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SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND LAW

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# Organizational Factors that Influence Creativity

- An Empirical Study of Small Advertising Agencies

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**“Creativity is intelligence having fun.” - Albert Einstein**

## FOREWORD

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We would like to thank the companies that agreed to be interviewed for the purpose of our education and bachelor thesis. We are very thankful for their hospitality and the great insight they offered when we were given the opportunity to speak with them. The interviews were the most exciting part of this work, and one of the best parts of our studies. We were delighted by the wisdom and pleased to have chosen a topic that was able to reveal so much depth and information. What we have learned we will value for our personal development and bring with us on our future journeys. Each conversation revealed interesting concepts and sparked new thoughts and ideas. We conclude that the people working in this industry are creative, wise, humble and kind. We truly appreciate every person we encountered through our case study and do not take the time and energy they spared for granted. The favor inspired us to pay the act of kindness forward by helping future students who may request our future insight. We send are sincere gratitude to:

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The CEO and Art Director of Company 4

## ABSTRACT

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Creativity is a vital tool in a knowledge based industry, which has shown itself to be ever increasing as the society shifts its focus on it. Creativity is a phenomenon which has proven itself valuable to the advertising industry. This concept is difficult to grasp and narrow down, yet of such importance for being competitive on the market, therefore this study aims to highlight the organizational factors that influence it. The question asked is what organizational factors influence creativity a small advertising agency. It can either be boosted through the factors present in the work environment, the individuals at the agency who compose the groups and thus the dynamic that emerges, the leader's role and characteristics, goals, their autonomy and freedom, available resources and work pressure. In addition it is essential to consider and shed light on impediments to creativity, within the group, organization and the leader's impact on the work process. This dictates how mistakes are handled and used for the company's development. Risks are a meaningful element in the advertising business and must be reflected upon. It is apparent that many factors are to be considered when evaluating what affects creativity, and none can be disregarded as they are all incorporated. They are highly interconnected. Agencies are sometimes limited due to their small size in having the room to take risks and daring to create something different. Interviews were conducted at four small advertising agencies to gather information to form a valid result and understanding of creativity's platform an organization. Theories relevant to the subject have been collected to aid this aim. A model has been formed to cover all the organizational factors, and structure the analysis.

Title: Organizational factors which influence creativity at a small advertising agency

Course: Management Bachelor, spring semester 2014

Question: What organizational factors influence creativity at a small advertising agency?

Authors: Jessica Bromander and Dijana Jakic

Target group: Small advertising agencies in Gothenburg

Thesis supervisor: Martin Selander

*Key Words: Creativity, Individual, Group, Organization, Advertising agency, Environment, Leader, Autonomy, Goals, Resources, Impediments.*

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

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What does a company need to do to make their products and services successful? They need attention, because attention creates awareness. It is not enough to solely create a great product or service, the target group must find out about it in order to consume the good. A road from the product/service to the customer must be built. The tools to create this communication line are marketing and advertising. (Baines et al., 2010)

## 1.1 ADVERTISING AND MARKETING

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Marketing and advertising allow a company to shape the image they wish to put forward and communicate to the world, David Ogilvy (2007, p. 7) once said astutely, "I do not regard advertising as entertainment or an art form, but as a medium of information" . It is the agency's task to deliver information in a way that the client desires consumer to perceive it. To create the best platform for this to happen, an effective communication line to the customer target, they often assign this task to an advertising agency. The agency sells a service to efficiently reach the target group through advertising. Their main tool to do this is through creativity; it is their competitive advantage to come up with something unique. This leads to the question of where creativity originates. Or rather what factors allow creativity to flourish? There are numerous aspects that can hinder this ability. Sometimes there is no room for it in assignments. An advertising agency's success lies in the client's success to bring their message forth.

## 1.2 CREATIVITY

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'Creative' indicates something to be unique, and its solutions to be irreplaceable, nothing could cause the same outcome. Creativity must be promoted, and the organizational conditions govern this. Each agency must carefully review or maintain an overview of the factors that boost or harm this essential tool.

The use of advertising serves an important purpose for businesses who want their message to come forth. The tool advertising agencies use to be able to create efficient advertising and marketing is creativity. Therefore it is important to study where creativity originates, how it is brought to live, and what threatens to kill it. Creativity is based on the "People, values, feelings, perceptions, opinions, motivation and biographies. An organization is not the physical facility within which it operates, it is the networks of people in it" (Ted Talks:



Robinson, 2006). The creative genius craves certain organizational conditions to be present or protected by.

### 1.3. DEFINITIONS

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Creativity: The use of imagination or original ideas to create something; inventiveness (Oxford Dictionary, 2014).

Art Director: The director in charge of the artistic features production (Dictionary.com, 2014).

Leader: The person who leads or commands a group, organization, or country (Oxford Dictionary, 2014).

Manager: A person responsible for controlling or administering an organization or group of staff (Oxford Dictionary, 2014).

Advertising: The activity or profession of producing advertisements for commercial products or services (Oxford Dictionary, 2014).

Copywriter: He or she is writing for the purpose of advertising and marketing a service or good (Adam Green, 2011).

Project: An individual or collaborative enterprise that is carefully planned to achieve a particular aim (Oxford Dictionary, 2014).

Project Leader: Project management; to delegate resources in order to pursue the aim of the assignment (Project Management Institute, 2014).

## 2. PURPOSE

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**The main question for this study is:**

### **What organizational factors influence creativity at a small advertising agency?**

Our aim is to highlight the factors from both the theoretical framework and by empirically researching what practices are used in real life. This we do in order to give a full overview of the factors influencing creativity in advertising.

We chose Sweden as the target of our study, because even though the country's relative small size, Sweden has the world's seventh largest per capita advertising investments (IRM International Advertising Market Statistics, 2012). Further, a study done by the Martin Prosperity Institute (2011), who conducts the Global Creativity Index, ranks Sweden as the most creative country in the world. This makes it interesting to look at the factors that spur creativity and what unique elements can be identified in Scandinavian organizational factors within advertising agencies.

### 2.1 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

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Our goal has never been to give a complete view of how creativity is formed and how organization's form impacts the company creativity. Instead this study aims to focus on what factors are different within the geographical demarcation of agency creativity. The region of choice is agencies within the city of Gothenburg, as a representation of advertising agencies across the nation. This study builds on limiting the companies for our empirical research not only to a small geographical area, the region of Gothenburg, but also to small enterprises. None of the companies in this study have more than ten employees; setting further boundaries to the study, giving a result that only will represent smaller enterprises.

Further, in this study we have chosen to disregard the financial situation of the companies, which could be a measure of their success. Instead our objective is to focus the factor that prompt or hurt creativity in their work process.

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## 3. METHOD

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

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In this section we will motivate how we have conducted the study, and describe the chosen methods to do so. This is done in order to create an overview of the study and its structure, and demonstrate from a scientific and practical perspective; which fabricate the thesis. We will explain what techniques we have decided to use and the choice of companies for our case. Finally, we will discuss the validity and reliability of the research we have gathered. We will justify our incentive to the have elected the purpose of the thesis.

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### 3.2 AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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This study aims to highlight, find patterns and insights to ‘controlling’ creativity from a management perspective. An exploratory research method allows us to examine these findings; therefore we have used empirical data and existing theoretical research as the basis of our analysis (Collis and Hussey, 2009). Our desire is not to give a concluding answer to the question of organizational creativity, rather our goal is to focus on a small and precise area of creative research that has not been previously executed, which dictates our choice to an exploratory approach (Collis and Hussey, 2009). Throughout the process, we have kept a critical point of view to the theoretical and empirical data we have collected. This is done in order to remain as scientific and truthful to the reality of the issue of the study (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Lastly, by doing an exploratory study, we have been allowed to adapt and develop our study throughout the process in order to enhance the quality of the final result (Blumberg et al., 2008).

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### 3.3 THE COMPANIES

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All the companies in our empirical research are small advertising agencies with no more than ten employees in each of them. We have tried to choose similar companies, because we believe this will give the fairest representation for the research area. We have contacted four companies, to conduct an interview with each CEO of the company and one employee with a creative role, to create a nuanced picture of the company (see appendix 1 for list of interviewees). Two of the four companies have chosen to be anonymous. We believe that this does not affect the result of our research, as their specific name is not relevant. All interviews with the CEOs were conducted at the company’s respective office. The employee interviews

were however done per telephone or in person; this due to availability issues, this will be further discussed in the validity section of this chapter.

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## 3.4 PRIMARY SOURCES

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### 3.4.1 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHOD

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#### WHY INTERVIEWS?

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In order to find relevant data that is of value for the purpose of the thesis, we decided to conduct interviews. The aim is to observe and realize how creativity is managed in reality and how it looks practically. By using interviews we are able to create a valid reflection on which practices are used in the daily work at the companies, this enables us to draw conclusions based on the sample (Blumberg et al., 2008). The choice to use interviews is simple; we believe that it is not possible to quantify the meaning of creativity and what impact leadership has on it, without losing important nuances. Qualitative data is used to describe in detail what the situation of a specific research topic looks like (Bryman and Bell, 2011). However, by only using a qualitative research method it becomes more difficult to draw direct conclusions and analyze the empirical data, as well as the secondary sources of theories used (Collis and Hussey, 2009).

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#### INTERVIEW TECHNIQUE AND QUESTIONS

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In-line with our choice to have use an exploratory research method, we have used the recommended interview technique, semi-structured interviews, for this type of research (Blumberg et al., 2008). Semi-structured interviews allow both us as researchers to get the information we are looking for, but also give the interviewee room to freely develop their own thoughts on the subject, and therefore give more depth to the interview (Blumberg et al., 2008). The semi-structured approach is particularly important to use, as we have more than one company as subject to our case study, which allows us to create a scientific and reliable perception of the empirical data (Blumberg et al. 2008).

We opt for open-ended questions and try to avoid influencing the answers (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008; Blumberg et al., 2008). This we try to maneuver by being aware of how we ask the questions and the wording. Certain words different people attach different meanings to. Prior to conducting the interviews, we have decided to test the questions on a person who unbiased and not involved in the process, this in order to check how the questions may be interpreted or misunderstood (Kvale et al., 2010). If the wording does not serve the purpose

but misleads or confuses the person, this test person can give us insight to these possible mishaps, which allows us, correct and be more prepared for the real encounter, as well as prevent us from losing important information and protect from miscommunication or abrupt awkward interruptions. We construct categories of questions, with sub-questions, in case the answer to the broad questions skips certain aspects that relate to the questions (Kvale et al., 2010). We prepare in advance with additional sub-questions, in case the person being interviewed has very short, precise answers and does not speak freely or not understand the question. We formed these questions with the hopes that they allow us establish a flow in the interview, in case it proves itself not to come naturally (Kvale et al., 2010). The questions in the interviews were based on the theoretical framework we gathered and based on our own thoughts evoked by theories and personal discussions on the topic, that are in line with the aim of this study.

To have consistency in each interview, we chose to have the same person interview every time in order to be able to compare the responses as easily as possible. Each interview was, with consent, recorded and transcribed, in order to not miss details in what the respondents said (Bryman and Bell, 2011; Blumberg et al., 2008; Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). This allowed us to go back and validate each interview word by word, which increased the reliability of the entire study.

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### 3.5 SECONDARY SOURCES

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To find scientific theories that present models and information already realized by prior research, we searched libraries, journals and online databases. The process of collecting relevant and most recent, as well as the most notable theories and authors' research has been continues. We have throughout the entire development of this study added and reviewed literature connected to the study's purpose. Our aim has been to see where prevalent research can explain the phenomenon we saw during our empirical study, as well as strengthen the scientific credibility and purpose of the study (Blumberg et al., 2008).

The litterateur we have used is in various fields of research studies, such as creativity, corporate culture, leadership et cetera. We have primarily used Gothenburg University library databases, by searching for key words as 'creativity', 'creative leadership', and 'organizational creativity' and so on, from which we have deducted the most meaningful studies and authors for our thesis, e.g. Teresa Amabile (see chapter Theoretical Framework).

Our research has not only been focused on theories regarding organizational form and creativity only in the advertising business, instead we have also chosen to look at each part of the study outside of this specific business area, in order to create a broad yet in depth theoretical base for our analysis and empirical discussion.

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### 3.6 ANALYSIS

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After having gathered relevant theories and conducted the interviews, comparisons are made based on the empirical findings to what the theoretical framework suggests. Based on these results, thoughts and conclusions are formulated with the ambition to spark new information. In order to do this, a model has been constructed which specifies the different factors in an organization that govern the platform of which creativity can either thrive on or fails to flourish within. The model is based on the theoretical framework, by using the models which have been presented in the chapter, as well as the data that has been collected. It is the foundation for the model to which more categories and scales have been added that supplement and complement its purpose in order to make it as useful and truthful for advertising agencies.

Each point is discussed and reflected upon, as all topics are essential for creativity's potential and are highly intervene with one another. Different perspective are set into considerations, what the interviewees all claimed to be true, and thus the common denominators, as well as the differences that made themselves known. The questions asked during the interview all serve valuable insight, and based on these answers and the theories, a platform for valid observations is made, where reflections and conclusions can be formed, that are inspired by thoughts and ideas that appear during the process.

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### 3.7 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

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To make sure that the results of this study are as truthful and scientifically ethical as possible, we have throughout the entire process been consistent in our methods, as this increases the reliability of the outcome (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008; Collis and Hussey, 2009). By being consistent, if any other researcher would repeat the same study, they would reach the same results. Examples of this is can be seen in the interview questions, as every CEO has been asked the same questions, as well as each employee we have interviewed. The same person has also conducted each interview. We are however aware that the method of

executing the employee interviews has been different; some in person while other by telephone.

Further, we have tried to obtain validity by consistently recording and transcribing each interview, so that the quality and accuracy of each of our interviews is coherent. Each step of the process of the study has been made in order to make our results as measurable as possible, which creates a realistic base for the analysis (Blumberg et al., 2008).

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### 3.8 METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTION

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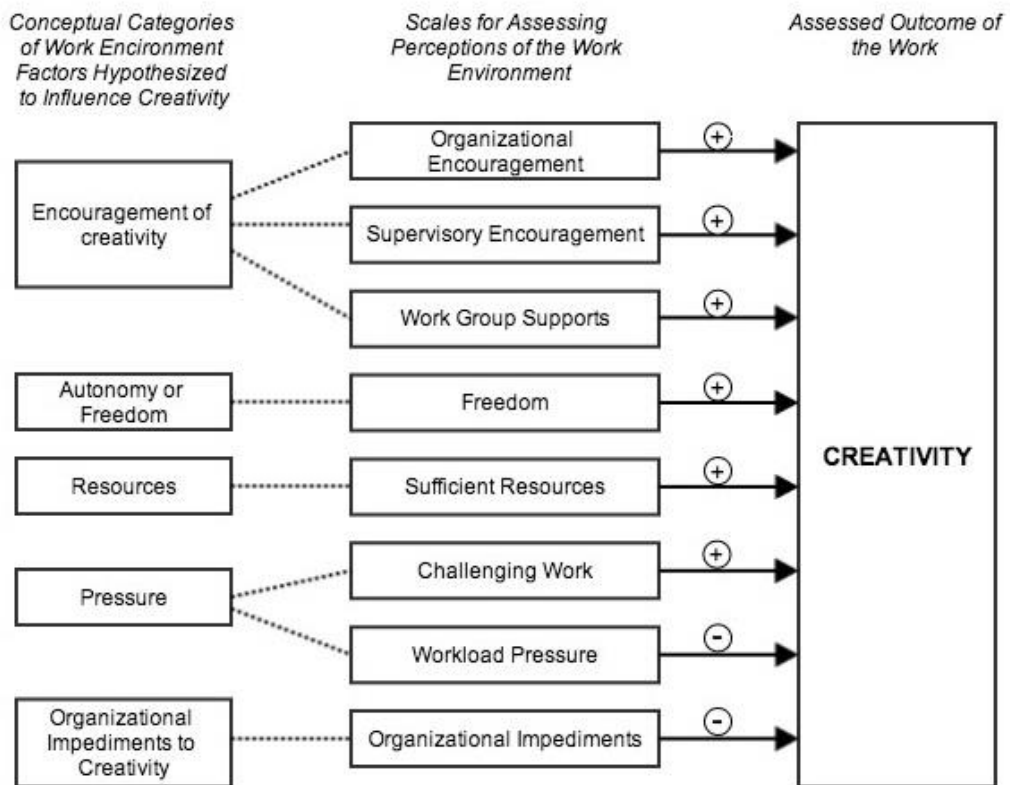
While our aim to keep this study as truthful and scientific as possible, there are some factors that may have influenced the credibility of this study. We have had the opportunity to interview four companies as a sample of the small advertising agencies in Gothenburg; this therefore limits us to the results of the interviews conducted with our sample. As all of these interviews were conducted during a short period of time, it also only gives a snapshot of the situation at that very moment. Whether this is a fair view of small advertising agencies at all times, in all of Sweden becomes then debatable. Due to the time limitation of the thesis, we were only able to have four companies at the basis of the research. This also affects the results and broadness, and therefore also the truthfulness of the study.

As all companies who participated in this study were aware that a few of their competitors also were a part of the study, and therefore also would be able to read the results. Consequently, this could have influenced their answers, both from the managerial staff as well as the creators. Further, since the interviews were all conducted in Swedish, and we have then translated them ourselves, which means that some things are lost in translation and could also affect the understanding of the reader.

## 4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 4.1 A MODEL FOR CREATIVITY

As the basis of our theoretical framework we use Amabile et al. (1996) model of assessing factors that influence creativity. This model has the main conceptual categories: Encouragement of Creativity, Autonomy or Freedom, Resources, Pressures and Organizational Impediments to Creativity; see figure 1 below (Amabile et al., 1996). The scales depicted (organizational encouragement, supervisory encouragement, work group support, freedom, sufficient resources, challenging work, workload pressures and organizational impediments) are assumed to be positively related to creativity and are called “stimulant scales”, while those negatively correlated are named “obstacle scales” (Amabile et al., 1996). All factors are listed to either lead towards creativity or hinder it (Amabile et al., 1996).



FIGUR 1: CONCEPTUAL MODEL UNDERLYING ASSESSMENT OF PERCEPTIONS OF THE WORK ENVIRONMENT OF CREATIVITY (AMABILE ET AL., 1996)



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#### 4.1.2 MOTIVATION FOR USING THIS IN THE CONTEXT OF MANAGEMENT

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We have used this model as the basis of our case; the categories with the appurtenant scales cover the main points of the topic. The structures with the set up points form a credible overview that is straightforward. The study that gave form to the model was conducted in 1996. Since then, more research and information has been devoted to the subject, therefore we have used new and more current data to complement and develop the content of the model in order to make the model more up-to-date and relative to current research. We have also used older, more subject significant theories, though they are older, their content has by no standards any less significance today. This also enables the proper conditions for a valid analysis and conclusion for the purpose of the study.

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### 4.2 CONCEPTUAL MODEL UNDERLYING ASSESSMENT OF PERCEPTIONS OF THE WORK ENVIRONMENT OF CREATIVITY

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#### 4.2.1 ENCOURAGEMENT OF CREATIVITY

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Encouragement of creativity is the broadest dimension, and appears to occur in three subcategories; organizational encouragement, supervisory encouragement and work group supports (Amabile et al., 1996). Each of these, if used effectively, is a source for motivation, which itself exists in two forms; extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, where the latter is more powerful (Amabile, 1998).

#### EXTRINSIC VERSUS INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Extrinsic motivation is most commonly the root of problems in the organizational world. This type of motivation comes outside the person, often either financial compensation or the threat of being fired (Amabile, 1998). This can often come to hurt the process, as the people in question feel bribed or controlled, Amabile (1998) goes on to say that money does not necessarily stop people from being creative, but in many situations it does not help to increase creativity.

On the other hand there are passions and interests, elements of a person's internal desire that is intrinsic motivation (Amabile, 1998). When this is the case, people engage into the challenges as a form of enjoyment, this is believed to be the major factor of creativity. Amabile (1998) explains that if an individual is motivated by money, hence extrinsic motivation, he or she is likely to solve the problem as it has been done before, choosing the fastest and most obvious way. This approach will probably be unimaginative, and will not

create new insights. When it comes to intrinsic motivation the worker is comfortable taking his or her time with the project, they do not mind since they enjoy the process. Through this technique they may explore different aspects. This journey is more likely to include mistakes and be more time consuming. However, once a solution is found, after many dead-ends, it will likely be more interesting and fruitful. The business will be able to thrive on such results and achieve a competitive advantage, as their findings are unique and difficult to imitate by competitors. (Amabile, 1998)

#### ORGANIZATIONAL ENCOURAGEMENT

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This scale refers to the encouragement of risk taking, where they value innovation in all levels of management (Kimberley and Evanisko, 1981; Hennessey and Amabile 2010). Useful ideas have been known to appear when someone feels like they are welcomed to do so by the situation (Hennessey and Amabile, 2010). Ideas should be evaluated fairly and encouraged, whilst harsh criticism undermines one's motivation (Amabile et al.,1990; Zhou and George 2001). Recognition and rewards promote creativity but not if an individual participates in the activity only to receive the award. However, it is promising if this is considered a 'bonus' that affirms the good work (Amabile, 1993). Collaborative idea flow is meaningful because the probability increases for creative ideas as exposure to other equal ideas increases (Mumford, 2011).

Increasing one's knowledge and skills is an important factor, and also keeps the work interesting. This process allows new connections to be made (Epstein et al., 2013). It is the manager's task to provide the employees with training in topics outside their current expertise (Epstein et al., 2013). Most people have poor memory skills, and underestimate how easily the ideas can be lost if they are not recorded right away, this is especially important for unusual ideas. Successful individuals are known to go to great lengths to capture the fleeting ideas that could result in something extraordinary. The manager should enforce the importance of this and encourage them to do so and provide tools that aid the process of capturing ideas (Epstein et al, 2013). By using this technique many more ideas appear than what would have been otherwise (Epstein, 1996). Skunk Works (design department of American aircraft and technology company, Lockheed Martin) engineering facility enabled this by allowing their workers to write on the walls (Miller, 1995 as cited in Epstein et al., 2013). Many companies make it a habit to have screen savers that remind the employee to record ideas before they disappear, as well as other forms of reminders such as labeling pens and stickers with this message (Epstein et al., 2013). The idea is to create an interesting

physical and social environment and change it from time to time to remain creative (Epstein et al., 2013).

### SUPERVISORY ENCOURAGEMENT

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Studies reveal that the role of the manager is vital in the areas of goal clarity, open interactions between manager and subordinates, and the supervisory support of the ideas the team comes up with and decide to pursue (Hennessey and Amabile, 2010). Ideas and initiatives that originate from the employees themselves have a larger success rate (Amabile and Khaire, 2008). The most effective task a manager can complete is to match people with the right assignments (Amabile, 1998). In order to create a good match, the manager must possess rich and detailed information about the employees and the assignment. Good matches are rare, because this process is time consuming and requires effort. Amabile (1998) claims that creativity can emerge and thrive when the manager lets people decide how to complete a project or task. However they do not need to let the employee choose what project or task. Further it is important to have clearly defined strategic goals as they often improve worker's creativity (Amabile, 1998)

In regards to creativity within the field of design, a successful leader positively influence this defining factor, through the effect of their own characteristic regarding innovation, being a source of critical input (West et al, 2003; Elenkov and Manev, 2005; Kisfalvi and Pitcher, 2005). When the leader's values are creativity, his or her followers are familiar by this, they become inspired and motivated by what thrives the leader him/herself. Through this attitude that the leader embodies they can transfer the values to the employees, who accept them as their own. The leader acts as a role model who thrives and whose character serves as an inspiration to the subordinates (Elenkov and Manev, 2005).

Managers are busy people, but in the midst of their responsibilities they should be aware that praising subordinates for their work is an important factor for sustaining the passion they possess for their work. The worker needs the validation, to see that their efforts matter and make a difference to the organization. Namely, encouragement has many more forms than rewards and punishments. This sets successful managers apart from regular ones; they generously and freely recognize great work rather than limit themselves to only offering extrinsic rewards (Amabile, 1998). If they encourage positive breakthroughs rather than focus on failures, such as rewarding workers when they succeed and do not put attention on moves

that lead to dead ends. They should also boost for collaborations between departments in order to evolve, which promotes success for the company (Amabile, 1998).

### WORK GROUP SUPPORTS

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Encouragement within the group is positive when there is the diversity of team member's background, mutual excitement for the idea, and openness to one another (Styhre and Sundberg, 2005). The diversity can expose people to a greater variety of new ideas, and a positive sense of challenge as well as focus (Amabile and Khaire, 2008). By promoting environments of cultural and environmental variance, further complexity is added to collective creativity, thus creating further opportunities for solving problems and creating new ideas (Amabile and Khaire, 2008).

According to the Generativity Model theory (see Appendix 2 for overview of the theory) new ideas and behavior appear as former ideas and behaviors become interconnected overtime (Epstein, 1999). Steve Jobs, famously proclaimed 'Creativity is just connecting things' (Wired Magazine, 1996). All in all, the manager should keep in mind how he or she build groups and interact with them at work. Amabile (1998) claims that creativity should not just survive in an organization but thrive to assure desired success. Many ideas which are creative within the work environment appear in the exchange of groups as a collective effort, when individuals interact it triggers ideas, dialogues, and such serve as inspiration and a birthplace of ideas (Chen, 2006; Hennessey, 2003). The interactions are based on the genuine interest to understand and learn on a deeper level. This is enabled when people work together with ambition to add small pieces that together form a whole (Catmull, 2008; Hirst et al., 2009).

The design of the team is crucial; they must also be mutually supportive. Different expertise and creative thinking styles combined have the capability to create useful ideas (Amabile, 1998). Collective creativity creates more opportunities and possibilities for improvement as each problem can be seen from a different perspective in the group (Amabile and Khaire, 2008). Diversity is only a starting point. The group also requires an excitement of the goal they share and support one another during the process, as well as recognize each other's knowledge and take on the problem to get the most out of the process. Yet, it is common that manager form homogenous groups, they usually come up with solutions quickly and get along well. However, this method does not advance the workers perspective and allow the company to evolve (Amabile, 1998). The groups also benefit if the size is rather small as interaction between each individual within group naturally is larger (Amabile, 1998). It is important to

create an atmosphere where one feels comfortable to disagree, allowing creative personalities to emerge (Amabile, 1998).

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#### 4.2.2 AUTONOMY OR FREEDOM

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##### FREEDOM

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Research has shown that creativity is promoted when a person or a team has a sense of ownership and control over their work and their ideas, because this creates freedom (Amabile and Gryskiewicz, 1989; Runco, 2004). The creativity is fostered when individuals feel that they have the choice in how they wish to work towards the result (Amabile and Gryskiewicz, 1989).

It has been established that freedom is required for creativity to be able to thrive, but this freedom can be mismanaged. There are two common ways in which this can occur, the manager changes goals frequently or if goals are not defined clearly. In turn the employee feels lost within the freedom that was granted to him or her (Amabile, 1998). The manager set the final goals, but allows great autonomy and freedom to make their own decisions to get there (Amabile, 1998).

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#### 4.2.3 RESOURCES

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##### SUFFICIENT RESOURCES

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Efficient resource allocation is seen to positively affect creativity. Aside from the obvious constraints that limited or no resources can cause practically, availability of resources has shown itself to make a favorable impression on a person's intrinsic motivation (Runco, 2004). In regards to resources, the main ones are most often time and money, the manager handles the decision to however much of the resources will be spared, this is a crucial judgment call and can either lift or damage the project and the possibility for creativity (Amabile, 1998)

Creativity is highly constrained by available resource according to Robert Epstein (2013) for creative expression to be possible. Resources and timetables that allow subordinates to create new methods and products are necessary (Epstein et al, 2013). The manager must be sensitive to the circumstances that dictate the meaning of time, if there is a deadline that is fake or too short, it will cause stress and distrust. The manager must respect that creativity takes time, but at some instances, time crunches, can be effective, such as if the workers know that a competitors is launching a product within a short time span, this increases their motivation, as the sense of challenge is heightened. A common mistake in allocating resources is if they

limit them, people will use their creativity efforts into finding additional resources rather than developing a new service or product (Amabile, 1998). It is an important responsibility to issue the right amount of the resources that are available, a very tricky matter, as too much does not increase the likelihood of success, while an insufficient amount of resources dampens creativity (Amabile, 1998).

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#### 4.2.4 PRESSURES

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Pressure can have paradoxical effects on creativity, although extreme pressure tends to hurt creativity but a degree of pressure could create a sense of urgency and the challenge motivates people to work hard (Amabile, 1988; Amabile and Grysiewicz, 1987). The two forms of pressure loads are divided up to either 'excessive workload' and 'challenge', the first being negative to the process (especially if workers have the sense it has been imposed as tool to control) while the second heightens the possibility for creative solutions (Conti et al., 1993; Amabile, 1993).

The manager has the task to assign challenges (Epstein et al., 2013). These challenges should be difficult with ambitious goals in mind, all while the manager has the responsibility to help them handle the stress that comes as a result of it (Epstein et al, 2013). Challenges forces people to think in new ways. A famous example of this is the manager Thomas Edison who required his employees to come up with a minor invention every ten days and one major one every six months (Lally and Michalko, 1996; Dyer and Martin, 2006). Open-ended goals can increase creativity and productivity, sometimes by fifty percent or more, depending on what the perimeters look like (Epstein, 1996). However, according to Amabile (1998), they can also confuse the worker.

Amabile (1998) argues that the manager has a vital role in fostering creativity such as making excellent matches, all while pushing their capabilities. Yet the gap between the employees' actual knowledge, capabilities and potential should not be too big. Some employees may even be unsure at first but through the process their passion and growth sparks and creativity can flourish (Amabile, 1998)

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#### 4.2.5 ORGANIZATIONAL IMPEDIMENTS TO CREATIVITY

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Rigid management methods are perceived as harmful for creativity, they can embody controlling factors; this category aims to highlight the negative influences companies can have on creativity (Kimberly and Evanisko, 1981; Amabile et al. 1996).

It is important to within the company refrain from being skeptical and issue harsh criticism to new ideas, or if the idea does not receive a response for a long time. Not all ideas should or can be realized but such approaches cripple creative expression (Amabile, 1998). Many company cultures tend to criticize new suggestions, rather than to further explore possibilities that they bring and expand the ideas. If a creative atmosphere is favored, a climate of fear should be avoided, where workers are anxious of how their ideas may be perceived it hinders their expression and courage to discover innovative products (Amabile, 1998). The manager should keep in mind that it is difficult to judge beforehand if an idea will succeed or be a failure. By pursuing an idea, it may be very enlightening and eventually lead to the winning idea (Amabile, 1998). Knowing what does not work comes hand in hand with knowing what does work. Companies should recognize “failure value”, and incorporate this into the organizational culture; the intrinsic motivation will thrive as a result (Amabile, 1998). It is rather important to accept failure as a natural process of the system and try to capitalize on it by encouraging learning from mistakes. Mistakes can facilitate opportunities (Amabile and Khaire, 2008)

Managers have imperatives, e.g. financial incentives, that they must follow, which often kill creativity, therefore hurting the very imperatives that managers are driven and controlled by. Ironically the managers in question do not intend or want to hinder creativity, on the contrary, they believe in creativity (Amabile, 1998). Amabile (1998) claims that during her extensive research, she has seen creativity getting killed more often than it gets supported. This observation suggests the importance of focusing on this topic to recognize the barriers to creativity. Time crunches can sometimes prompt people to work harder and be motivated to be creative, but this is only true for short period of time, or else the risk is that workers will be run-down or feel tricked into doing more work than earlier agreed upon (Amabile, 1998). Policies and politics can also stand in the way, if the ideas have to follow a list of orders before it can be considered, or if the ideas do not get a response. Leaders have a responsibility to protect the creative process from interruption, by creating structures that support the collective and the collaboration by avoiding excessive bureaucracy (Amabile and Khaire, 2008). Another factor is the social climate, if workers are engaged in forming social groups and gossiping, their energy will be directed towards these activities rather than coming up with new ideas and products (Amabile, 1998).

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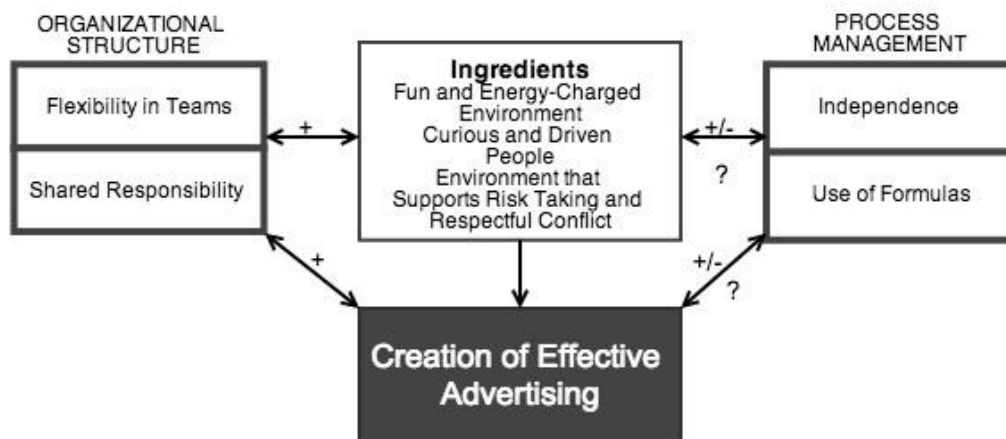
## 4.3. ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE AD CREATION PROCESS

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### 4.3.1. INTRODUCTION

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The model of ‘Elements of an Effective Ad Creation Process’ point out the factors, which are unique to the advertising industry (Oliver and Ashley, 2012). We have chosen to include this model to address what is especially true in this line of business, i.e. advertising. People, who produce ideas for advertising, are charged with the incentive to find creative ways to solve the problems the clients has (Oliver and Ashley, 2012). The model has main categories, which are ‘organizational structure’ that includes ‘flexibility in teams’ and ‘shared responsibility’. In addition the ‘process management’ is studied which focuses on ‘independence’ and the ‘use of formulas’, depending on how these factors are implemented they can either hurt or lift the solution to the clients request for advertising, see figure 2 below. Together they make up the ingredients for the creation of effective advertising (Oliver and Ashley, 2012).



FIGUR 2: ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE AD CREATION PROCESS (OLIVER AND ASHLEY, 2012)

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### 4.3.2 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

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The organizational structure dictates the flexibility in team and the sense of shared responsibility for ideas they come up with (Oliver and Ashley, 2012). The flexibility that the leader allows makes the employees feel like they can work clearly to satisfy the needs of the client. The leader must include everyone in being creative and make everyone a part of the findings, hence the openness and collaboration that occurs internally at the company (Oliver and Ashley, 2012), a culture that embraces these values and a physical space that fosters creativity. Through interactions, one person may recognize the potential of someone else’s idea that would have otherwise been overlooked. (Oliver and Ashley, 2012). The shared



responsibility for ideas is promoted by giving each person credit for the capacities they have proven, though the leader should avoid putting too much focus on individuals or more experienced workers. Instead an open environment encourages everyone to make a contribution (Oliver and Ashley, 2012).

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### 4.3.3 PROCESS MANAGEMENT

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The leader has the responsibility to set standards high, and keep people stimulated in their work (Oliver and Ashley, 2012). This is enabled by pushing employees and let them expand their talent, which creates self-confidence (Oliver and Ashley, 2012). A supportive environment supports the likelihood for people to take risks (Oliver and Ashley, 2012). Whether formulas should be used is a debated topic, some argue for the use of it while others do not, and fear that implementing such would hurt the creative flow. Research exists which suggest that problem solving is framed by procedures, information and restrictions (Mumford, 2000), while other creative thought processes may require more freedom (Oliver and Ashley, 2012). The fun and energy charged environment, suggests positive energy and a place staffed with driven and naturally curious people, which welcomes risk-taking creativity. Rick Boyko (1993 as cited in Oliver and Ashley, 2012, p. 340) claims: “Advertising should be fun. When you are having fun, you are more likely to do your best and boldest work”. When recruiting employees, individuals who are intrinsically motivated and curious are the best fit for the industry (Oliver and Ashley, 2012). Without taking risks one may create bland ads that do not stick out (Oliver and Ashley, 2012). Research has even shown that more risk taking has a correlation to better, more successful and even award winning advertising (El-Murad and West, 2003). Jeff Goodby (1992, as cited in Oliver and Ashley, 2012, p. 341) sums risk taking up by recommending to “...dare each other to take risks and attempt outlandish things and then offer the moral support that makes it all seem reasonable.”. Now and then creative people are shot down, in these situations the leader must step in and pick them up, strengthen their confidence so they can be sent back out again (Oliver and Ashley, 2012). A leader should truly believe in the path they have set out on, and gather talented people who share the passion, preferably ones that are better than the leader, too (Red, 2007 as cited in Oliver Ashley, 2012, p. 341). The leader must be prepared “to let them fail. If they know they can, more often than not they will not they won’t” (Red, 2007 as cited in Oliver Ashley, 2012, p. 341). Talented people take pride in their accomplishments, and react by pushing themselves to reach new heights (Runco, 1997).

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## 5. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

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Below we will briefly present each company for the reader to gain a better overview of the sources where we gathered our empirical data. Stating who they are, which is followed by a summary and examples from the findings we made. The results are divided into the following categories: culture, goal setting, group structure, creativity, motivation and rewards, and finally mistakes and risk taking. We will to emphasize both the similarities and differences we recognized among the respondents' statements. The categories' structure aims to facilitate for the reader, creating an overview that enables an understanding of the results we collected, seeing how the companies operate. This structure follows our interview guide, where we have intentionally avoided following the exact structure of the theoretical framework in order to keep an open attitude while conducting interviews, with the ambition to make observations and see information we would have otherwise missed.

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### 5.1 THE COMPANIES

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All companies are small, with no more than ten people, and are located centrally, within the city walls (Vallgraven) in Gothenburg. Each office, where the interview was conducted, was open spaced and decorated accordingly with carefully selected elements which complemented their style and physical work environment.

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#### COMPANY 1 (ANONYMOUS)

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This is the youngest of all the companies, and is also the smallest with only five employees, where one is on parental leave. This company differentiates themselves by focusing on corporate social responsibility within advertising, wanting to step away from traditional consumption pattern that can be found in the marketing industry (company website, non-disclosed; 2014, interview). Our interview is conducted with the CEO, co-owner and founder of the company. She also works as the Creative Director at the firm. We failed to interview an employee as she was parental leave at the time of our study.

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#### NYLA DESIGN

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This company is four years old. They describe themselves as being able to make both stylish and smart solutions for their clients (Nyla Design, 2014) [own translation]. The business is operated by the founder and single owner, Caroline Eriksson. Aside from being in charge of the company, she is also one of two project managers and Art Directors at the company. The second interview was with the other project manager and Copywriter, Karin Hellström.

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## FRANK AND EARNEST

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As an award nominated company, Frank and Earnest have been in the business since 1998. They stand out as being the oldest company in our research. The CEO is Petter Wetteus although he claims that this position he considers to be secondary in his daily work. Instead he emphasizes his role as a creator (Peter Wetteus, 2014, interview). Our second interview is conducted with Eva-Lena Wingsjö, project manager at the company.

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## COMPANY 4 (ANONYMOUS)

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This is a steady and growing firm, which focuses on strategic branding and communications (company website, non-disclosed; 2014, interview). The company is also the largest in size with ten employees. We interviewed the company's CEO, who has a history in copywriting, as well as one of the company's Art Directors.

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## 5.2 EMPIRICAL RESULTS

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### 5.2.1 CULTURE

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All the companies we have investigated are small in size, the largest of them having ten employees and the smallest five. This has allowed everyone at the respective agencies to know each other's very well, both professionally and personally. All the offices were constructed to form an open work space, where the work groups are seated so they are naturally gathered. The CEO of each company was seated among the staff, at first glance it is not apparent who the manager of the company is. Petter Wetteus at Frank and Earnest explains that the staff should not have to report to a 'higher office', each person has their area of responsibility and are considered experts in his or her field. The small size of the companies enables an opportunity for inclusiveness; no one is on their own. It is valuable for the work process, because they know each other's strengths and capabilities and thus are able to allocate them accordingly for the best result. Karin Hellström, the employee at Nyla Design said that this also caused them to care about one another, and that they are always ready to help each other out, the sense of being a team was mediated by this closeness that naturally appears through the small size.

Each of the respondents mentioned that it is their ambition to keep an open dialogue during the work process; this is aided by the familiarity that is present at the companies. The dialogue allows for new thoughts and ideas to be set into place, where everyone becomes part of the creativity sequence, one person contributes with one detail that gets the 'ball rolling' as

someone else adds to it with their details to eventually create a 'whole'. A random statement has the power to spark thoughts and ideas that lead the company forward, in this respect there is practically no unnecessary comment, Petter Wetteus at Frank and Earnest explained. Emphasis was put on the pleasure they had while working; every company gave examples of how they have a lot of fun during work. The CEO at Company 1 gives an example of that they try to keep a lively discussion going, where everyone is welcome to voice their opinions about all kinds of topics. Company 1 and Company 4 have a system of spreading information and inspiration they have come upon and sense could be of interests to others as well. This could be regard an article, an exhibition etc. At Company 4 this has even been formally set into place by an 'inspiration e-mail' that is sent to everyone at the agency.

All the companies explain that they have a humble attitude towards the job and the client. Peter Wetteus at Frank and Earnest says that the term 'home' describes their culture; this mind set is complemented by their choice of interior. What all companies had in common is that they all try to involve everyone in all their working processes that currently concern the company, creative input can appear from anyone even people who do not have this as their main task. The company is not prestigious in this sense that everyone is welcome to contribute in any area; no formal positions or system keeps them from doing so. The small size of the companies enables this opportunity of inclusiveness. The CEO of Company 4 says that they try to keep an open attitude, which allows for easier collaborations within the team and in turn towards the client.

The companies have allowed the culture to be formed on its own, through the personalities who compose the company. The company is made up individuals who in turn form groups that are based on the chemistry that appears when they are brought together, this chemistry is what governs the culture and sets them apart from other groups and their dynamic. To know each other's well enables trust in one another and allows for efficient work, tasks can be distributed and employees are trusted to complete their task and no superior person has to be set in charge of a project to directly monitor that work must be enforced or a need for rules. In addition, as mentioned before, when employees are comfortable with one another they are more likely to share their views and opinions and not feel intimidated to do so. Peter Wetteus at Frank and Earnest explains that when a designer proposes an idea, it is as if one is exposing themselves, which is why an assenting environment is essential. The idea that is proposed is very personal, because the ideas are not generic answers to a problem that anyone could have thought of. That person has come up with something on their own, drawing from their own

personal experience and personality to create it and come forward with it. When this very idea is attacked, it is as if their personality and personal experience is attacked, where the idea originated from, a safe and familiar environment therefore becomes necessary to allow for creativity to take form.

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## 5.2.2 GOAL SETTING

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Financial goals are of great importance to the companies; they all emphasize this as the basis of the business's survival. However we have observed that the objectives of these financial goals differ. Company 1, Nyla Design and Company 4 find this to be a crucial factor for them to be able to grow larger, gaining financial strength and expanding the group. While Frank and Earnest, who were once a larger in size, recently scaled down their operations by dramatically cutting their size. Today they are barely half the size they were before the reconstruction. Peter Wetteus explains that for them, their previous size was difficult to handle, saying that they were neither large nor small as a company. It is namely so that large companies can take on large projects on a global scale while small companies can tackle smaller projects. While they were a medium sized company, by industry standards, a lot of big expenses were created so they were pushed towards competing for larger accounts. However, the corporations with the larger accounts were themselves often big operations, and did not identify Frank and Earnest as a match, being too small but also too big for small accounts. He further explains that it was his responsibility as the CEO to find accounts and work that was right for their company, and therefore they made the conscious decision to become a smaller company.

Apart from the financial goals, they have creative ambitions. Each company stated that they do have an incentive of how they want to be perceived and profiled by their existing and potential clients. Each project has its own goal, the art director at Company 4 explains, since advertising agencies most often are project driven. Each goal is unique to the project; therefore it was difficult to formulate a certain goal they aim for when we asked if they have any goals at the company. Nyla Design suggested that perhaps they should consider setting up goals they work for, but have not done so yet. Caroline Eriksson, the CEO, says it is difficult to consider financial results as a measurement of how well they are doing, since many independent factors influence this number. Instead they consider conducting a client survey to see how satisfied they are, which would be more valuable and accurate measurement for them. As the CEO of Company 1 explains “An advertising agency is the sum of the products

and experiences one has achieved during its existence” [own translation]. It is understood that their portfolio of work is also their own advertising towards clients they deal with or may encounter in the future, their achievements communicate what they are and how they work, which is important to keep in mind. Peter Wetteus at Frank and Earnest also says that with new clients it is important to create trust, saying that clients at first are suspicious and that their ideas are received with skepticism, and a “healthy dose of it” [own translation]. This is where the company has to build a stable relationship on a good foundation of trust in order to mediate the ideas successfully and assure of its potential they believe in.

Frank and Earnest as well as Company 4 use a company specific formula to reach these creative ambitions. They exist in form of a recipe that is used to tackle and plan each project step by step. This is meant to give guidelines and a schedule for each project, both to the team and the client. The two other companies, Company 1 and Nyla Design however do not have a formal system that governs the work process ahead of them. Peter Wetteus at Frank and Earnest emphasized that it is their uppermost goal to foster and create the best client relationship possible.

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### 5.2.3 GROUP COMPOSITION

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All the companies are small in size; each of them only has one or two work groups. Often the division is created either naturally, or by a person’s attributes and capabilities that prove themselves suitable for the project. Caroline Eriksson, CEO at Nyla Design, points out that when a person on the team has an interest in what the client asks for; they are naturally able to do a better job because they enjoy it. She therefore tries to make matches considering personal interest and the competencies. Each interviewed CEO has a creative background and is actively involved in the creative work. The time distribution of the CEO’s design work tasks vary, often assisting where it is called upon, common work includes administrative tasks and creative feedback, fostering financial aspects, bringing in accounts and taking care of existing and potential client relationships. The time allocation for each responsibility is flexible and it is the CEO’s task to create a balance between them.

While all the companies are very small in size, they all know about the advantage this brings because they are able to be involved in each other’s projects, creating a good platform for feedback. In addition to that, they are able to become very close to one another, which has allowed them to get each other’s strengths and weaknesses. Being a small company also

makes it easy to communicate with one another. As CEO of Company 4 points out, that the size of the business allows for ‘short communication distances’.

The company size is also affects the company negatively, mostly due to the fact that they have very few replacements options if one employee is sick or not present, which makes the companies inflexible in this respect. Using freelance workers in some cases solves provides aid in handling the workload that appears. Their size also results in the lack of broadness available but is only a limited amount of people to discuss ideas with, as the CEO of Company 1 explains. However, as previously mentioned three out of the four companies expressed a desire to grow in size and thereby staff.

All companies have teams consisting of fairly homogeneous people, regarding age and nationality or international experiences, with a few individuals that diverge from the rest in this respect but they are only a minority. However, a majority of the companies had a rather equal gender distribution within the company. Karin Hellström at Nyla Design describes an advantage this has, saying that their likeness makes it easy for them to work very “effectively and in sync” [own translation], which for their line of business is important as it is a fast paced industry. She further explains that they are very adamant in their recruitment process, as it is important for the company’s growth to pick the right person for the team, and avoid having to choose someone urgently. Instead they try to make sure that each new recruit is truly a good fit with the group and the job description, which she claims is vital for their long-term success.

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#### 5.2.4 CREATIVITY

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When asked what creativity means to them, a common answer appeared, each interviewee said it meant finding a solution or solving a problem in a new way. The companies tackle this by trying to work together as a team in each project, and draw from each other’s strengths and insights, which enables them to find this new solution that creativity enables. Three of the companies stated scheduled weekly meetings where everyone is invited to contribute, develop, and test ideas that come forth during this dialogue that they open up for. At Company 1, where they only are five employees who are seated near one another, they are able to conduct such conversations without formally gathering through scheduled meetings.

Each respondent emphasized the importance of encouragement, saying that within the group there needs to be a positive attitude present. The atmosphere at the agencies that were

examined claimed to be comfortable in their working group, which is enabled through the factors discussed in organizational condition and the culture that they have. The group at the company discusses possible solutions, test ideas and brainstorm together. Responsibilities are often delegated but the person in charge is not perceived as the sole operator or on their own in the project in any of the companies. Karin Hellström explains that there is “no” bad idea at Nyla Design; rather all ideas are voiced, if a person in the group respond by saying no to suggestions, the group support is counteracted. Instead they test their way forward, they encourage each other and hand out positive feedback during this. We have seen similar traits in the rest of companies, were all have implied that the interaction and group support is essential for their business. Frank and Earnest have a rule that is very meaningful to their group creativity. The rule dictates that when someone comes forward and proposes an idea, no one is allowed to respond with “Yes, but...”, instead rather say “Yes, and...”, [own translation] so people have the courage to share their ideas. If one waits until they have something brilliant to say, there is no meeting taking place at all, Peter Wetteus, the CEO explains. All ideas are welcome, which they work hard for to make a reality at the firm. One comment that may have seemed foolish at first can spark new thoughts and thereby get the ‘ball rolling’ towards something potentially great. Petter Wetteus states that this “Yes, and...” rule is truly the only one you need.

Even though the companies would like to present their absolute best in each project, it is sometimes hindered by their client, as it is most often the client who sets the budget and time restrictions to a project, and already has a set idea of the result, which allows little room for creativity. On the contrary, if the guidelines set are too broad the agency has difficulties knowing what the client wants, making it harder to deliver satisfactory results. This dictates how high they can set their standards for the project. The companies often make a suggestion to the client and how much time and money they require for the proposed idea, which the client in turn considers. If the client already knows what they want in the project it rather concerns a production than a creation, as several of the interviewees explained. Caroline Eriksson at Nyla Design observed that a lot of time on a project can be good but sometimes time crunches can become very efficient and motivating, and adds that a variety of this is probably the most favorable. The project manager often has to set the limit for how long the creation process can take. As Caroline Eriksson of Nyla Design said, in her role as both project manager and CEO must set limits and declare when something is good enough and



enforce a time limit or judge when more effort would not result in more value for the client. The creative staff has to channel their creative energy according to the client's guidelines.

The freedom for creators' work process is based on resources, time is a main resource and a worker needs time to enable his or her freedom to be used, but this resource can be scarce, and the creative process is often tied down by set guidelines, such as budget and a limited time frame. The companies often make a suggestion to the client and how much time and money they require for the proposed idea, which the client responds to.

The art director at Company 4 says that they are free to work overtime if they feel that it is necessary, implying it is to counteract the time restrictions they are given by the client. As far as other types of resources, the employee further explains that there are always something that can be wished for. There are many technical resources in this industry but as a small company they cannot manage to cover all expertise, such as having a studio. Various inexpensive software programs available, which gives them the opportunities to increase their resources at a low cost. The art director goes on to say that simple tool such as pen and paper is meaningful for him in his creative process, and if one is involved from the beginning it aids the sense of inclusiveness, thrive and excitement for the project.

The relationship the company has the client also influences the creative process. As Karin Hellström, at Nyla Design, says, design is always subjective, so it is difficult to distinguish between the incorrect and correct solution. Anyone is the judge of that. The creatively active worker knows that they have succeeded when their work is well perceived; this is their measurement of success. One employee explained that a good and long relationship to a client can be positive but also have a drawback to creativity. Saying that in such cases they know each other well, already possessing the knowledge of their preferences and taste. This can possibly cause the project to limit itself at the start because they are able to be effective in their choices but may miss a new route the client may have liked as well. As the CEO of Company 4 explains, obstacles to creativity can be hard to recognize due to ingrained thinking patterns that emerge during their years of work, which can be difficult to recognize at a small firm. It can also be manifested in actual physical patterns, such as sitting down and not moving around enough to get inspired and being creative, as the art director at Company 4 adds.

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### 5.2.5 MOTIVATION AND REWARDS

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To be able to work in this line of business, all the respondents mentioned that there has to be an intrinsic motivation to be able to perform well. As the art director at Company 4 says, the job requires each person to have a big personal interest in what they do and therefore the personal motivation to create and do well needs to be present, even before they arrive to work. Inspiration is important for the creative input and the essence of the job, and it is usually a very personal process, Karin Hellström at Nyla Design says, putting focus on the individual rather than the job itself. She goes on to say that a creative worker can get better at being creative but there has to be a creative spirit present from the beginning which can be built upon. Another trait that is crucial is their ability to be up to date, regarding the world around them, in order to make their work relevant. The person who collects inspiration does so by seeing something in a way no one else would observe or interpret something as; it is a daily habit to them. They do not turn off their intrinsic motivation and curiosity when they leave work since they work with something they are passionate about, as the Art Director at Company 4 conveys. "Everyone has their own passions and is encouraged to pursue them; deepen their skills and knowledge within it- which serves themselves as well as the company" [own translation], the CEO at Company 1 explains.

Some people wish to contribute with a solution and some want their work to be visible, the CEO at Company 4 portrays. A creator is highly influenced by how others perceive their work. As the art director at Company 4 explains, it is very easy for anyone to have an opinion about design work. Each company stresses that feedback from clients is important for their motivation, meaning that it becomes a sort of reward for the creators to have their work validated. Karin Hellström, at Nyla Design, gives an example of being relation-oriented, feeling motivated by satisfying a client, and thereby receiving a positive review, saying that challenges are often personal and come from within.

To motivate and reward the employees is of importance for the companies. At Nyla Design, Caroline Eriksson recognizes that extrinsic motivation does not really serve the company; the staff is already driven by their intrinsic motivation to do do well. Two companies out of the four we interviewed mentioned that the yearly salary review is a tool of motivation. Caroline Eriksson also says that specific rewards are difficult to hand out to individuals as the tasks among the employees differ and are hard to compare to one another. All of them are equally important to the company, so they can with combined efforts create the best result. Each

company further mentioned that it is important and valuable for them to be very free within their job. Frank and Earnest give an example with the ‘Gold Egg’ (Guldägget, a Swedish annual advertising award, Frank and Earnest, 2014; Guldägget, 2012), when they recognize great potential in an idea they are able to call out ‘egg-awareness’, which gives them the right and freedom to further pursue the potential they have recognized in that specific project, allowing any person in the company call this out.

We have observed a tendency to reward and motivate through group rewards, such as inspirational trips, which three of the four companies conduct. At Company 1 and Nyla Design, they mentioned setting financial goals, and if they were reached a company trip would take place as a spur of encouragement and motivation. At Frank and Earnest, the trip had a slightly different design, not associated with exact numbers, instead being more as a general reward and inspiration. All of the companies also mentioned that they try to incorporate motivational tools into their daily work as well. Each company highlighted the importance of giving positive feedback to each other to spur enthusiasm for the job among one another. The art director, at Company 4, and Peter Wetteus, at Frank and Earnest, mentioned that it is important to make positive results visible, to see what a team member has accomplished, and to share the ‘we’-feeling at the office. Three of the companies also try to incorporate educational inserts, for instance taking a lecture or doing something not directly related to their job description during working hours. This they do in order to get inspiration and motivation from unexpected sources, and keep an open mind. Karin Hellström at Nyla Design explains that creativity is boosted when the creatively active person can take a break from the project and return to the task with fresh thoughts, however when time is limited there is often no room to do so.

Karin Hellström at Nyla Design states that a person should not be stress sensitive, in that case the industry is not a fit for them. Karin Hellström reveals that Caroline Eriksson, the CEO, is very mindful at enforcing reasonable work schedule for the employees. During hectic times Caroline Eriksson is conscious of planning for ‘unplanned time’ in the schedule in order to aid the workload and the creativity necessary for their work. Pressure can cause the creative flow to freeze, in addition the creative genius anxiety is something every creatively active person has to battle with, Karin Hellström (2014, interview) says, meaning that the individual must find a way to break out of this. A stressful factor can be that the agency accepts projects from clients on short notice because they want to be a loyal partner, Peter Wetteus at Frank and

Earnest explains. He further explains that even though there is a lot of pressure to perform, each person still has a personal life outside of the office that needs to be considered.

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### 5.2.6 MISTAKES AND RISK TAKING

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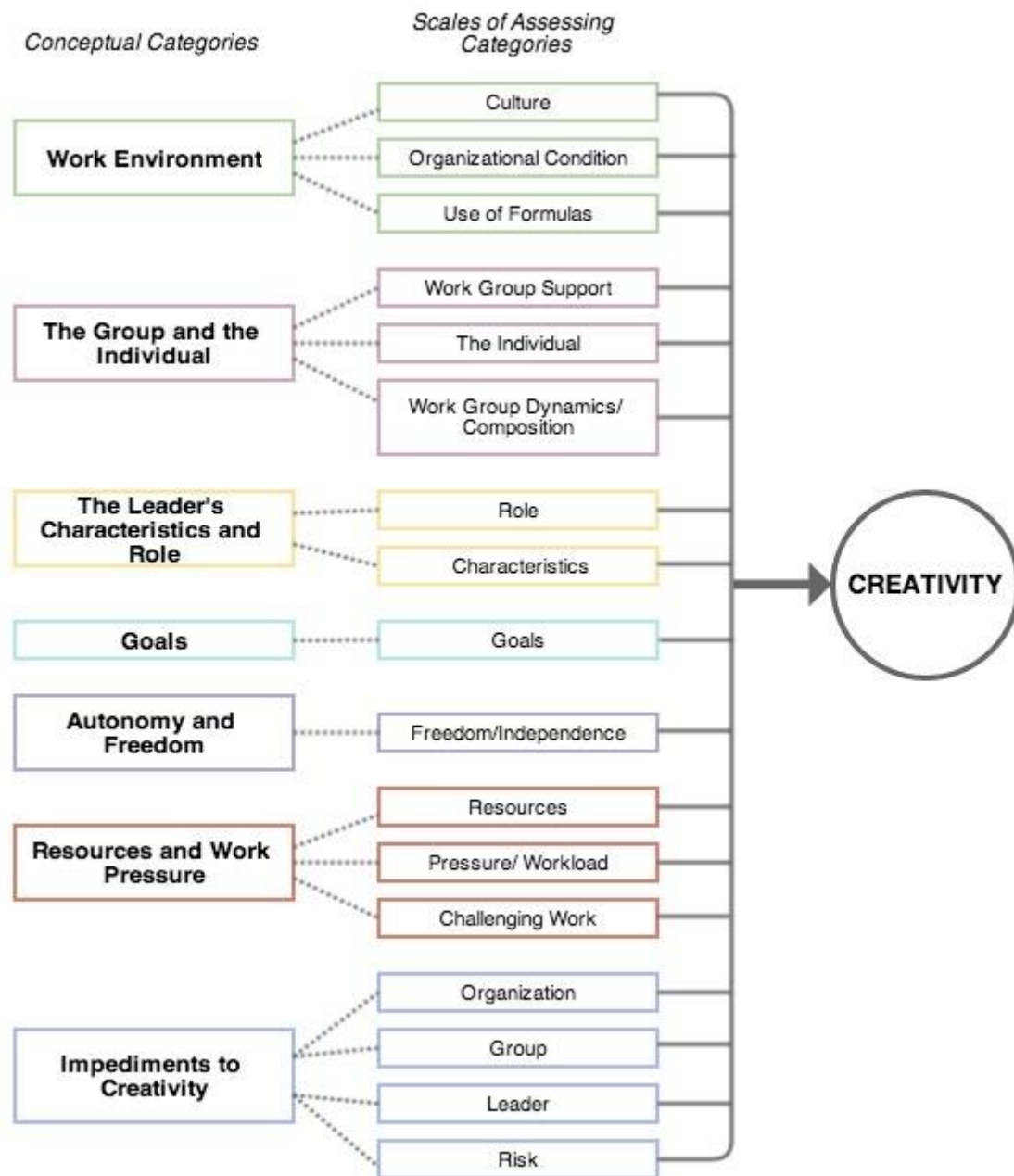
When mistakes or failures occur, like losing a pitch to a competitor or a project not being well perceived, each respondent stressed that they try to handle it as a group by evaluating each mistake and trying to learn from it. The CEO of Company 4 highlighted that it is humbling that mistakes sometimes happen; no company can be the best at everything, which shows them that there is always room to improve and develop. Three of the companies discuss these occurrences in formal meetings, which most often are scheduled weekly, where they collectively discuss in detail every aspect of what went wrong and what could have been done better. At Company 1, they are small enough to incorporate the discussion into their daily work, without requiring specifically set meetings.

The companies also accentuated the need to take risks, which also why some mistakes may happen. The CEO, at Company 4, states that if no mistakes are ever made the agency has failed to be brave and dare enough. Peter Wetteus at Frank and Earnest says that they want the client to have the courage to succeed and maybe step out of their comfort zone, which thereby gives the creative team the courage to aim a little higher than the client thought they could. Caroline Eriksson at Nyla Design stresses the need to be confident of the idea that they are presenting, meaning that if one person not related to a certain project can be convinced by another person within the company, they should be able to convince the client as well, thereby creating confidence in an idea or concept. It is important to consider that the client often sets the guidelines and thereby the available room for risk taking, where there is sometimes no room at all. The CEO, at Company 4, states that if no mistakes are ever made the agency has failed to be brave and dare enough. Each company stated that it is important for them to take creative risks in order to be able create great projects. The CEO at Company 4 however emphasized that it is of great importance to make sure that these risks are not taken on the expense of the client.

## 6. ANALYSIS

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After having collected relevant theories that concern the purpose of the thesis and gathered empirical data we have recognized that the model of '*Conceptual Model Underlying Assessment of Perceptions of the Work Environment of Creativity*' (Amabile et al., 1996) connects to the reality of the purpose of this study, but lacks categories to make it even more truthful and useful. In our study, we give form to a model that we have created with the help of the existing model (Amabile et al. 1996 and Oliver and Ashley, 2012) we gathered in our theories, and add from the findings of our empirical data. We have discovered that certain categories and topics are not covered or discussed thoroughly and wish to combine the information into one model to create a valid overview and summary of important points. The model is a new and improved version of existing models which we have investigated, and meaningful to small advertising agencies, which this study focuses on. The topics in the model interconnect highly and we recommend reading the model as a whole instead of individual topics to get the most value out of it. Our contribution and answer to the question of what organizational factors influence creativity is presented in the model that we have given form to, which lists all the factors we have recognized to be of importance that either lift or can hurt the phenomena. It is thorough because creativity is a complex matter. We go on and discuss the categories and their topics, many are very integrated with one another because an organization is a perplex and living thing. The factors are based on each other in order to exist and hopefully act in the favor of creativity, how this is possible is discussed in the analysis as well as factors that hinder it, which the agency should be aware of, in order to avoid the examined pitfalls.



FIGUR 3: ADAPTED AND REVIEWED CONCEPTUAL MODEL UNDERLYING ASSESSMENT OF PERCEPTIONS OF THE WORK ENVIRONMENT OF CREATIVITY

## 6.1 WORK ENVIRONMENT

### 6.1.1 CULTURE

The companies profit from being small in size, as discussed in the empirical data. It allows people to know one another very well and be aware of one another's strengths and capabilities. None the least, inclusiveness appears that is meaningful as people feel

comfortable and have the courage to make suggestions and propose ideas. The companies suggest that the culture has emerged naturally, influenced by the personalities present at the company who each serve as a component of the whole which can be summarized by culture that appears. A key word which Frank and Earnest's CEO liked to use to describe the culture was 'home'; in turn humbleness pervades the work setting and the factors which govern it.

Familiarity proves itself to be an important factor when cultures are set in a small advertising agency, and foremost to embrace inclusiveness, which is vital in the creative process (Amabile and Khaire, 2008), to experience a sense of shared responsibility for the project, as the model of 'Elements of an Effective Ad Creation Process' under the sub-topic of 'Organizational Structure' describes. The inclusiveness allows for the employees to feel a sense of importance to the work that is being done, that their contribution is unique and of value, everyone is 'on board', a major factor to the culture that is established. The sense of inclusiveness is based on humbleness that everyone should obtain; if that is not present the flat structure (discussed further in 'organizational condition') that is vital is hindered. If one person sees him- or herself above others, the opposite is created, i.e. exclusiveness.

Each company was aware of the advantages the small size serves to their creative process, such as being involved in each other's work and be able to give feedback that strengthens the results. It is also crucial for the creative process, as it is a very vulnerable matter to introduce ideas, and requires a sense of safety in the work environment. Based on Hennessey (2003) and Chen's (2006) theories, this collective support is needed for the interaction that will create new and exciting ideas. The collective support and integration is necessary, as they together create the whole of the company (Catmull, 2008; Hirst et al., 2009). Interaction can further be seen in examples in our empirical research. Three of the companies have scheduled coffee time where they update each other on what they are doing, and casually chat, in order to incorporate everyone in the work processes. Casuals meetings can a be source of inspiration and spark new thoughts and ideas, the CEO at Company 4 knows this and does not oppose to to employees spending such time during work hours.

Culture, we conclude, is very important and is usually formed on its own, naturally by the people who are gathered at the work environment every day. It dictates the way they work by affecting many aspects of the process and thereby defines their identity. We presume this to be a standard for this company size in the advertising industry.

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### 6.1.2 ORGANIZATIONAL CONDITION

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A flat structure is present in all companies we visited, which is a strong indicator that this is meaningful for the organization, for example is the CEO seated at the work space where everyone else is working as well. Petter Wetteus (2014, interview) at Frank and Earnest explains no higher office is in place where workers need to report their work to, but are trusted to complete their task on their own. Communication is facilitated due to the open space they work with and the small office. Robert Epstein (2011) claims that creativity appears when former ideas and behaviors become connected. The organization's size allows for flexibility, all CEO's stated.

At Nyla Design, as Caroline Eriksson (2014, interview) mentioned she sees that extrinsic motivation does not truly serve the company as the people working must already be intrinsically motivated in this business. Amabile (1998) suggests that extrinsic motivation prompts a person to solve the problem as it has been solved before. Two companies say that their salary review is a motivation tool, and also an indication to the employee that they are satisfied with their work. Through our empirical research it appears that the individual who works creatively desire validation, the salary being such a tool (discussed further in the category of 'Group and the Individual'). Caroline Eriksson (2014, interview) says that individual rewards are more difficult than group rewards, as each person is necessary for the project as they complement one another, and are therefore hard to compare to each other. Most companies conduct company trips that serves several factors such as inspiration and getting to know one another better, strengthening the 'we feeling', which can have positive effects to the company as a whole (Amabile et al., 1993; Hennessey et al., 1989), but it could be suggested that they also could be used to increase intrinsic motivation.

A motivation tool in this industry could be to enter competitions to receive awards for their work. This should be considered a bonus to their performance rather than their incentive to do the work, which can be seen as a form of recognition serves the individual's need for validation, adds to the agency's credibility and improves the spirit of the group as it can enhance the excitement for the project, such as the Gold Egg award Frank and Earnest received (Runco, 1997). However, as mentioned before, this should not be their sole focus because it would hurt the creativity and feel forced.



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### 6.1.3 USE OF FORMULAS

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Frank and Earnest (2014) and Company 4 both used specific formulas in their working process, which they reveal on their website as well. The formulas help them structure the work, creating an overview that aids the working staff in structuring an approach the project. In addition, we believe that when they propose an idea to the client, the formulas aid them in explaining how they resonated when they came up with the concept. The working process is thereby more easily understood and mediates a sense of security. Petter Wetteus (2014, interview), the CEO at Frank and Earnest reveals that they are often met by skepticism when they encounter new clients, a healthy dose of this, he adds. The key to tackling this is building confidence and trust in the relationship, thereby overcoming this challenge and growing stronger in their potential towards the client.

The use of formulas can communicate the working process, which gives a sense of credibility and faith to the client, as they feel involved, and more likely understand how they go about the assignment. This tool also allows the agency to show that they have understood the problem, or if not this can be corrected through this. Oliver and Ashley (2012) write about the use of formulas in advertising agency, which is debated. There are fears that they could damage the creative process (Oliver and Ashley, 2012). This by creating a narrow view of the problem, and 'lock' themselves into generic solutions or limits themselves as creativity is trying to be 'boxed in'. The agency should be aware of its pitfalls yet appreciate the advantages it can serve. The formula should be flexible so it does not counteract the creativity. Each project has a different solution; the key is to keep an open mind when approaching it.

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## 6.2 GROUP AND THE INDIVIDUAL

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The agencies most often work as teams on projects, where their attributes complement each other and form a group with the capabilities that the client wants. The characteristics of an individual are essential as each part of the group is important in the pursuit of effective advertising. That is why both must be examined, the individual who in turn impact the composition and dynamic of group.

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### 6.2.1 WORK GROUP SUPPORT

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Encouragement within the group is positive, as well as shared excitement for the project. Many creative ideas appear during the exchanges in a group, as a result it is a collective effort.

When ideas are exposed to other ideas, the probability for creativity increases (Amabile, 1996). The interaction between individuals' creates ideas and discussions, which lead to creativity (Hennessy, 2003; Chen, 2006). Within the group, the atmosphere should be comfortable so people can feel free to disagree and let their personality emerge (Amabile, 1998). The atmosphere at the agencies which were examined were comfortable in their group work, they claimed, which was enabled through the factors discussed in organizational condition and the culture that is present. The group goes ahead and discusses, test, and brainstorm the thoughts and ideas that appear. Everyone receives a task and responsibility but is not just their own, as it is not a 'one man show'; everyone is involved and helps one another. Frank and Earnest have a rule that is very meaningful to them and their creativity. The rule istates that when someone comes forward and proposes an idea, no one is allowed to respond with "Yes, but....." but rather "Yes, and..." [own translation].

All ideas are welcome, and people need courage to come forward with them. One cannot wait until they have the right thing to say, and then there is neither a meeting nor discussion taking place, thus failing the creative incentive. It is the only rule that is needed according to Peter Wetteus, CEO at Frank and Earnest (2014, interview), and one random comment that seems silly at first may be the start of some other thought pattern which may result in the greatness they are looking for. In groups one may recognize the potential of someone's thought that would have otherwise been overlooked (Oliver and Ashley, 2012). Karin Hellström (2014, interview) agrees as she says that there is no bad idea, all should be voiced to investigate their possible opportunities. If ideas are shot down, the creativity they desire is counteracted. Similar traits we found at all companies, implying that the group interaction is important and what it looks like, needing an assenting environment and supportive crew they rely on in the pursuit of great work.

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## 6.2.2 WORK GROUP DYNAMICS/COMPOSITION

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Our research has shown that the small size of the companies and the culture allows the group to get to know each other well, enabling the leader to know the employees well enough to create the best group for the project, possessing a rich knowledge of the capabilities and strengths.

Small company sizes allow for flexibility but lack the broadness of perspective, as they interact with a limited amount of people within the company. They are also vulnerable in the short run. New people could contribute with different perspective that could spark new

thoughts, dialogues and ideas (Amabile and Khaire, 2008). All companies wished to grow larger except Frank and Earnest. Diversity within a group can give rise to the possibility of a variety of new ideas and a sense of challenge where another person's views and opinions are discussed and questioned (Amabile and Khaire, 2008). This can enrich the people who are exposed to the variety of worldviews they are presented with. Karin Hellström (2014, interview) reveals that at Nyla Design, they are very alike as a group, this can serve as an advantage and disadvantage. Being alike can mean they work very efficiently and are insync. All companies suggested they were quite alike in this respect, which indicates that efficiency is an important tool in their work and value this. The recruitment process is vital and Nyla Design knows the importance of being mindful of this, the right person must be found and time pressure will not hinder this.

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### 6.2.3 THE INDIVIDUAL

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The traits of an individual in this line of business are very important. People who produce ideas for advertising are charged with the incentive to find ways to solve the client's problem (Oliver and Ashley, 2012). They are the basis for creativity and their characteristics are essential in the recruitment process, they should be a good fit to the group and be passionate about the business. When a person likes what they do, they are more likely to do a better job (Oliver and Ashley, 2012). The individual must be up to date, so their ideas are relevant and can connect to the people who are targeted. In addition the person must have a creative spirit before they apply for the job, it can be developed and built upon but must have basis to grow on, a personal trait.

The interactions the individual has are based on genuine interest to understand and learn on a deeper level. By increasing one's knowledge and skills, it keeps work interesting and allow for connections to be made, which ideas are often made of.

*"Everyone has their own passions and is encouraged to pursue them; deepen their skills and knowledge within it- which serves themselves as well as the company"* [own translation]

, the CEO at Company 1 explains. The manager in every company we have investigated does usually not suggest employees to do something specific to increase their knowledge but allows the staff to do some activity they are interested in.

They have many discussions, but a lot of the thinking is done on its own, which suggests the importance of the individual and the contributions they make to the work through this method.

Curiosity is the foundation to their drive to gather inspiration and exceed, the most creative people are distinguished by this trait (Amabile, 1998), which the interviewee's agreed on. The individual needs to be intrinsically motivated by their work (Amabile, 1998). Their passions and interests come from their personal thrive. When this is the case, people engage in a challenge as a form of enjoyment (Amabile, 1998). Then the worker is comfortable taking his or her time with the task, the journey will be more time consuming and include more mistakes but when they eventually reach a result it will likely be more unique and valuable to the company (Amabile, 1998). The person who collects inspiration does so by seeing something in a way no one else would observe or interpret something as; it is a daily and personal habit to them.

Karin Hellström, at Nyla Design emphasises since design is most often based on taste, it is hard to see the right or wrong option; it is very subjective. Based on how well their work is perceived they know if they have succeeded and is their measurement of validation. That is why validation and encouragement has a vital role in strengthening the workers ambition and thrives to deliver. Talented people take pride in their accomplishments and react by pushing themselves to reach new heights (Runco, 1997); they identify with their work.

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## 6.3 LEADER'S CHARACTERISTICS

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### 6.3.1 ROLE

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The leader has a number of responsibilities. All CEO's are creatively active at the company and have a background in this field. The leader has many tasks within their job, formal and informal, it is their duty to make the business financially sound and other administrative work. What is unique in this line of business is their creative being and its meaningful implication to the project, like providing input. The leader should provide employees with training in topics outside their field (Epstein et al, 2013). However, this was not the case at any of the companies we visited, these initiatives come for the worker themselves but it was however encouraged in each company, this seems unique to the advertising agency where personal thrives and interests are common and important.

When it comes to creative tasks, one of the most important functions the leader serves is to encourage employees; this sets great leaders apart from the rest. Praising hard work goes a long way, especially considering that employees in this industry thrive upon intrinsic motivation, and therefore the leader must show that their efforts matter to the company

(Amabile, 1998). We saw examples of this in each company, where they, in either formal or informal meetings, try to forward positive feedback from clients to one another. This is in alignment with theoretical findings that suggest that the leader should focus on breakthroughs rather than failures to promote a positive environment which creativity craves (Red, 2007; Oliver and Ashley 2012).

Previous research reveals that the leader should set up goals, but should not specifically monitor how to achieve them (Amabile, 1998). Without a goal, the employee can feel lost, not knowing what to focus their creative energy on (Amabile, 1998). For this, we have had a hard time perceiving to what exact extent the managers are involved in each project, but our conclusion is that the employees within our research are given a lot of freedom (under responsibility), within the parameters each of their project has. Unique to the limits of our study, is that the leader is often involved with creative input and connect with the team. As a result from this, we have been able to draw conclusions that this gives the managers more creative insight and understanding for what the work process involves for the employees, and although they are often involved it does not hinder or bother the employee in their work instead they seems to appreciate guidance. Amabile (1998) claims that the best ideas originate from the subordinates, the companies welcomed ideas that the employee can convince the CEO of and thereby enforce. The leader should provide tools that aid the workers in recording these very ideas (Epstein et al., 2013). It is underestimated how easily they are lost as inspiration can appear at any time and any place; no specific tools to do so were recognized to be used at the companies.

The paradox in managing creativity, what each CEO emphasized; is also their desires to optimize the company's profit. This can cause one to quickly choose a solution, but rather opt to invest in quality and test a number of solutions until they find the best one (Amabile, 1998). This may be more costly but often call for better solutions. The companies agreed upon that they are most often are creatively restricted by the limits clients set, both financial and time restraints.

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### 6.3.2 CHARACTERISTICS

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Somewhat unique to this line of business is the characteristics that the leader possesses are crucial to the creative process. All four interviewed managers have a creative background and a creative role within the company. When they embody the values of the company, the employees are prompted to do the same, such as being active creatively. The leader

him/herself should be a source of critical input (West et al., 2003; Elenkov and Manev, 2005; Kisfalvi and Pitcher, 2005). The leader's thrive should inspire the workers, and motivate them (Elenkov and Manev, 2005). In all companies the CEOs, we found, to be humble, which seems to have influenced the company culture positively and enable a flat structure, as everyone is comfortable communicating their ideas and thoughts to the leader.

To conclude, the leader holds the upper most responsibility in how the agency operates and the results that appear thereof. The leader holds an important role, they often act as a co-worker but also a leader in inspiring people in gathering accounts, ideas and get everyone 'on board' and uphold the positive environment.

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## 6.3 GOALS

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### 6.3.1 GOALS

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None of the companies we interviewed had specific goals that they worked towards although Amabile (1998) claims that clearly defined strategic goals improve worker's creativity, as briefly discussed above. Yet everyone's ambition is to be profitable in their work, something the leaders say that they usually have to make the staff aware of. As mentioned earlier, the creative most often work with their passion and thrive on delivering their best and always exceed in their performance. It is the leader's task to keep an overview how the creative energy is allocated, and declare when it is good enough. It is everyone's desire to deliver the best project possible and also add to their portfolio, as the CEO at Company 1 stated:

*"An advertising agency is the sum of products and experiences we have collected during our existence."* [own translation]

It naturally becomes their desire to always improve and perform and by that exceed their clients' expectations. They all want to be known for the 'right thing', as their portfolio is their advertising towards potential and existing clients. Nyla Design, Company 1 and 4 expressed their wish to grow. The CEO at Company 4 explains that they want to grow slowly and organically at a stable rate. On the other hand Frank and Earnest, due to their experience as a larger company, declared that they have made a conscious decision to be a small company, according to them they have recognized this to be the best path to success. The relationship towards the client is very important in this line of business. Frank and Earnest specifically explain that their goal is to have the best client relations possible, if that is true everything else

falls into place according to them. It is apparent that this is true for any advertising agency, when a client has faith in the agency's work, they can set the parameters for the project. Therefore there needs to be trust between both parties, enough to give the creative staff room to take risks and be bold and through this '*help the client succeed*' (Peter Wetteus, interview, 2014) or "*enable the client to dare to be successful*" and be known for the 'right things' [own translation]. A project has its own goal, as each one wants something different, which means that it is difficult to formulate a broad general goal in their work.

In conclusion all company's main goal is to satisfy and impress the client with their work, if they do all other sub-goals, such as being profitable, fall into place. This can be discussed in Amabile's (1998) argument that employees need goals to aim at. We argue that these goals do not necessarily need to be financial as a result of the project-based industry. Instead we believe that each project should have a clear goal, a necessary step for the companies to be successful in the long-term perspective.

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#### 6.4 AUTONOMY AND FREEDOM

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Research has shown that creativity is promoted when a person has a sense of ownership and control over the work (Amabile et al, 1996). When a person is included from the beginning of a project it aids creativity, states the employee at Company 4.

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##### 6.4.1 FREEDOM/INDEPENDENCE

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The creative worker wants to sense a freedom in how they go about solving the client's problem (Amabile and Gryskiewicz, 1989; Runco, 2004). It is the leader who decides how this freedom is managed; the leader should set a goal but not control how the employee gets there, as mentioned earlier. If there is no goal at all, the subordinate feels lost and confused (Amabile, 1998). Sometimes the requirements set by the client are too broad, making it difficult to satisfy the wishes as they are not entirely sure of what the client wants. Freedom is connected to resources, time is such a resource and a worker needs time to use his or her freedom, but this resource can be scarce, and the creative process can be limited by set frames regarding the finances or the time they are given. A freedom that a leader cannot always give or the client cannot afford to allow.

## 6.5 RESOURCES AND WORKLOAD PRESSURE

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### 6.5.1 RESOURCES

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Resource allocation is a delicate matter, and has been lightly touched in the previous section. The most common resources that have to be efficiently distributed are time and money (Amabile et al, 1996). In this line of business the client often sets a time span and a budget for the project. It dictates how high they can set their standards for the project. The company tries to influence this decision by making suggestions for the best options according to them and hope that the client agrees and considers this. At other times their client already arrives with set guidelines. In many such cases it regards a production rather than a creation, since there is no room to be creative, as several of the interviewees mentioned. Caroline Eriksson (2014, interview) at Nyla Design recognizes that a lot of time on a project can be nice but sometimes time crunches can become very efficient and motivating, a variety is the best. The theory agrees with this viewpoint, time crunches can be motivating but trying in the long run. All resources cannot be covered; there will be some technique that would be nice to have. If a worker can take a break from work new perspectives can appear, but sometimes the time limit hinders this.

The art director at Company 4 (2014, interview) explains that there are always something that can be wished for, but simple tools are vital too for the creative process which they have. It is tough when a worker can recognize great potential in a project but the resources do not allow him or her to pursue the idea. When several such projects appear it can dampen the creative spirit. It is important to keep an active dialogue and a good relation to the client so they can trust the agency in their judgment of the amount of resources they desire for the project in question and thereby create the best result.

The employees at the company are the main resource the agency possess, and thus their capabilities. It is therefore in the company's interest to provide tools that help the worker to record their thoughts and ideas that may randomly come up, this can be a value to the company and their progress and success. This industry is project based, which means that the workload differs, while the staff number remains the same. At Nyla Design, they expressed that there is challenge to plan efficiently to handle this obstacle. However, they and the other companies hire freelance workers to relieve pressure and import resources and knowledge they themselves do not have. We believe that freelancers have a difficulty to adapt into the



corporate culture and to quickly get an understanding of what a project requires, which creates a challenge for the companies to fill resource gaps in an effective way.

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## 6.5.2 PRESSURE AND WORKLOAD

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Constant pressure tires and stresses workers while a certain degree of pressure can be highly motivating (Amabile, 1988, Amabile and Gryskiewicz, 1987). Karin Hellström, at Nyla Design, says that if a person is stress sensitive it is probably not the right fit for them to work in this line of business. The leader has to control this accordingly (Amabile, 1988, Amabile and Gryskiewicz, 1987). Caroline Eriksson at Nyla Design is very mindful of the work, refraining from enforcing a work schedule that is common in this industry (highly demanding), one is supposed to have room for their personal lives, e.g. they have flexible working hours, according to Karin Hellström (2014, interview)

Agencies often react faithful to a client, by taking on projects on short notice or when they do not actually have time to work on it, but they do this to foster the relationship and value the client, according to Peter Wetteus at Frank and Earnest. Some agencies cannot afford to say no, which can be true for smaller businesses as those in our study. The leader should be conscious of employee's workloads and make sure they are not too big to handle. The employee at Company 4 (2014, interview) claims that this is a personal decision; each person has the choice to work overtime or continue the working process on their own time, for their own personal growth as well as the company's. Karin Hellström (2014, interview) at Nyla Design explains that when the work loads are big, the company still is conscious of trying to planning for unplanned time in their schedule, to do an activity or so, in order to not get lost in just working nonstop. By having scheduled time for non-work related activities, it is suggested that it has an increasing effect on creativity and also relieving pressure on employees (Conti et al., 1993; Ruscio et al., 1995; Amabile, 1993).

We recognize that the resources can be limited and create challenges in how they are successful within the set parameters. Challenges prompt personal and the agency's growth, but there are not always the opportunity to pursue aspect. Work pressure can lift creativity, but only a certain degree before the stress becomes tiring and hurt the creative process. The workload an employee obtains is often personal; the leader should be aware of the workloads as the employees are ambitious and can gather an amount that is too big to handle for an individual.

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### 6.5.3 CHALLENGING WORK

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The manager should assign challenging work but accordingly. The leader should show confidence in the subordinate and believe in their potential, this in the interest of the person as well as the company. The employee should always feel a sense of personal growth in their work. Their aim should be ambitious. Challenges forces people to think in new ways, by getting out of their comfort zone (Lally and Michalko, 1996; Dyer and Martin, 2006); creativity craves this. The advertising business is project based; as a consequence, the amount of challenging work is dictated by what type of project the company acquires. Therefore it becomes essential for the company to aim for different types of projects that can demand different types of perspective. Specific to the industry is that the agency is very tied to the guidelines the client sets so the company may not be entirely free to pick challenges they sense are appropriate for the personal growth state they find themselves in. It is their task to search for accounts that give them the opportunity to do this, all while remaining profitable in the process. Karin Hellström (2014, interview) gives an example of focusing on the client relationship, and adapt to what they find good and be reviewed by them and be motivated by positive feedback, it is a personal thrive.

Our conclusion is that the individual, usually because their intrinsic motivation, puts a lot of pressure on themselves already. Their creations are very personal to them, so they want to succeed in their work. The leader should aid them in handling the stress that can occur in this context (Runco, 1997). Personal growth should be enabled by finding projects that allow this to occur, although it must be respected that the agency must remain profitable and take on accounts that may appear more generic.

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## 6.6 IMPEDIMENTS TO CREATIVITY

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Once intrinsic curious and motivated people who are creative, have been recruited to the agency, creativity is present. Still, this does not assure for creativity to take place in the business, the conditions in the company must promote and aid it. More often than not, Amabile (1998) claims, it is not the case, instead conditions are present that hurt creativity. Therefore the agency must consider pitfalls and threats that commonly occur and hurt the very imperative they try to achieve.

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### 6.6.1 ORGANIZATION

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Politics and policies can hinder creativity, where the bureaucracy does not allow the idea to come forward and be given attention (Amabile and Khaire, 2008). Peter Wetteus (2014, interview) at Frank and Earnest says that it is not good for creativity at a company where the managers are employed to keep track of employees, and must be reported to. Ideas also need to get a quick response, which they do at the small companies in our study as a result of their size and communication structure; the communication line is very short. Consequently politics are avoided. Pressure can threaten creativity, since it can block it. Every creatively active person faces the anxiety of how well their work is perceived, something each individual must find a way to handle and use it for their advantage.

Economic aspects can hinder creativity, since they do not always have the room and resources to pursue what they wish they could. In addition the daily life keeps people from being able to devote time and effort to pursue something; other personal responsibilities come in the way (Peter Wetteus, 2014, interview). No one can afford to be completely compromise-less. A threat to creativity is that the people actively involved are so focused that their view becomes narrow and in turn blind to the improvements that could be made.

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#### 6.6.2 GROUP

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The social climate is meaningful, people should sense inclusiveness and refrain from gossiping and forming social groups, because it is distracts them and consumes energy (Amabile, 1998).

When they are faced with mistakes at the companies in the study, they all gave examples of holding meetings and discussing it, often a form of follow up. They track back and contemplate on what and where it may have gone wrong, considering it to be a wakeup call. It is important for the company to see and acknowledge the ‘failure value’ in projects, by learning from mistakes and try to capitalize on them by seeing the opportunities that they bring (Amabile, 1998; Amabile and Kharie, 2008). The critical step is to not just ignore why a project failed, but learn from it and not blame or ‘point fingers’ which can cause a hostile environment and hurt creative incentives in the future.

Everyone in the group needs to be motivated, if not, it taints the whole group, bringing everyone down. If a person loses interest for something, the leader must place them on some other task where they can perform. From our research, we have observed that there is a mutual support within the group and we recognize that this is vital for creativity.

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### 6.6.3 LEADER

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If the leader hands out extrinsic motivation the worker can feel either bribed, these factors should only be perceived and introduced as bonuses (Amabile, 1998). It is also important to refrain from putting too much attention on one person, and instead reward the group as a whole. If ideas are ridiculed, no one dares to come forwards with any suggestions (Oliver and Ashley, 2012). When a leader monitors every detail, the employee feels controlled. All these factors can kill creativity because it destroys the worker's motivation.

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### 6.6.4 RISK AND MISTAKES

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If risks are not made one may create bland ads that do not stick out (Oliver and Ashley, 2012). Research shows that more risk-taking correlates positively with successful award winning advertising (El-Murad and West, 2003). Peter Wetteus explains that they value risk; their ambition is to convince the client of its necessity so they can '*dare to succeed*' [own translation]. It allows them to aim a little higher. Here, creativity should be used as a tool. In order to dare to take risks, the moral support within the group is necessary to make it all seem reasonable (Jeff Goodby, 1992 as cited in Oliver and Ashley, 2012). When a mistake is made no individual is blamed, instead they move forward and learn from it. Mistakes should be allowed, if they are never made, the company lacks courage to dare enough. Most often, the agencies track back when they lose a pitch and consider the factors that may have caused it, for example if they have put emphasis on the wrong place of the project. They ask the client for feedback and find out who won the account.

All companies stated that risk taking was essential for the creative process, while Company 4 who was comfortable taking risks with their own resources, such as time, but do not act upon an idea for a client until they assure its success as much as possible. Nothing can be truly promised before the launch, therefore all ideas carry risk, and agency must gain trust from the client when doing this. It is also implied by the interviewee's that when it regards risk it is difficult because their big accounts allow little room to be creative, as those clients often have already set standards for the way advertising should look like for their company. Their challenge is to be creative within the limited parameters they are given or react by making a completely different suggestion they can motivate which the client may consider. After all, design is subjective and it is the client who is always in the right since it is they that the agency is working for, Karin Hellström says.

We conclude that risk is important; it is sometimes what the client is asking for. Advertising that has been the most successful have taken the biggest risks. It may be more difficult to do so as a small agency, where you are very dependent on the clients satisfaction and do not have as much room to be bold and lose accounts, potentially go on to be known for the wrong thing. It is a delicate balance that has to be decided upon. On the other hand, there is a negative aspect of not taking risk, jeopardizing the entire project and potentially make the advertisement mundane.

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## 7. DISCUSSION

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### 7.1 DISCUSSION

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Advertising is used as a tool to communicate the picture a company wishes to bring forth. The product or service must be able to reach the customer target. The advertising agency's competitive advantage is creativity. The right communication format is an art form. Creativity rests on a number of organizational conditions that must be considered and reviewed to allow it to flourish. Each topic discussed in the model of the analysis can be further studied and developed. During the studies more factors were discovered to have an effect on creativity. It appeared that the companies we interviewed were all located within the city walls of Gothenburg (Vallgraven), which suggested the location to be meaningful for this line of business. Clustered could be recognized. Studies could be made to find the reason for this, and the benefits it serves the company to be located in this area of the city. Our judgment of what is varying and challenging work is difficult to make, as our insight in the industry is not large enough.

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### 7.2 SUGGESTED FURTHER RESEARCH

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Further research to examine the management of creativity is to look closer on group sizes, and how it affects leadership and the platform on which creativity can flourish. A large number of advertising agencies are very small. In addition there were very few medium-sized advertising agencies, to which Petter Wetteus, the CEO of Frank and Earnest explained was very difficult to work with. More detailed information and studies could reveal specific guidelines for this and what companies should consider when they expand and how their size affects their business. Our research revealed that creativity is a very personal process, and the traits of the worker are essential to the company. Therefore it would be interesting to investigate the recruitment process in this industry. The characteristics of an individual prove themselves to be vital, so the advertising agencies must manage to find these people and make them part of their team, the question is how they do this.

The effect of rewards for creative accomplishment could be studied and observed more. The employee at Company 4 suggested that it would be motivating, while theories suggest otherwise. The result could be formatted and quantified in a way that would enable any company to use the information for their purposes.

## 8. CONCLUSION

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In conclusion it is apparent that a number of factors govern the conditions in which creativity can occur. The model we created: “Adapted and Reviewed Conceptual Model Underlying Assessment of Perceptions of the Work Environment of Creativity” covers the factors that lift or hinder creativity, it is quite complex as many aspects influence it. The ambition to understand creativity is a classic problem, it is of great value to companies across the board, yet the phenomenon is difficult to grasp. The model attempts to tackle the platform on that creativity takes place and thereby understand it, therefore the model is very thorough. The topics below the model (the overview) discuss and explain the implication of the each factors. The organizational elements are complex and interconnect in many ways (Amabile 1996; Oliver and Ashley, 2012). It is important for advertising agencies to reflect upon this in order for them to make the most efficient choices and ensure success. Creativity is the main resource an advertising agency has. It is their competitive advantage in the industry, and what clients need in order to reach their customer target. The culture dictates the way they work, how they structure the job that has to be done. There is a debate on what purpose formulas can serve in this regard (Oliver and Ashley, 2012). It is important to consider its benefits but keep an open mind during the usage of them, as creativity does not thrive on a specific format. The culture is the product of the group that composes the company, therefore the dynamic and composition is essential. Individuals who make up these groups form the basis of the company; they personal attributes and characteristics are the components, which contribute to the ‘whole’ of the agency. Their own thrives and motivation is what defines the company, therefore the selection of workers is crucial.

The leader holds the uppermost responsibility for the conditions that govern the creativity, especially in small organizations as their actions have larger impact in a limited environment. He or she has to aid the employee in their work as well as acting as a role model and providing creative input, and also has a number of tasks to take into account. Their role as well as their personal characteristics affects the company. Goals are unique for each project and difficult to generalize at the companies, although it is their ambition to be profitable in their work at all times. Creativity craves freedom to take form, but often the client sets such tight guidelines that it becomes difficult to be creative, instead it is the companies are challenged to be innovative within the parameters they are allowed to work within, or dare to make a completely new proposition which the client may consider. To build good relationships is meaningful in this business. Nothing can be promised prior to the launch

therefore trust from the client is important so they can create projects they believe will fulfill their wishes (CEO of Company 4, 2014, interview)

Creativity exists on its own through the people who join the working staff, yet their creativity can be blocked and hindered. It is very important to a company to consider what can cause these impediments to creativity as that poses the largest threat to creativity. This can make itself known in many ways. Ideas that are proposed must be respected and responded to. Mistakes are difficult to avoid, but how the agency reacts is critical to their development, how the interviewed companies proceeded to learn from the event. Risk is a delicate matter, whether they can take risks depends on the client the four companies' claim. Yet it is no one who wants to risk being boring.

Overall the people and their composition in the company are the main resources the agency has. The leader is part of the working force and selects the best people for what has to be done. The people in this industry are passionate about their work, and driven by intrinsic motivation to deliver great solutions. This makes the industry unique in comparison to many other professions.



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## APPENDIX

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### I. INTERVIEW DATES AND QUESTIONS

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#### INTERVIEWEES

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<b>Company</b>	<b>Title and Name</b>	<b>Date of Interview</b>	<b>Number of people at agency</b>
Company 1	CEO/Creative Director - Anonymous	2014-04-29	5
Nyla Design	CEO/Art Director <i>Caroline Eriksson</i>	2014-04-29	7
	Project Manager/Copywriter <i>Karin Hellström</i>	2014-05-14	
Frank and Earnest	CEO/ Art Director <i>Peter Wetteus</i>	2014-05-05	6
	Project Manager - Eva-Lena Wingsjö	2014-05-20	
Company 4	CEO/ Copywriter - Anonymous	2014-05-05	10
	Art Director - anonymous	2014-05-08	

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#### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

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#### QUESTIONS TO THE CEO

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#### INTRODUCTION

How many people work at the company?

Do you hire freelancers as well?

Can you briefly describe your work tasks?

What does a regular work day look like for you?

What responsibilities do you have within your role, in general?

#### COMPANY CULTURE

We have some questions regarding the company culture, could you describe company culture?

How would you describe your company culture?

Do you actively work with your company culture or do you let it develop on its own, organically?

How do you do it actively? In what way does it grow organically, how come it is organic?

Do you think the company culture governs the way you work? How? If not, what does govern the way you work?

### GOALS

Do you set up goals for how you want to work?

Who sets these goals in that case? How do you work to follow up these goals?

How involved are you in the working process? In what way?

How do you keep yourself updated during the work process?

Why are goals important to you?

### GROUP

What advantages do you see with being such a small company?

Do you work together on all the projects? (Individual work vs group work)

If no: Who forms the groups in how you work? What do you keep in mind when forming these groups?

### CREATIVITY

What does creativity mean to you?

What conditions do you have for creativity?

How do you find inspiration (in the daily life)?

Do you do anything apart from the regular work, within the working times, to gather inspiration? What?

How do you work actively to create creativity? How do you encourage creativity? Can you give an example?

Do you find that there are blocks or impediments to creativity? Give examples.

How can you as a leader stimulate creativity at the company? What do you do in that case?

### MOTIVATION AND REWARDS

What does motivation mean to you?

How do you motivate each other at the company?

Do you work actively to create motivation?

Does the company have a reward system for good work ? What does this look like in that case? If no - why not? If yes – Do they receive individual work or as a group?

#### MISTAKES AND FAILURES

How are mistakes and failures handled at the company? Simply, how do you proceed when it goes wrong? An example?

Do you think risk-taking is important for creativity? In what way?

#### QUESTIONS TO THE EMPLOYEE

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#### INTRODUCTION

What is your profession at the company?

Explain what a normal day at the office looks like.

#### COMPANY CULTURE

How would you describe your company culture? Does it influence the way you work, how?

Who creates the company culture / How is the company culture created? (Do you feel involved in creating this culture?)

#### GOALS

Do you have any goals you are aiming at, individually or collectively? Who sets the goals?

How involved is the CEO in your working process? In what way?

#### CREATIVITY

What presumptions do you have to work creatively? Describe.

How do you find inspiration, in the daily work?

Do you think you battle with any impediments for your creativity? Please give examples.

Do you believe that there is a company structure that blocks your creativity, or hurts it? If yes, please explain.

Do you believe that you have enough resources in your project to be creative? If yes, describe? If no, what are you missing?

#### MOTIVATION AND REWARDS

What does motivation mean to you?

How is motivation created in your job?

Are you motivated by the rewards you have?

Can you describe your workload, is it big or small, or enough, is there a lot of overtime?

Do you feel pressured to be creative, to develop creatively? How do you handle that?

Do you feel challenged in your work? Please explain.

#### MISTAKES AND RISK TAKING

How are creative failures and mistakes at your company, according to you?

Are you afraid to do anything wrong, to take risks? If no, why not?



## II. MODELS AND FIGURES

### THE GENERATIVITY MODEL

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>1. Broadens Knowledge and Skills</u></p> <p>One ambitiously acquires new knowledge and skills, outside of one's current experiences and capabilities.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>2. Capture New Ideas</u></p> <p>One notes and preserves ideas as they randomly occur, without judging and or changing them beforehand.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>3. Manage Surroundings</u></p> <p>One is surrounded with an environment that should include diverse and physical attributes. Social stimuli.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>4. Seeks Challenges</u></p> <p>One seeks challenges and learns from failures.</p>

Source: Robert Eptsein et al., 2013, 'How is Creativity Best Managed?'

**FIGURE 1: CONCEPTUAL MODEL UNDERLYING ASSESSMENT OF PERCEPTIONS OF THE WORK ENVIRONMENT OF CREATIVITY (AMABILE ET AL., 1996)**

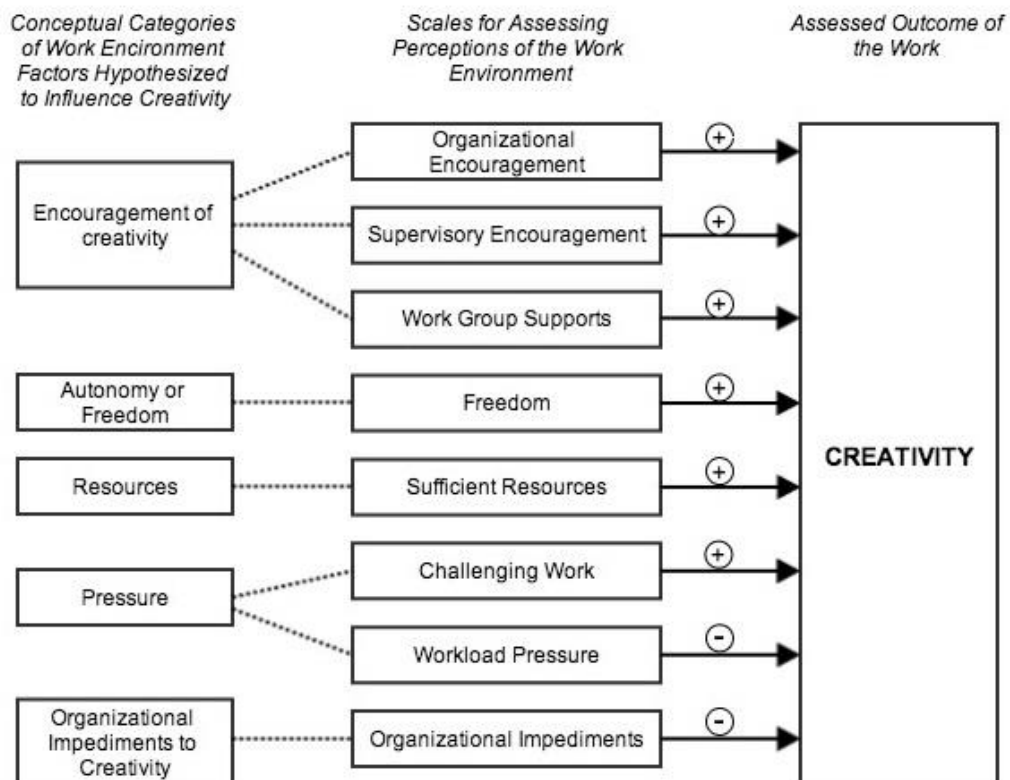


FIGURE 2: ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE AD CREATION PROCESS (OLIVER AND ASHLEY, 2012)

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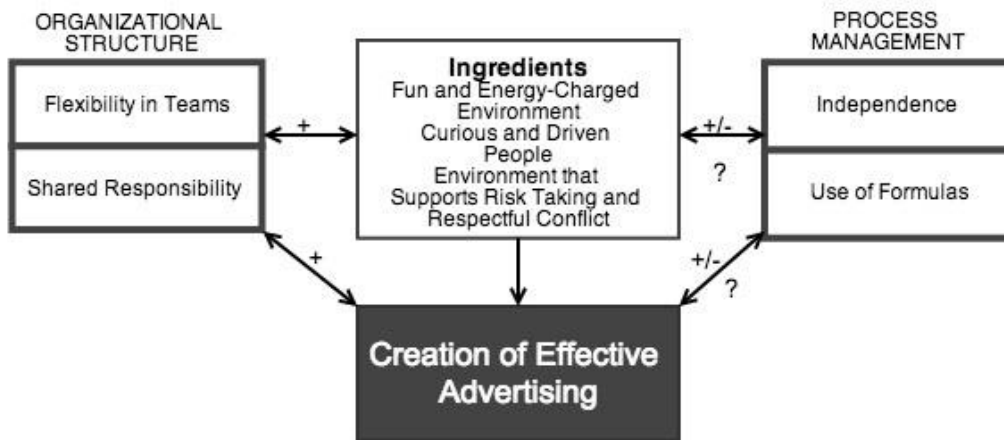


FIGURE 3: ADAPTED AND REVIEWED CONCEPTUAL MODEL UNDERLYING ASSESSMENT OF PERCEPTIONS OF THE WORK ENVIRONMENT OF CREATIVITY

