual building site to a nice dinner party at a restaurant".

4.3.2 Reasons for Holding Corporate Special Events

From the perspective of the four KappAhl employees, the most significant reasons for a company to hold corporate special events were, to encourage and support their employees, and to show them appreciation. Moreover, events let the employees know that the company cared for them, and saw to it that they were happy and felt good about their work. As two interviewees expressed it, "one needs a little encouragement – an incentive, a carrot – for perseverance", and "it's always a 'push', when the company show that they appreciate what you do for them, it has a positive effect, it makes you happy and you tell your friends and family about the event, and that has a ripple effect!" Another interviewee stated, "we don't take for granted that events will be thrown at us all the time, but certainly we hope to get a 'little reward' at the end of the year and so on".

Additionally, the interviewees of KappAhl mentioned the importance of meeting and getting together outside work, to get the opportunity to talk about "other things than work", and to create a good camaraderie. "I'm sure the events have contributed to creating a better unity between employees", as one interviewee expressed it. Another interviewee agreed and stressed, "events generate a lot of positive things, you get to know your colleagues better, you become closer to each other, and that contributes to increased job satisfaction". A third interviewee also pointed out the positive effects events can have on the social environment,

> "For example, our shop has two floors, and usually you don't talk that much with the people downstairs, but after an event, you have experienced something together and you have something in common to talk about, 'do you remember?', and so on".

The opinions of the Skanska interviewees were in accordance with the Kappahl interviewees. One interviewee stated,

> "Yeah, it's nice to spend some time with your friends. Everybody enjoys a pleasant dinner and a good party with workmates without having to pay themselves, don't they!? It's important to get that appreciation from your

employer. But in the building industry I think it is difficult to weld employees together only with a few events, it might be different in an office or something where you see each other every day. What I mean is that we work on different projects all the time and rarely with the same people, we are a bit like 'gypsies' you know. After each project we split up and sometimes it can take years before you work with the same people again. Ultimately, to create good camaraderie you should work on a big project, which lasts for a year or two. But, as I see it, the Christmas party is of particular importance for creating a sense of fellowship and a feeling of security. It's good to know you'll meet your "old" colleagues at least once a year. First of all it's great fun to see them, but then you also get updated on what's going on within the company, and when you later on come to a new work site it's not that alien to you".

At KappAhl all interviewees stressed, that since the company do not hold corporate special events "that often", the events are always seen as something positive, which they appreciate, talk about and look forward to, "we feel 'yes, now it's time to do something again', and everyone wants to come along, and if they can they will". One interviewee explained,

"I think events bring about extremely positive effects, they generate a different working spirit. You feel happy and are more motivated. I mean as a customer you notice as soon as you enter the shop if the staff feels good or not. And the effects last for a while, first of all, the event is talked about for at least two weeks, and after that there is still something left."

She also stressed that if the particular event recurs annually recurring, let's say a Christmas party or a spring kick-off, and the employees know it is something frequent, then the effects will last longer, "Since people know a similar event will be held next year, they start to plan and think 'I wonder what we are going to do next year?' or 'Yeah, next time maybe we can do this or that', and then the memories are brought to life again".

Moreover, the interviewees had by no means experienced that the events have had the opposite effect and made people "feel forced" to attend. "Of course it

must be on a voluntary basis, and we never question if somebody doesn't want to come", one interviewee emphasized.

4.3.3 Corporate Special Events and other Work Motivators

The interviewees emphasized the encouraging effects events can have on work motivation, for instance, if there were certain sales-goals to achieve, and the employees knew they would "go on a trip or do something together" if they met the objectives. Other encouraging sales-activities mentioned were competitions where the employees had to guess what amount they thought the shop was going to sell for during a particular weekend. This was according to the interviewee a good way to involve the staff and make them feel part of the company. The employee with the guess closest to the actual sales figure won a prize, usually movie tickets.

Furthermore, almost all interviewees of Kappahl stressed that for work motivation "the big events" were not the most significant ones, on the contrary the "smaller ones" were of greater importance, if not the greatest. A typical "small event" mentioned would for example be a celebration or a meeting with food and drinks in the shop after closing time. However, interviewees from both KappAhl and Skanska also stressed they thought there were too few "big events" for all employees, and they felt this would be beneficial for creating a sense of belonging and loyalty towards the company, amongst other things. The interviewees stated,

> "I believe all employees would appreciate an initiative from the head office, an event or something, organized by them for all the shops, even together with the co-workers from the office. It has happened a couple of times during my 20 years with the company, but not regularly. There is a huge difference between how they work at the head office and how they work with the employees on the floor. Sometimes we feel disregarded".

> "Sometimes I feel once a year isn't enough. To have a big event, like our Christmas party, twice a year would actually be a good idea! If the employees get along well, everything is so much easier".

Besides corporate special events, the interviewees mentioned several other factors contributing to work motivation, such as friendship and unity among employees, to be open-minded and have a well functioning dialogue between manager and employees, as one interviewee put it, "That's probably why one is so motivated, and the working environment so friendly, everyone is forthcoming, and no one is involved in back-stabbing". Other motivators brought up by both KappAhl and Skanska interviewees were, feedback - "so one knows what's going on", recognition from management, to like and be interested in one's job, varying work tasks - "you face new situations and meet new people all the time", own responsibility – "so that everyone gets their share", and being trusted and not too managed. Additionally the interviewees from Skanska brought up problem solving and freedom as two important motivators.

It is noteworthy to point out that none of the interviewees mentioned money as a motivator. However, when asked "What motivates you most, money or events and incentives?", one of the interviewees stressed that of course it was because of the money he worked, if he "had loads" he wouldn't be working at all, "everything is relative, but at the end of the day it's the money that makes the world go around". Another interviewee emphasized the salary as being most important, but "on top of a decent pay 'small things' in the daily work motivate and cheer me up". The "small things" she referred to were primarily incentives, such as a weekly basket of fresh fruit to the lunchroom, discounts on KappAhl garments, and smaller events celebrating a sales success or somebody's birthday. A third interviewee stated that it is a combination of both, "of course you appreciate movie tickets or something, but ultimately it's the salary that makes a living". A further interviewee stressed that the existing, so-called bonus-system was "not much of a spur", and therefore she valued events and doing things together more.

At KappAhl the average employment time for our seven interviewees, both managers and employees, was 20 years, with two extremes on 6 and 40 years. Naturally, we asked the interviewees what made them stay so long, and most of them claimed it was because of, or rather thanks to, the pleasant working

environment, the camaraderie, the "KappAhl-spirit", and that they enjoyed what they were doing.

Consequently, the interviewees were asked to explain the "KappAhl-spirit". This "spirit" seemed to mean different things to different employees, but the common trait was concerning how employees addressed and treated each other all the way from top to bottom of the organization, "everybody is on the same level, and you can easily phone the head office and talk to them and so on". Moreover, it had to do with loyalty towards each other and the company, and openness to new ideas encouraging innovative thinking and own initiatives. All employees stated that the KappAhl-spirit was descended from the time Pelle Ahl, the founder, was managing the company. One interviewee explained,

> "You know he could personally come to the shops with cakes and things on Saturdays, he said 'hello, how is it going', sat down and had a cup of coffee. The boss was with us, so to speak!"

However, the interviewees' opinions about the spirit (culture) of today differed, one meant it was not there anymore, another that it still lived, and a third that she had heard it used to be a typical spirit, but that it was slowly fading away. One of them stressed that it is beneficial for any company to have a strong culture, for the employees to get on well, for the customers to know what to expect, and for loyalty towards the company.

4.3.4 Means of Communicating Company Policies, Goals and Strategies

The interviewees of KappAhl stated that they mainly get informed about the company by the store manager, and usually at staff meetings and daily morning meetings before the shop opens. One interviewee stressed,

> "It's only ten minutes in the morning, but those minutes are very precious I think, and it's interesting to hear how we are doing compared to budget and to other shops. It's important to know what's going on!"

Another interviewee stated that it is also up to the employees to inform themselves, but that it varies depending on how committed people are to their

work. Additionally, the interviewees mentioned annual co-worker appraisals as a means to be informed and updated.

The Skanska interviewees mentioned weekly meetings, held by the site manager or a supervisor of sorts, as their main information source. At these meetings they were primarily informed about the actual project and hardly ever about "other things", referring to company policies and strategies. Additionally they occasionally got "some nice brochures" sent home, but as one of the interviewees saw it, "it's only words on paper, what they say is difficult to relate to and take in, it's not like that in reality". From his point of view, very few blue-collar workers felt involved in the company in that sense, "you don't think like that, you want to do a good job and earn your money, the organization is too big and there are new managers with new ideas all the time".

Once a year the employees of each KappAhl shop have a sort of kick-off, a one-day-seminar/workshop, with their store manager at someplace else, away from the daily work environment. On these occasions matters concerning company policies, goals and strategies for the coming year, and so on, are dealt with, The employees are expected to contribute with their own ideas how to reach the goals in their particular shop. These events are above all aimed at educating and informing the employees, and they are not combined with any entertainment or food and drinks in that sense. One of the interviewees explained,

> "I don't think these events should be 'great fun' either, it is education, you have to take it for what it is, otherwise everybody is just looking forward to the party afterwards, and probably don't take it seriously. On other occasions though, if the purpose of the event mainly focuses on enjoyment, I think it's okay to start off in a more serious way, maybe with a staff meeting or something, and then continue with the fun".

Another interviewee emphasized that corporate special events can communicate very well what KappAhl stands for, "Yes, absolutely, I think that is a good way to inform us!" An interviewee of Skanska was of the same mind and stated, "Well, I think events might be a better way to inform us about the company than sending home those 'nice brochures' every now and then".

5. ANALYSIS

This chapter will analyse and discuss the findings that were presented earlier in the empirical chapter and connect them to the theory and our own opinions. The conclusions that have been drawn by the interpretation of the case study will be presented in accordance with the purpose of the thesis. The main purpose of the thesis is to examine how corporate special events are used in companies' internal marketing, as a strategic tool, to motivate and retain employees. In addition to the management perspective, employees' perceptions of corporate special events will be considered. Moreover, an organizational culture perspective will be applied to provide a deeper level of understanding of the purposes, goals, and effects of holding corporate special events. Additionally, some models will be applied to illustrate the significance of corporate special events and their effects in organizations.

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5.1 Reasons for Holding Corporate Special Events

Most managers would certainly like to create a working environment in which people like working and where people work well. Björklund (2001) stressed that there are many factors, both physical and psychological, contributing to form the working environment, which in turn may affect the job satisfaction of employees. As the nature and number of corporate special events varied from organization to organization in our study so did the reasons for holding them. However, an interesting observation is that most of the case companies had, if not the same, but similar events. Additionally, although the companies belong to different industries their primary reasons for holding corporate special events were almost the same, frequently relating to the working environment.

Björklund (2001) stressed that job satisfaction is the job-related attitudinal construct that has received most attention in modern times, and Higgins (2000) reported that the more good relationships an individual has to colleagues, the greater his or her job satisfaction will be. In our study, from the management perspective the most significant reasons for holding corporate special events were to create *job satisfaction*, along with building *good relationships*, and to

enhance *commitment* to the company. From the employee perspective the most vital reasons for a company to hold corporate special events were to *encourage and support* them, and to show that they were *appreciated*. Employees from KappAhl stated that events create good relationships with colleagues, are an encouragement from the company, and increase job satisfaction. One Skanska employee compared the labour workers of the company with gypsies, in the sense that they are moving from one project to the other and never know when they will see their colleagues next time. To them corporate special events provide an opportunity to get together and refresh old memories.

In addition, both managers and employees emphasized the importance of *"getting together outside work"* under more relaxed circumstances. Apart from various internal benefits, the companies also saw external benefits, such as *"word of mouth"*, *brand recognition*, and that corporate special events signal to potential future employees that the company is an *attractive employer* (for the complete list of reasons, please refer to Table 1 in appendix III).

5.2 Effects & Potential Benefits of Corporate Special Events

The majority of the interviewees perceived corporate special events as, "something good" that resulted in various positive effects. Both managers and employees described several potential benefits the events could bring to the organization, such as, increased happiness, cooperation, team building, communication, bonding and socialization.

If corporate special events are perceived as something positive, which they usually were according to the interviewees, the company can benefit from a planned event as soon as the employees know about it. We will use the lifecycle concept to facilitate the illustration of the positive effects regarding work motivation corporate special events may result in. From a managerial perspective the event can be viewed as a project, but from the employee perspective the event can be seen as a product launched to them. In figure 6 below, both the phases of the *product life cycle* (Kotler *et al*, 1996), and the steps of the *project life cycle* (Cleland, 1999) are presented.
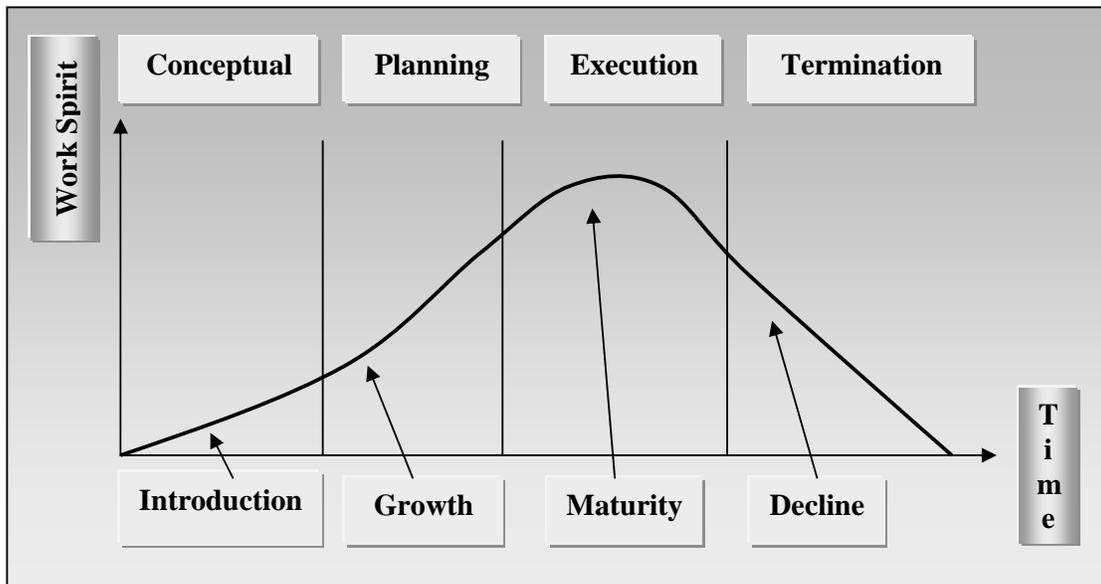
Figure 6: The Lifecycle of Work Motivation Effects

Source: Adjusted model from Kotler *et al* (1996) and Cleland (1999).

For the effects of corporate special events (see Table 2 in appendix III for the most frequently mentioned effects), the introductory phase starts when an event is proposed to the employees by an invitation or some news. With the proposal, ideas come forward and with the decision to take part rumours start to circulate in the office or the company. People start talking about the event, looking forward to it, and some may even start planning what to wear. The expectations are growing, and so is the "work spirit". During the time of the actual event, most people are in high spirits and having a good time. This "happiness" resides during the event but when it is over, as time passes, the level of "increased work spirit" diminishes, and the memories of the event start to fade.

As all of us know nothing last forever, neither do the effects of an event. At some point the employees do not have any affiliation or feeling for the event, and "everything is back to normal again". Almost all interviewees, both managers and employees, pointed out that the effects of a corporate special event, concerning increased "happiness" and "work spirit", are usually seen for a couple of weeks before they start to decline.

Since the mangers perceived the effects of corporate special events as something positive we got the impression that they tried to make them last as long as possible. Many of the companies worked actively with the "memories" of the events in different ways. In the co-worker magazines from both KappAhl and Peab we found short stories and party pictures from previous corporate special events. At Skanska, in some of the interviewees' offices, group pictures of the participants who took part in Drakbåtsfestivalen were nicely placed on the wall or desk. In addition, the employee who was in charge of handling and registering for the event had a huge collection of pictures from different events and videotapes of Drakbåtsfestivalen. Some event pictures were even copied on CD and the employees were allowed to borrow them.

We have developed a model to illustrate the "prolongation" of the effects of the events. Figure 7 below is an extension of figure 6, which is further developed with an extra feature the "prolongation of effects".
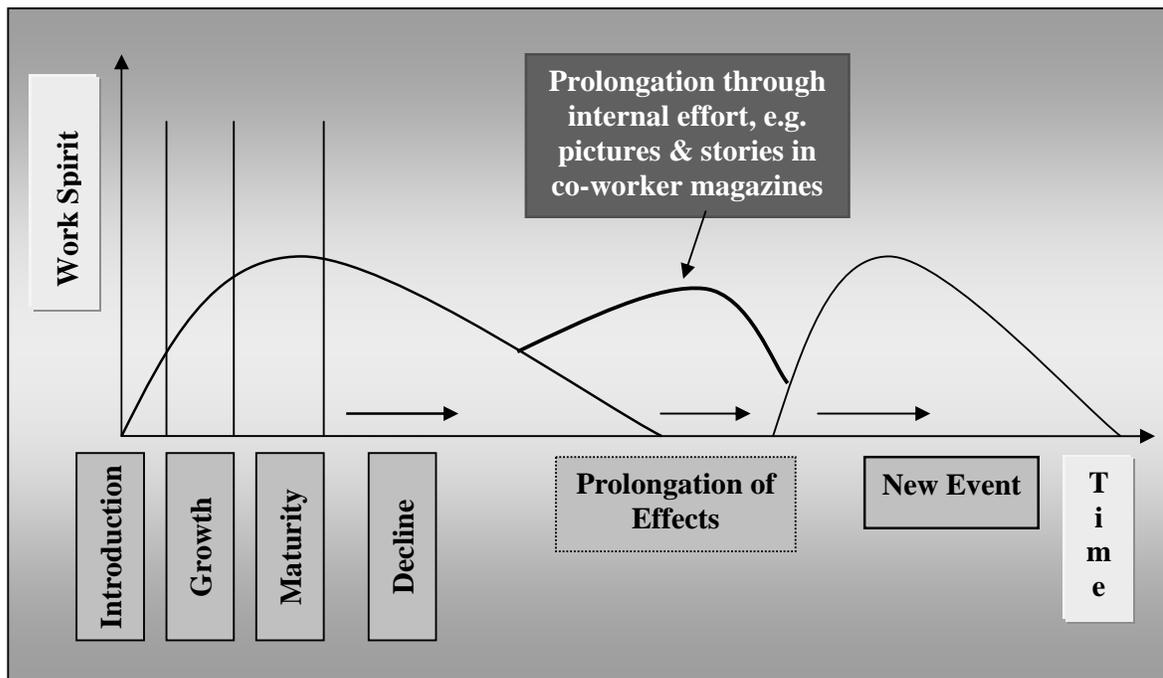

Figure 7: Prolongations of Work Spirit/Work Motivation Effects
Source: Own elaboration.

After a week or so, when the effects of the event start to decline, managers could reinforce the effects by for example displaying pictures from the event on the notice board. Employees may not only appreciate the efforts of the organization for holding a nice event but they may also think of people with whom they participated, and in this way they will be reminded. Moreover, almost all big organizations have monthly or quarterly magazines that are sent home to their employees. These magazines can also play a great role in the prolongation process if they are utilized in a strategic way, for instance if they talk about recent events held in the organization. If managers are aware of the effects of these small actions, take advantage of them, and work efficiently with them, they may stretch the positive effects of the actual event to last for a bit longer than they usually do.

5.3 Measurement & Evaluation of Corporate Special Events

No matter which part of life one sees, one will look for some kind of return from the efforts invested. Then why are organizations ignorant of the event measurement when they are investing huge amounts of money every year. The events are carefully planned, and the money spent cannot be seen as "unexpected" irregular costs. The majority of the interviewed managers stated that they reserve a specific amount for such happenings in their budgets

Getz (1997) argues that the reason why it might be considered difficult to evaluate an event depends on the fact that it is hard to evaluate the intangible aspects of the event. During this research it was noticed that none of the organizations had any specific measurement tool to evaluate corporate special events, neither had they tried to evaluate a specific event through traditional surveys or questionnaires, apart from a few special occasions. But even these evaluations were only for the short-term perspective. For evaluating the long-term effects of corporate special events the interviewees stressed the need for a common measure instrument. Allen (2000) argued that it is important to consider why you are holding an event, what your goals and intentions are, and what you hope to achieve. One of the managers agreed to this argument and stated if there is a "special purpose" for the event then maybe one could achieve something measurable from that specific event.

Moreover, Ambrose and Kulik (1999) pointed out that we cannot actually see work motivation nor can we measure it directly. What can be measured on the other hand are the observable manifestations (the work related behaviour) of work motivation, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and absenteeism. However, since many of these manifestations are *constructs*, i.e. "mental abstractions formed by the perception of a phenomenon" (Kinnear & Taylor, 1996), they are still complicated to measure. The managers from our case companies stated that the most frequent way of "evaluating" the effects of events, concerning for example increased work motivation, was to observe "how happy" the employees seemed to be after an event. Their happiness signalled to the management that they liked and appreciated the event.

Apart from the difficulties in measuring the effects of corporate special events there are other reasons for why they are not being evaluated. Martin (2002) argued that events could be viewed as *rituals* – "celebrations of the mundane". Moreover, Alvesson (2002) stated that cultural manifestations, such as rituals can exist without fulfilling any positive function, i.e. being reproduced, for instance, by the autonomous powers of tradition. The manager at Skanska believed that one explanation to how companies can spend so much on corporate special events without knowing the effects is that many events are seen as corporate traditions, and the employees expect the company to hold them. Take a Christmas party for example, or Drakbåtsfestivalen. The tradition to hold such events is so deeply rooted within the organization that the employees will get disappointed if the company does not provide these "annual treats". Hence, since the purpose of holding the events primarily is to satisfy the expectations of the employees, the company might not consider other potential benefits as vital, and therefore are not interested in evaluating them.

The manager of Peab believed that another rather common reason why companies do not measure and follow up corporate special events is because such activities together with other human resource related matters are regarded as "soft values", and therefore not prioritized by top management. Generally the primary focus is on productivity and cost, and investments in the so-called soft areas of business are usually seen as less important.

Most companies tried to examine the impact of events by some means in their annual co-worker survey, or during employee appraisals. The questions were of a more general character concerning work environment, job satisfaction, and so on. This way they attempted to observe whether employees valued corporate special events, and other activities. At Skanska where they have seen that one of their events, Fältstafetten, kept losing interest by the employees, they have changed the event schedule. Instead of holding it every year they now have it every second year. According to the interviewee the number of participants was decreasing continuously until they decided to have it every second year. As a result, a higher number of employees participated, and some personally thanked her for organising such a nice event and making it happen.

5.3.1 Work Related Behaviour of Corporate Special Events

As previously mentioned motivation is not directly observable. Pinder (1998) described work motivation as a set of energetic forces that initiate work related behaviour. It is the multidimensional stream of behaviour and the products of this behaviour that are visible to a manager. After reviewing all the interviews, we have made an attempt to illustrate our findings in a model showing the work related behaviour of corporate special events. We found Getz's (1999) model illustrating the "quantum leap" effect and related scenarios very inspiring and useful for our purposes. The original categories have been modified to adjust to our findings. Our model shows how the work related behaviour fluctuates before, during and after the events are held. The most frequent elements related to the work behaviour of employees were *communication*, *commitment* to the organization and *bonding* with the group, *socialization* and *cooperation* with colleagues, and *job performance*. During the event most of these elements will naturally be at a peak, but our intention is to illustrate them at different stages of the event.
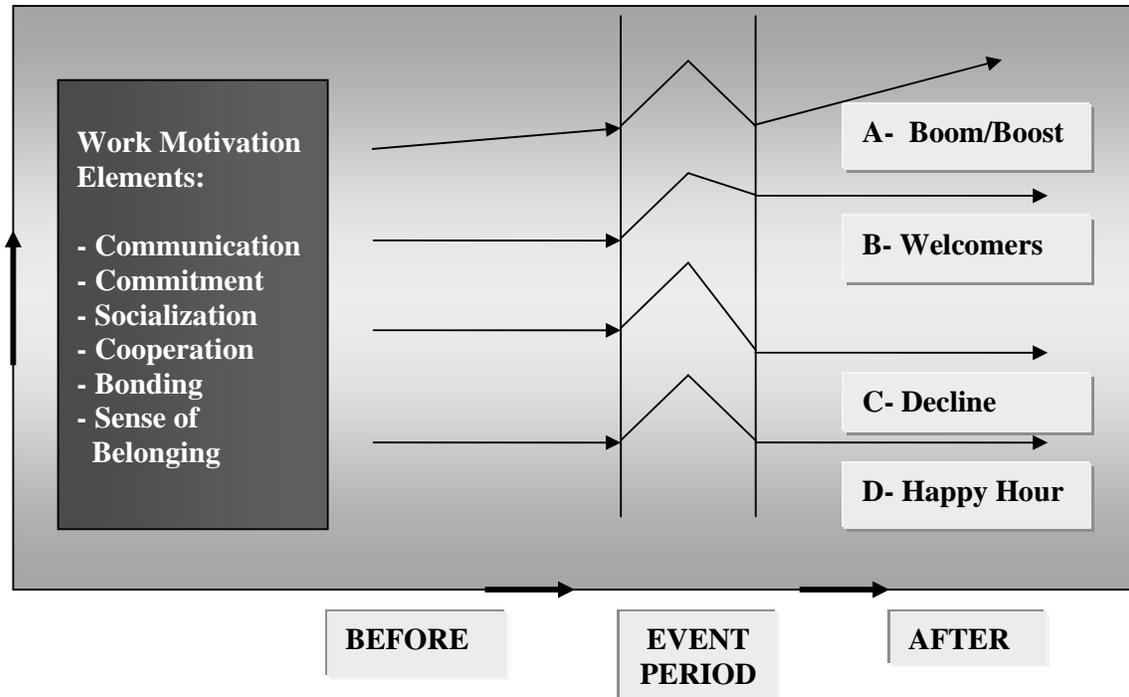
Figure 8: Different Scenarios for Corporate Special Events' Effects on Work Motivation Elements

Source: Adjusted model from Getz, 1999.

Case (A) is what all organizations would like to have. However, to achieve this outcome they have to be prepared. The elements mentioned in the model may not be the result of events only, but corporate special events can be a trigger to boost them. This kind of results can be achieved through open discussion and communication in the organization. Where employees feel part of the company, feel a sense of belonging and value organizational goals over individual goals.

Case (B) is also considered beneficial for the organizations. The event period increased the cooperation and communication with the rest of the members. This scenario may be mostly seen at the time of kick offs. Usually new employees appreciate when organizations give them opportunity to come together with the rest of the staff. The effect can also be seen when employees from different districts, regions or towns meet. The event provides an opportunity for the participants to get to know each other, which helps them in their work after the event.

Case (C) may not be desirable for the companies. Of course, when they spend a huge amount of money, they would like to see some positive effects. This situation may occur when organizations do not take their responsibility in holding events. The negative turn after the event could have been caused by mismanagement of the event, poor communication (the event does not match the theme presented), unsolved problems and clashes among groups before and during the event, and so on. As a result, the event may not only affect the elements in the model negatively, but also productivity, motivation and retention.

The name of Case (D) - "Happy Hour", speaks on its own. Consider this case as one goes to a bar or restaurant during the happy hour where one gets drinks or meals cheaper during a specific period of time. While there are employees who show appreciation through happiness or increased productivity, there are others who take corporate special events for granted. For them these events are a regular routine of the company. They feel that the company is obliged to hold such events for them. This may be the worst case, since employees have such perceptions about the company and events. If we assume this was the case with Skanska, and Fältstafetten where the number of participants kept decreasing. Thanks to the sound management where they realized the problem and changed the strategy to hold it every second year, not only the number of participants increased but the employees' attitudes towards the company also changed. Consequently the effects of the event shifted from case (D) to scenario (A) or (B).

It is always tricky to deal with events but careful observations by managers can bring the desired outcomes. It is important to consider why the event is held, and what the goals and objectives are. Moreover, corporate special events should not be considered the sole factor to affect work behaviour; they are one spice of a recipe.

5.4 Internal Marketing & Corporate Special Events

Internal marketing, communication, education, work motivation, and employee retention are closely interlinked fields of managing human recourses.

Communication and education were significant motivation strategies for most of the case companies, and ideas from all the fields play fundamental roles within the internal marketing (IM) concept.

Berry (1981) suggested that marketing tools and concepts can be used internally and that "the internal customers" must be happy and motivated in their jobs before they can serve the external customers effectively, and Grönroos (1981) stated that everyone in the organization has a customer to be served. The manager of KappAhl presented the similar insight, she believed that it is important for an organisation to have an IM-thinking, she stressed, "satisfied employees lead to satisfied customers".

Joseph (1996) argued that every marketing plan should include strategies for reaching and winning over its internal customers. All managers of our study stated that corporate special events were one strategy they used to reach their employees. The managers considered corporate special events an important part of internal marketing in the sense that they not only brought employees closer to each other, but also closer to the management and the organisation. However, none of the interviewed managers could mention how much the company spent on internal marketing or corporate special events, but that it was "probably possible to find out".

5.4.1 Work motivation & The Corporate Special Event Portfolio

Rudolph and Kleiner (1989) claimed that work motivation is the development of a desire within an employee to perform effectively and efficiently. To have motivated employees might be the common ambition of all organizations, but there are various strategies to achieve this desired goal. All managers of our study did not consider money as a motivational factor. Some of them said that motivational effects of a salary raise are temporary, similar to the short-term effects of events, and therefore not a "better alternative". None of the employees mentioned money as the primary motivator either. They stressed that of course the salary is important, but in the day-to-day work "other things" are much more important. Factors such as recognition, appreciation, feedback, fair treatment, and good management were frequently mentioned (refer to

Table 3 for motivation strategies and Table 4 for outcomes of motivation, in appendix III).

Stershic (2001) stressed that communicating the organizational values to employees can increase their participation, motivation and moral involvement. The interviewed managers were aware of how important it is that employees understand their role in the organization, that they see the "big picture", and know how they can contribute to the company. They communicated these values in different ways. The most common motivation strategies used were various education/training/development/change programs, where corporate special events was one of the components.

King (2001) underlined that when you start planning events, meetings, and so on, they need to continue, and if the company stops there is a risk that both productivity and revenue may decrease. The managers agreed on the fact that a single event does not accomplish much in motivating or keeping employees "on board" unless there is a chain of events. Some managers stated that one should not exaggerate the importance of events concerning motivation or retention, "Yes, they do make employees happy and keep them working, but you need to do other things as well, the management in the day-to-day work is more important". Corporate special events should be seen as an extra "motivation-spice" to the daily work routines.

Nevertheless, one should keep in mind that holding only one big annual event hardly makes any difference. The employees from KappAhl emphasized that the smaller events, such as celebrating a sales goal or a co-workers birthday motivated more. But on the other hand, employees from both KappAhl and Skanska also stressed that the bigger events and initiatives from the head office were much appreciated. Moreover, they could be beneficial for increasing commitment and loyalty towards the company. An interviewee from Skanska stressed that only one big event for all employees per year was too little. Thus, there should be a chain of events, and the events in this chain should be a mix of small and big events.

Rafiq and Ahmed (2000) stated that one of the central concepts of IM is the focus upon the issue of employee satisfaction. King (2001) stressed that all employees should be able to participate in the events a company organizes. To keep employees happy and satisfied there should be events for each and everyone. The events should be directed to diverse activities or themes so people have a variety to choose from. At Skanska this "strategy" seemed to be taken into consideration. The interviewee responsible for the employee association explained that they have board, a group of people, which decides about the kind of activities they will have during the year. Since the group is comprised of different people and from different departments it is natural to see different events during the year. Another matter concerning the corporate special events is the time between events. King (2001) emphasized that the events shouldn't be held too often; there should be time in-between so that the employees look forward to them and appreciate them. According to the interviewees this was not a problem in their companies. Corporate special events were not held that often, so the "risk" of getting tired of events was at a minimum.

A further issue related to the event portfolio is *annually recurring events*, i.e. corporate special events coming back year after year. A typical example of this phenomenon is KappAhl's annual Christmas party at the head office where the employees are responsible for the entertainment. Each department performs an act at the "Christmas show", and whoever wins "best in show" get the honour to hold the party for next year. Usually the themes for the acts are related to events significant to each department, which all employees can relate to, and have a laugh about. According to the manager, the competition is a motivator for the employees seeing that most of them consider the Christmas party as a fun event to organize. To come up with the best idea for the show requires a joint effort from the department. Thus, the planning of the show and also the event itself increases employee involvement, communication, and co-operation. Moreover, since it is the department's responsibility to arrange the party it is not a big burden to a few individuals. The interviewees of the KappAhl shops also mentioned that having annually recurring events increases work motivation, and make the effects last longer. If they know a similar event will be held every year, let's say a Christmas party or a spring kick-off, they have

something to look forward to and to talk about as time gets closer to the event. They start to plan and think of possible things to do, memories are brought back to life, and the work spirit increases.

5.4.2 Communication & Corporate Special Events

Winter (1985) was one of the first to stress that the purpose of IM is also to align, educate and motivate employees towards organizational objectives. All managers emphasized the importance of communication, and of having a close dialogue between managers and employees in general, but also for implementing company strategies, policies and goals.

Managers as well as employees believed that the manager closest to his/her employees, whether it is a region manager, a site manager or a supervisor, plays the most important role when it comes to forward information within the company. Employees from both Skanska and KappAhl valued daily morning and weekly meetings as well as annual co-worker appraisals. Moreover, they viewed these meetings and appraisals as sources of information that excel them to perform efficiently.

Joseph (1996) argued that both consumer marketing and internal marketing are based on the concept of exchange and both necessitate efforts that help to influence, update, and change behaviour. While internal marketing can play an important role in guiding behavior and bringing employees' closer to the organization, it can also play the opposite role and work as a de-motivator. Many employees criticized the communication channels provided by the organizations. Some ground floor (blue-collar workers) employees mentioned that occasionally they get "some fancy brochures" sent home from the company, but these are "only words on paper", and what they communicate is difficult to relate to and take in, since "it's not like that in reality". Also many felt that due to hierarchy and different steps of communication, sometimes the message changed on the way or the information never reached them at all.

The interviewee in charge of the employee association at Skanska, and the HR-manager of Renova, among others, stated that there were difficulties in reaching out with information, since many of their employees do not have

access to a computer, and the managers in charge do not always have the time to inform or think that it is necessary to inform about certain things. This affected of course their possibilities to forward the information about corporate special events as well. One of the employees of Skanska mentioned that he was a member of the association, but that he had never participated in any of their events. His explanation was that he did not know any other colleagues who were members. The reason for this he saw as a combination of disinterest on their behalf, but also that they actually were not informed about the activities going on.

Wiener (1988) stated that organizational value systems provide guides for organizational goals, policies and strategies. If the prevailing values are consistent with what the company stands for and wants to achieve, the organizational culture is an important asset. At KappAhl, for example, the employees have a one-day kick-off seminar/workshop every year, which is based on education and training. All employees found this event beneficial and important in communicating organizational values and other information. According to them it would be nice to continue with such events instead of or as a compliment to sending home "glossy" brochures, aiming at passing on corporate values. The employees of Skanska shared the notion that corporate special events might be a more beneficial information tool, which is closer to their reality and a more straightforward way of taking in organizational values.

Different people have different preferences and an organization cannot hold a corporate special event by looking at everyone's preference. However, events can be organized by collecting information from these preferences. This way employees are involved in the process, and may feel being part of bringing the proposal to practice. Many managers emphasized the importance of having an open dialogue between managers and employees, and asking the employees what they would like to have instead of the event they are not pleased about. In the case, where the company decides to hold the particular event anyway the participants are just silent spectators and they might even feel "forced" to join. This way the event can result in exactly the opposite effects. At Nordea for example, due to company polices, a certain amount of time of the event program has to be related to the business, and they cannot hold corporate

special events "just for fun". However, the manager believed that having such events would actually be a good compliment to the more "serious ones", and might be very beneficial from a social point of view.

5.4.3 Employee Retention & Corporate Special Events

Berry and Parasuraman (1991) suggested that IM is about attracting, developing, motivating and retaining qualified employees through job-products that satisfy their needs. Companies not only strive to increase the number of customers but they also want to keep their employees. The interviewed managers mentioned the need of having employees faithful to the company. When asked what retention rate their company had, not a single company could mention the rate of retention. However, all of them stated it was "fairly high", and that having a high retention rate was "healthy" for companies. The Editor of Club Industry (2003) suggested that recognition from managers is one essential retention strategy. The manager of Peab also believed that employees stay longer if the company shows that it cares about them. She stressed that corporate special events are one way of investing in employees to let them know that they are appreciated.

Moreover, Satava (2003) pointed out "A to Z factors" affecting employee retention. He mentioned for example, generosity, helpfulness, laughter, unity and communication. Many of Satava's factors were found at Skanska where the manager suggested that corporate special events contribute to creating a pleasant atmosphere, which in turn results in a good working environment and close cooperation with friends and colleagues, both of which lead to loyalty. When the employees were asked to describe their reasons to stay with the company the answers were of the same nature. They mentioned factors like camaraderie, company spirit, that they liked working with the company, loyalty towards the company and each other, and openness to new ideas.

The Editor of HR Briefing (2003) stated that most often people join an organization for the salary and other benefits, but when they leave it is due to other factors. Satava (2003) argued that these factors are both internal and external. The internal factors are work related that can be controlled by management. Many of the factors that the interviewees mentioned as potential

benefits of corporate special events correspond to Satava's factors to keep employees onboard. Through proactive event management these benefits can be used as a "guard" to minimize the internal factors of employee turnover.

5.5 Corporate Special Events & Organisational Culture

Martin (2002) believes that cultural forms, such as stories, rituals, and physical arrangements are not necessarily more superficial or less important than deeply held assumptions. When analyzing research from a cultural perspective often glimpses of cultural theory emerge. According to Martin (2002) cultural manifestations are consistent or not, cultural members appear to agree or not, and interpretations are singular and clear or multiple and ambiguous. Visibly KappAhl and Skanska, for example, have/are (depending on how one views culture) two totally different organizational cultures. However, the interviewees' perception of what is organizational culture, who creates it, and do we have one, varied more on the individual level than on the organizational level. Furthermore, we could not observe any apparent correlation between types and number of corporate special events held in the organisation and its culture. Nor could we distinguish any particular differences in how managers' or employees' general attitudes towards events, or their perceptions of the effects of them varied depending on the company culture. Hence, when looking at the significance of corporate special events from a culture perspective, our intention is not to describe the differences, or to compare different organizational cultures with each other. Conversely, we will interpret and analyse the perceptions of corporate special events the interviewees had in common, and explain their significance to any organizational culture.

When the interviewees were asked why they thought a company should hold corporate special events for its employees the answers concerning various social aspects were overwhelming. As pointed out earlier, both managers and employees emphasized their contribution to creating job satisfaction, increasing communication and cooperation, and strengthening commitment and bonding. Since these aspects were so frequently mentioned we draw the conclusion that *corporate special events* have a huge impact on the *social environment*, and consequently contribute to shape the *organizational culture*. On the other hand,

one can argue that an organisation's culture determines the type, number, and regularity of corporate special events typically held by the company. It is difficult to say which comes first, but no matter how one looks at it, it is obvious that the three are closely entwined, and that one affects the other.

As is always the case, managers must implement some strategy of control. Ray (1986) claimed that properly implemented the use of culture, as a managerial strategy, is potentially very effective in promoting loyalty, enthusiasm, diligence and even devotion to the company. He further argued that control by corporate culture views people as emotional, symbol loving, and needing to belong to a superior entity or collectivity. The manager of Peab emphasized that corporate special events might have a huge "symbolic value" to employees, sometimes bigger than managers realize and therefore "sort of miss the importance of holding events". She stressed that to employees not only the salary is central, the social environment is also very important. Alvesson (2002) stressed that one of the most common metaphors for organizational culture is as social glue. Employees from both KappAhl and Skanska mentioned several outcomes of corporate special events concerning the social environment, factors that led to increased work motivation. Moreover, both managers and employees strongly emphasized that events offer an opportunity to build relationships in a "different way", "you get to know each other on a deeper level", which will be "in the company's favour for future occasions".

When discussing the impacts corporate special events have on the social environment of a company we find Maslow's (1970) theory of human needs useful to explain the importance of satisfying employees' social needs. Applying his "need hierarchy" to a work setting gives that the *basic needs* are satisfied by salary and other practical matters related to the work environment. Next on the ladder are the *social needs*, such as feeling of belonging, affiliating with colleagues, and being accepted by the group. Corporate special events can play a very important role in satisfying these social needs of employees. An illustrative example of the need of belonging to a group was portrayed by one of the KappAhl employees, who stressed that they looked after each other in the group, and saw to it that nobody was left out. These manners were especially associated to corporate special events. The employees could for example refuse to visit a

particular restaurant if they could not provide them with a "long-table" so the group could sit together. Once the social needs are fulfilled the *esteem needs* come to the fore, and employees will be motivated by achievements, to reach certain goals, they want to be competent, do a good job, and gain approval and recognition from managers and co-workers. Ultimately, this is what all managers seek. Furthermore, Satava (2003) found that an inadequate career path and lack of fulfilment are common reasons for employees to leave an organisation. Consequently, if the social needs are not met the employees may get stuck between two levels where they cannot move on. Then it might be difficult for the company to motivate employees to perform efficiently, and to keep the retention rate on a stable level.

6. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

In this final chapter we conclude the findings of our study, and formulate the learning in more general terms. The chapter also includes suggestions and recommendations for how corporate special events should be approached and managed. Additionally, the relationship of internal marketing and corporate special events is illustrated in a model. Finally, we point out some areas for further research.

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Corporate special events are generally perceived as something positive by both management and employees, in the sense that they contribute to create a nice working environment. Their positive effects on work motivation should be seen as short-term, however, other potential benefits, such as greater camaraderie, closer relationships with colleagues and managers, and increased co-operation seem to last longer. Further, since these events are carefully planned and budgets are set, one can say that organizations unintentionally use corporate special events as a strategic tool to motivate employees.

There are many factors contributing to create a working environment in which people like working and where they work effectively and efficiently. Corporate special events should be seen as one factor contributing to create job satisfaction, to build and enhance relationships, and to reinforce commitment to the company.

From the employee perspective corporate special events should be held to support and encourage them. The events are seen as a reward and an appreciation from the company. Moreover, corporate special events, e.g. kick-offs, provide an opportunity to introduce and bring together old staff with new members. Also employees have affiliated themselves with annually recurring company-specific events, for example Drakbåtsfestivalen and Christmas parties. Such events should be well handled by the management to build and increase employee morale.

Besides the potential internal benefits, some corporate special events result in external benefits for the company, and should be considered as an external marketing tool as well. Employees might for example spread a positive picture of the event and the company by "word-of-mouth" to family and friends. Moreover, participating in bigger external events, such as Drakbåtsfestivalen and Göteborgsvarvet, can play an important role in marketing and building company image. Companies should pay more attention to such events since they provide free publicity through employee participation.

Many companies have an aspiration to measure and evaluate the effects of corporate special events, however, very few actually perform it. In order to evaluate something there should be goals and objectives, against which the results can be verified. For certain occurrences, such as events, it may not always be easy or possible to establish clear goals and objectives. Companies normally find it hard to measure and evaluate corporate special events because of the intangible nature of the outcomes, and due to the unavailability of a solid measurement instrument.

Managers often have the perception that the "happier" their employees are the more efficiently they will work, which in turn will lead to company profitability. Consequently, another explanation to why companies do not measure and evaluate events is that many events are held primarily based on the fact that employees are interested in participating and on the belief that employees most probably will get disappointed if these particular events are not held. Further, corporate special events together with other human resource matters are often regarded as "soft values" and usually less prioritised than the core business of the company. Thus, measuring and evaluating the day-to-day work is considered more vital than the evaluation of the effects and potential benefits of occasional corporate special events.

Furthermore, most companies are not interested in or do not even intend to measure and evaluate the outcomes of certain corporate special events as they consider them part of company traditions, which are something that has been done in the past and should continue. By commencing the events year after year they have become deeply rooted and part of the organizational culture. One can

say that these cultural manifestations exist without fulfilling any positive function, i.e. the employees expect the company to hold the events and the management does not reflect more over what to get in return than "happy" employees. Since the organizational members share similar values about these "rituals" they are difficult to exclude from the social agenda, and they probably should not be. Provided that some corporate special events are reproduced by the autonomous powers of tradition, and that the purpose of holding such events primarily is to satisfy the expectations of employees it might not even be relevant to talk about formal evaluations in these cases. The amount of increased "happiness", "work spirit" and other positive changes in work related behaviour perceived by management might be satisfactory enough.

The salary is normally the primary reason for why people work, but "other things", such as management, working environment and communication in the day-to-day work motivate and retain employees. Employees believe that corporate special events do create a nice working environment and lead to enhanced co-operation among employees and management. Besides, bonuses and commission are considered beneficial only to the individual while events provide an opportunity to celebrate and socialize with colleagues. For a company to gain the most favourable result out of corporate special events concerning work motivation the "event portfolio" should be carefully considered. It should preferably consist of a chain of events, and the events in this chain should be a combination of small events on a branch level and bigger events for all employees. There should also be a selection of different types of events so each and everyone is able to participate. Additionally, the events should not be held too frequently; there should be enough time in between for employees to look forward to the next event.

Management felt that information sometimes gets lost on the way from top to bottom in the organization, primarily due to many steps in the process of conveying information. Employees also experienced that they occasionally lack the necessary information needed for performing their jobs efficiently, or that the company values and policies provided in "glossy" brochures, is too superficial and distant to their reality, and consequently hard to relate to. Corporate special events offer an opportunity to eliminate or at least reduce

these communication problems. When planning corporate special events management should bear in mind the potential possibilities they possess, take advantage of these, and proactively implement corporate special events as a communication tool in their internal marketing strategies.

The model below, Figure 9, illustrates the relationship of IM with corporate special events. From the internal marketing perspective, corporate special events should be seen as a strategic tool to communicate the core corporate values and goals, and to motivate and retain employees by influence and direct their behaviour.
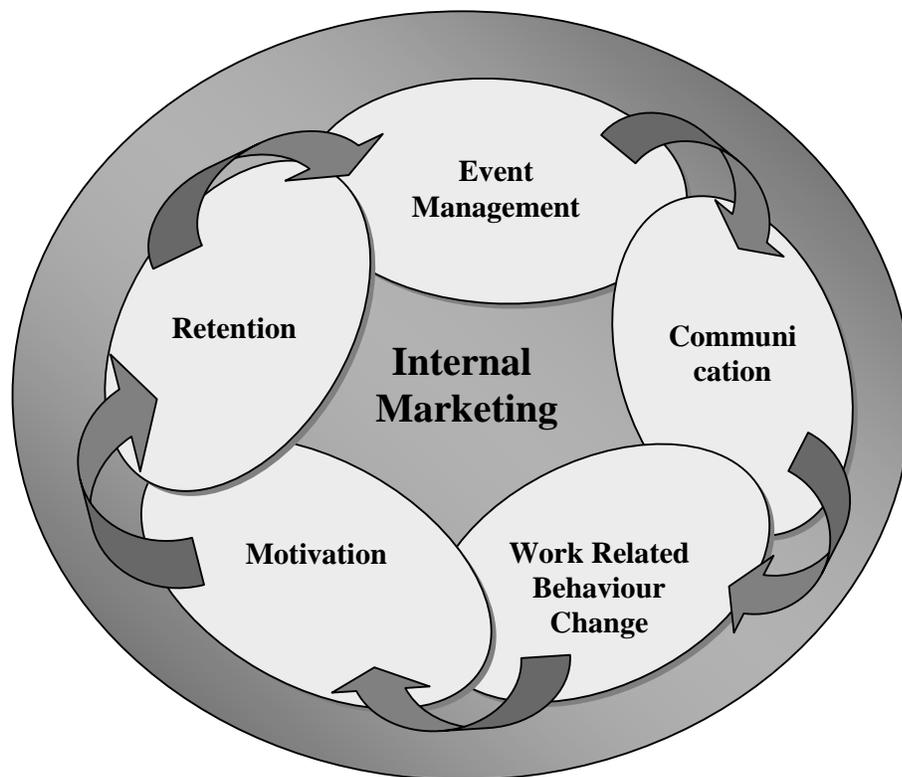
Figure 9: The IM Loop for Corporate Special Events
Source: Own elaboration

Before holding a corporate special event management should consider establishing its goals and objectives, and consequently the event theme should communicate the reasons for holding the event. The values or information communicated through the event should be tailored to fit the set objectives, which naturally may vary from event to event and from department to

department. The result of the communicated objectives will be visible to management through changes in work related behaviour. The positive change in the work related behavior might lead to increased work motivation, which can be prolonged through a proactive approach to event management and internal efforts. The motivation process should be continuous to keep employees motivated and to make them loyal to the company. The concept of the "IM loop" requires careful planning and well-structured strategies. The phases of the loop may overlap each other in the sense that, for example, motivation strategies might also be retention strategies.

This approach might not be applicable to all types of corporate special events, especially not to those that are considered "traditional", such as Christmas parties and other celebrations, on the other hand it might be very suitable for events combining "business with pleasure", for example events focusing on employee development, education and training. Often there is a mixture of purposes for holding a particular corporate special event. Take for instance Drakbåtsfestialen. The majority of companies claimed their participation in this event to be a tradition, however at the same time the event focuses on preventive healthcare, teambuilding, offers an opportunity for companies to profile and market themselves etc. Even if organizations might not consider these other potential benefits as vital it might be worthwhile taking them into account and utilizing all the possibilities the event possess.

Although organizational culture may play an important role in deciding what kind of corporate special events an organization holds, nevertheless the outcomes will be more or less the same regardless of the nature of the industry the organization operates within. Moreover, since events are perceived to create job satisfaction, increase communication and cooperation, and strengthen commitment and bonding, which are all elements of the social working environment, one might say that events have an impact on the shared value system, and consequently shape the culture of an organization.

In view of the fact that corporate special events do contribute to creating "social-glue-like effects" managers should consider such events as a powerful complementary strategy of control. Hence, the effects of corporate special events should not be left to chance; they should be proactively managed and considered valuable to reach company goals and objectives.

Further research

The field of corporate special events is a very broad and complex area, and due to limited time and resources, our study only covers a small part. In addition, since we consider our research as exploratory, the current findings can be taken as a basic ground to build up a better understanding of the corporate special event market and its effects on work motivation, employee retention, and other organizational issues. It would also be interesting to conduct a more specific and deeper case study on why corporate special events are not being measured and evaluated.

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8. APPENDIX

8.1 Appendix I: In-depth Interview Questions for Managers

1. How do you categorize events? What makes an event?

2. How many events a company should have in a year?

3. How many events do you have in a year?

4. Why do you think companies should be organizing events for the employees? (Purpose, goals and intentions).

5. Are they handled by the company or sourced out to professional event companies?

6. What Benefits do you see related to corporate special events?

7. How much did the company spend on events in 2002 and how much is expected in 2003? (A rough Idea)

8. Have you ever thought of ROI in terms of productivity, retention, happiness or well-being (quantitative/qualitative)?

9. How can companies spend so much money on events if they do not know, or are interested, in the effects of them?

10. Will companies actually achieve all the benefits stated in the marketing of event organizing companies?

11. Do employees really want and appreciate these kinds of company activities and events?

12. What Internal marketing strategies do you have?

13. a) How much money/effort is spent on internal marketing compare to the external marketing?
    b) Can events be seen as an internal marketing tool?

14. What strategies are used to motivate employees?

15. How do you as a manager know that an employee is being motivated?

16. What do you think about this? Do you have a reward system or incentive program for your employees? What do you support the most (i.e. Incentive or monetary rewards)?

17. What retention rate do you have in your organization?

18. What strategies do you use to maintain the retention rate/ keep a low turnover rate in your organization?

19. What is the culture in this company?

20. Who makes the culture?

21. How important it is for an organization?

22. Do you think it's a separate variable that can be controlled or you believe "everything is culture"?

23. Can you describe a typical or recent event? For example, what happens during an event? Power positions, jargon, symbolic games, stories, jokes, atmosphere etc.

24. Can you see any differences in the organization before and after the event? Motivation? Cooperation? Job satisfaction? Curiosity?

8.2 Appendix II: In-depth Interview Questions for Employees

1. What types of corporate special events is held at you company?

2. How many events do you company have in a year?

3. Why do you think companies should be organizing events for its employees?

4. What Benefits do you see related to corporate special events?

5. Do employees really want and appreciate these kinds of company activities and events? Have you any negative experiences?

6. How do you get informed about company policies, strategies and goals etc?

7. What motivates you at work?

8. How long have you stayed with the company, and why?

9. What is the culture in this company?

10. Who makes the culture?

11. How important it is for an organization?

12. Can you describe a typical or recent event? For example, what happens during an event? Power positions, jargon, symbolic games, stories, jokes, atmosphere etc.

13. Can you see any differences in the organization before and after the event? Motivation? Cooperation? Job satisfaction? Curiosity?

8.3 Appendix III: Tables

Most Frequent Mentioned Reasons for Holding Corporate Special Events
Drakbåtsfestivalen: Significant to Skanska and its employees
Management aware of Drakbåtsfestivalens importance
Decision is based more on feeling that measurement and calculations
Big event, Lot of employees interested
Event is good for external communication
Drakbåtsfestivalen seen as internal event
Get together during other circumstances than work
Creating job satisfaction
Good relationships among co-workers
Commitment and loyalty towards the company
To create a good social environment
To create a good team spirit
Develop one's network to create more business within the company
Appreciation from the company to make employees feel important
To make people feel involved
To make employees feel proud of the company
To strengthen the solidarity to the company
Events create good-will
'We hope to get a little reward at the end of the year'
'Events generate a lot of positive things', work spirit, motivation etc.
Nice to spend time with friends
Bring employees together, 'we are like gypsies'
Get updated on what's going on in the company
Annually recurring - longer lasting effects

Table 1:   *Reasons for organizing and holding events in organizations*

Effects of Corporate Special Events
Effects lasts a couple of weeks
Beneficial for short-term perspective
Chain of events would create an influence on daily work
New relationships built during events
Increased co-operation
Extra 'spice' to the daily work
Should not be seen as 'ultimate problem solvers'
'Something good' and 'something companies need to have'

Table 2: *Corporate Special Events and their effects*

Type of Strategies used by Different Managers to Motivate Employees
Appreciation
The salary
Good leadership
Fair treatment
Mainly a combination of communication and education
Education, means to provide necessary knowledge
Close dialogue between employees and managers for feedback and recognition
Knowledge among employees about the company
'KappAhl's soul' and 'the seven cornerstones'
Peab's six areas
Role of information to motivate employees
Projects – end result – pride
Status of the job decides what kind of reward employees prefer
Certain Sales goals to motivate
Competitions—good way to involve employees

Table 3: *Motivation Strategies*

Frequently Mentioned Outcomes of Motivation
Environment is friendly
Everyone is forthcoming
"one knows what's going on"
Recognition from the management
Everyone gets their share
Problem solving and freedom
Small things do matter and they "Cheer us up"
Unity among employees
Become open minded
Have well functioning dialogue between manager and employees

Table 4: *Outcomes of motivation*