Cross culture management
-a comparison between
IKEA Canada and IKEA Sweden

Author: Klas Blomqvist
Tutour: Boel Wiklund
Preface

I would like to thank my tutor Boel Wiklund for his guidance and assistance during the time of this work.

I would also like to thank all the personnel at IKEA Sweden and IKEA Canada for their kindness and generosity.

Thanks to all the others that have been contributing with their help and support during this time.

15th of June 2006

Klas Blomqvist-Lindberg
Summary

Multinational companies existed as early as 2000 B.C.; the Assyrians, the Phoenicians, the Greeks and the Romans – they all had their own version of globalize trading. Multinational management is getting more and more necessary for all kinds of branches as the global market – metaphorical – is shrinking.

There are differences among the working culture in every country. The problem is in what way this affects the way of managing an organization. The purpose of this thesis is to get a greater insight on how difficult it can be to manage a global organization. My goal is to come up with results that will reflect this, and hopefully, come up with a best-practice way of dealing with these differences. The will attempt to answer the following;

Are there any differences in how IKEA in Sweden and in Canada are managed? If so; are they a result of national business culture differences? If not; why are there no differences?

This thesis is made using a qualitative method. The definition of what culture really is has been used in order to confirm that even a company has its own culture. To compliment this, earlier studies used to describe what the typical Swedish or Canadian business culture is like, has been used in this research. In addition, the IKEA cooperation and its concept has been described to get a better understanding how the organisation is operated. The empirical data section deals with the results from the interviews. Two managers of IKEA Sweden and two store managers of IKEA Canada were interviewed. Additionally, seven co-workers answered an open-questioned survey.

The main differences between IKEA Canada and IKEA Sweden are that IKEA Canada is trying harder to keep the IKEA culture, norms and values. The way that this is shown is that in a Canadian store, everyone is participating in team building activities, but in Sweden it is divided from department to department. The business culture in Canada compared to the business culture in Sweden is not that different though. There might even be more similarities between Canada and Sweden, then Canada and U.S.A. The Swedish-ness feeling is very strong in the stores, especially abroad. One thing I found particularly noticeable was a deli by the exit in the store of Ottawa, Canada; selling Swedish bread and jam etcetera.

IKEA’s way in coping with cultural differences is not very inspiring; it is very restricted to the IKEA way. It is how they are working on preserving their own values and norms that are remarkable. From the very first day as an employee you will feel the culture and values within IKEA, if you are not in tune with them they will be enforced upon you. The managers also participate in routine check ups to ensure that the staff is living by these norms, the staff answer questions regarding if the managers are working by them as well. You could say that IKEA fails on the aspect of taking in mind other countries’ cultures. They should know about the different cultures in the countries where they enter, in order not to offend anyone. But on the other hand, if they did, they would get lost. It is almost impossible for them to be that flexible. They should stick to their concept – it has been a winning concept so far.

The main concerns for a multinational cooperation, such as IKEA, are to make sure they have a strong culture on their own. They should have clear values and norms and this should be diffused throughout the entire organization. It is also necessary that everyone feels comfortable making their voice heard working in an environment with conflicting cultures. If IKEA would not be so open in the organization and having such a flat hierarchy there probably would be a lot more complications.
Table of contents

1 INTRODUCTION .............................................................................................................................................. 6

   1.1 BACKGROUND ................................................................................................................................. 6
   1.2 PRESENTATION OF THE PROBLEM .............................................................................................. 6
   1.3 PURPOSE ......................................................................................................................................... 7
   1.4 CHOICE OF COUNTRIES .................................................................................................................. 7
   1.5 LIMITATIONS ..................................................................................................................................... 8
   1.6 DISPOSITION ..................................................................................................................................... 8
   1.7 EARLIER RESEARCH ....................................................................................................................... 8

2 RESEARCH METHODS ................................................................................................................................. 9

   2.1 SCIENTIFIC AIM AND DIRECTION AND RESEARCH APPROACH ............................................... 9
   2.2 SELECTION ...................................................................................................................................... 10
   2.3 INTERVIEWS .................................................................................................................................... 10
   2.4 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY .......................................................................................................... 12
   2.5 PROCEDURE ..................................................................................................................................... 12
   2.5.1 THE STORE MANAGER OF IKEA BOUCHERVILLE, CANADA .................................................... 13
   2.5.2 THE STORE MANAGER OF IKEA OTTAWA .............................................................................. 13
   2.5.3 THE EMPLOYEE MANAGER OF IKEA RETAIL SWEDEN ............................................................ 14
   2.5.4 THE EMPLOYEE MANAGER OF IKEA KUNGENS KURVA, SWEDEN ......................................... 14
   2.5.5 MY THOUGHTS ABOUT THE INTERVIEWS AND THE WAREHOUSES ..................................... 14

3 THEORY ....................................................................................................................................................... 16

   3.1 WHAT IS CULTURE? ......................................................................................................................... 16
   3.2 TODAY’S INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT ................................................................. 18
   3.3 COMPANY CULTURE ....................................................................................................................... 19
   3.4 WHAT MANAGEMENT IS .................................................................................................................. 20
   3.5 SWEDISH BUSINESS CULTURE ...................................................................................................... 21
   3.5.1 EARLIER RESEARCHES ABOUT SWEDISH BUSINESS CULTURE ................................................. 23
   3.6 NORTH AMERICAN BUSINESS CULTURE .................................................................................... 24
   3.7 HOW TO HANDLE AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS .......................................................... 27
   3.8 MERGING ACROSS BOARDERS ...................................................................................................... 29

4 EMPIRICAL STUDIES .................................................................................................................................. 31

   4.1 THE HISTORY OF IKEA ..................................................................................................................... 31
   4.2 IKEA’S THOUGHTS AND VISIONS ................................................................................................. 31
   4.3 IKEA’S ORGANISATION .................................................................................................................... 32
   4.4 WORKING FOR IKEA ........................................................................................................................ 32
   4.5 THE IKEA STORES .......................................................................................................................... 33

5 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS .......................................................................................................................... 34

   5.1 THE DISPOSITION OF THE ANALYSIS .......................................................................................... 34
   5.2 BUSINESS CULTURE ...................................................................................................................... 34
   5.2.1 IKEA SWEDEN’S BUSINESS CULTURE .................................................................................... 34
   5.2.2 IKEA CANADA’S BUSINESS CULTURE COMPARED TO IKEA SWEDEN .................................... 36
   5.3 THE REASONS FOR THE DIFFERENCES OF THE BUSINESS CULTURES ..................................... 38
   5.4.1 MAINTAINING VALUES AND CULTURE IN A MULTINATIONAL COMPANY ......................... 39
1 Introduction

In this first chapter the background for the choice of subject will be explained. My choice of organization for this research paper will also be introduced. Additionally, a description of what the purpose of this thesis aims to fulfil and the problem statement will be presented.

1.1 Background

Multinational companies existed as early as 2 000 B.C. - the Assyrians, the Phoenicians, the Greeks and the Romans – they all had their own version of globalize trading.\(^1\) The fast-growing technique and several other reasons, both on the economical side – regarding the introduction of the European joint currency; Euro, for example – and on the political side – the opening of the boarders of China – has been a groundbreaking way for globalization of different organizations.

International business transactions are emerging from multi-functional, multi-disciplines, and multi-contacts among home and host nations. Technological development of today’s business transactions among nations - through the borderless information such as the World Wide Web (WWW) – has brought nations together. In addition; demographic movements among nations have provided new opportunities to assimilate different cultures, races, genders, age groups, and religious into a new form of international-namely multiculturalism.\(^2\) Thanks to today’s traveling and modern information technology the intercultural meetings has multiplied several times. Intercultural communication skills can contribute to successful negotiations, where you are depending on the results to be able to solve global problems.\(^3\) Studies have shown that there are highly significant differences in the behavior and attitudes of employees and managers from different countries that worked within multinational corporations. Corporate managers and workers of multinational corporations must truly understand and effectively interact with other people from other cultures. They must understand both home and host countries’ formal and informal values, rules, structures, norms, and attitudes of people and the real cultural criteria for solving social issues.\(^4\)

Companies become more and more highly aware of the potentials which a multinational market brings – they can start or move branch offices, boutiques, production or any other parts of the organization across the globe, partly to seek new markets, but also for finding cheaper workforce. This will create great opportunities for the organization’s expansion. We will most likely see a substantial increase of organizations, which will widen their geographical views in the future. Nevertheless it is not as simple as to make the decision, pack the bags and take of. It can occur essential problems regarding that there highly might be an entirely other way to run the companies, different opinions on how the employees should handle their work and so on, in the other country – different business cultures in other words. It is these cultural differences in how to manage a multinational company that will be taking under a greater look with this thesis.

1.2 Presentation of the problem

First of all there are differences in the cultures in general between countries, in addition to this, there are differences among the working cultures in different countries as well. The problem is how this affects the way of managing the organization.

\(^1\) G. Hofstede, 2005, p. 29
\(^2\) K. Becker, 1999, p. 2
\(^3\) B. Bjerke, p. 335
\(^4\) K. Becker, 1999, p. 7
IKEA is a Swedish furniture company that works worldwide. It has a highly strong business culture with a strong Swedish image. It has succeeded exceptionally well abroad. It is interesting to look at how the different stores are dealing with the cultural differences, regarding the different kinds of business culture there are in that specific country compared to the business culture in IKEA. IKEA is a company which has two headquarters; one in Älmhult - in Sweden, and one in the Netherlands. There are also different branches all around the world - Europe, North America, Middle East and Asia.5

With this in mind; the questions to be concentrated on are: Are there any differences in how IKEA in Sweden and in Canada are managed? If so; are they a result of national business culture differences? If not; why are there no differences?

1.3 Purpose
The purpose of this thesis is to get a greater insight on how difficult it can be to manage a global organization. The goal is to come up with a result that will reflect this and hopefully come up with a solution dealing with these differences.

1.4 Choice of countries
The reason for looking more deeply into the differences between Sweden and Canada is that, first of all I am Swedish, so I feel very comfortable with writing about the Swedish way of work. Secondly, Canada is quite an interesting market because the buying potential among the customers there are high.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purchasing power parities</th>
<th>OECD = 100</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>117</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>148</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>109</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>109</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>105</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>103</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>109</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>114</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.1. The top five sales countries for IKEA.

Table 1.2. Purchasing power parities compared 2000.

Although the United States have a highly strong market, there may be other circumstances that one needs to take into account. Everything you do may have an impact on the views of the company. Working on a global market you have to look at the political effects of working at certain markets. As the United States has a pretty strong foreign politics, a lot of people have some opinions about the United States - good and bad. From my point of view the opinion is more closely to the negative aspect. I believe that the customers in Arab countries might have some opinions if you focus too hard at the American market. Therefore it might be a good idea to focus on the other North American market – the Canadian market.

---

5 http://www.ikea.com/ms/sv_SE/about_ikea/facts_figures/
6 http://www.scb.se/templates/Publikation___46689.asp
1.5 Limitations
Due to the fact that this is a very large subject and there is a great amount of literature about
cross-cultural management, there have to be restrictions about the information being used.
Subsequently, the boundaries have been set when it comes to the types of cross cultural
difficulties which may influence the company. Rather than incorporating all the types of
differences, such as religion and ethnicity at their individual level, this thesis will consider
cross-cultural difficulties as a general conception for these differences. Further more the
different aspects of the organization of IKEA across the world will not be brought up, the
focus will be strictly on certain stores at IKEA Sweden and IKEA Canada. National
differences that might cause difficulties on a national level will not be a matter of subject in
this thesis either, such differences as the bi-language aspects in Canada (French and
English).

1.6 Disposition
First of all the choice of method will be discussed. The reason why this form of methodology
has been used will be discussed and the problems this might give to the analyses. Next,
different theories about international management will be presented, focusing on cross-culture
management. Subsequent to this, the empirical data will be presented, this data has been
received from several interviews and surveys. These empirical data will be mentioned in the
result section of the thesis, but will be completely included in the appendix. The results will
be analyzed based on the different theories in the analysis, and then finally a conclusion will
be presented which hopefully will answer the questions in the presentation of the problem.

1.7 Earlier research
As been described earlier there are a substantial amount of literature available, but also, many
earlier researches about what culture is, what effect it has on co-operations, what different
types of management there are and what might be the best type for an international market.
There are also many researches done about IKEA. These have been used to get an idea of what
the questions should be when meeting the managers of IKEA. One of the researches that was
interesting was about how the business culture of IKEA is spread throughout the
organization.\(^7\) This was a thesis based on the business culture, and recruiting at IKEA
Kungens Kurva, Sweden and IKEA Khimki, Russia. The second was a case study of IKEA in
Italy.\(^8\) The authors of that thesis were trying to understand how the interaction between the
culture of IKEA and the culture of Italy works.

2 Research Methods

In this second chapter the science approach and the choice of research method will be described.

2.1 Scientific aim and direction and research approach

There are different approaches in developing a thesis. Each approach has its own pros and cons. In empirical researches the theoretical referent frames and the empirical data goes hand in hand. Theories which are not based on empirical data can easily be speculations, while empirical researches without anchoring in a theoretical referent frame can easily be isolated descriptions of a certain phenomena, that will not really give any new insight and help you understand that phenomena. In order to investigate divergence carriers, the scientist can proceed from a stamping theory and see if the empirical data confirms the theory or not. A projection like that, “from theory to empirical”, is called *deductive* which implies a conduction from the general to the concrete.9

Another approach could be to start the research with the starting point in the empirical materials. This means that you start with collecting data, with the purpose to find general patterns that can be made as theories or general conceptions. This approach, “from empirical to theory”, is called *inductive*.10

“This approach requires a lot of work, and is often not recommended by the teachers for a thesis for a bachelor degree.”11

*B. Wiklund (2005)*

In order to gather empirical data there are two different methods; quantitative and qualitative method. Quantitative method is when you, for example, hand out several surveys. When those are all answered you will be able to calculate different percentages of different activities etcetera. The qualitative method, on the other hand, is more about having long interviews with a smaller amount of people in order to get more detailed information. The purpose of this method is to receive more thorough descriptions, and it is especially useful when you do not know so much about a phenomena or when only small amounts of researches have already been done.12

Qualitative researches seldom give a foundation, which can be used for generalization results. On the other hand the phenomenon might be so complex that a quantitative research might give too little insight. A quantitative research can ensure more external validity then what a qualitative research can, but a qualitative research makes it possible to transfer results to related areas.13

---

9 A.Johannessen & P.A Tufte, 2003, p. 35
10 ibid, p. 35
11 Boel Wiklund, 2005.
12 A.Johannessen & P.A Tufte, 2003, p. 67
13 ibid, p. 246
As the purpose of this thesis is to get a more thorough knowledge and understanding how IKEA Sweden and IKEA Canada works the qualitative method will be used with a deductive approach, as a quantitative approach would not give the same detailed information. Four key persons will be interviewed – these are managers of different sorts at IKEA Sweden and IKEA Canada. In order to enrich the validity from the interviews of the managers employees at one store in Canada will be questioned. An interview guide will be used for the interviews and open-answered-question surveys will be used for the employees.

2.2 Selection
When doing a quality research it is not normal procedure to recruit informants by a random sample. The purpose with qualitative approaches is to generate transferable knowledge and not to make statistical generalizations. Therefore you do a so-called strategic choice, which means that the scientist, on purpose, chooses who is to participate in the research. The basis of the choice of informants in a quality research is suitability.14

There is several ways to make a strategic choice. The goal was to get in touch with people who have a great insight on how IKEA, in their country is managed and to locate people who could help out finding other people who could be interesting for the research purpose. This is a great way to get in touch with “the right people” as fast as possible. These two types of selection are described by A. Johannessen & P.A. Tufte (2003):15

- **Intensive selection** – People that are strongly characterized of a distinctive feature. The reason of choosing this type of selection strategy is to get people who can contribute with a lot of valid information.

- **Snowball method** – You are recruiting the informants by doing interrogations of which informants that might know a lot about the subject. These people might be able to tip you about other informants that might be of a current interest – a snowball effect.

2.3 Interviews
When you are doing a research with a quality approach there are several ways to get your data. The quality data, or “soft” data, is often a form of shorter or longer texts that has to be processed and interpreted. If you would use a quantitative approach the danger would be that the research might be stiff-legged and would only give answers on what the scientist him-/herself considers to be important. As a result you risk neglecting valid information.16

---

14 A.Johannessen & P.A Tufte, 2003, p. 84
15 ibid, p. 84
16 A.Johannessen & P.A Tufte, 2003, p. 69
### Table 2.1 Characteristics for quantitative and qualitative approaches in social science methodic.\(^{17}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of data</th>
<th>Quality approach</th>
<th>Quantitative approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of data</td>
<td>Qualitative (soft) data, meaning text sections (poss. Picture and sound clips) which illustrate theoretical “variables” or categories</td>
<td>Quantitative (hard) data, meaning theoretical variables reshapes to operational variables that can be measured with operational numbers or by the information will be reshaped into speech codes. Proportionately small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Big</td>
<td>Counting operations after the data collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data analysis</td>
<td>Interpret, In consecutive order and integrated with the data collection.</td>
<td>Statistical generalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use beyond the concrete examination</td>
<td>Transferability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The quality interviews can be more or less structured. One of the extremes is *structured interviews* with a fixed set of questions where the questions and the order are determined before the interview. This is almost like the quantitative questions, all though the questions are open, which means that the answer-alternatives are not formulated in advance. The informant will formulate his/her own answers. The answers will show how the informant understood the questions; the scientist has less influence in how the informant will answer then the pre-formulated answers. Consequently the scientist will get more contexts around the answers. This is important when the scientist shall interpret the answers.\(^{18}\)

The other extreme is *unstructured interviews*. The formulation of the questions and the order is not pre-decided. The interview is more like a conversation. The benefits of this kind of interview are that, first of all, it makes an informal atmosphere, which will make it easier for the informant to talk. The procedure is also very flexible; the scientist can be open for individual differences among the informants. The negative aspect is that it might be difficult to compare the informant’s answers afterwards, as the information is not standardized. There is also a risk that the relationship between the scientist and the informant might be very vital for the information that will appear.\(^{19}\)

Between these two extremes there is the most widespread form of qualitative interviews, which is the *part structured interviews*, also called the interviews that are based on an interview guide. An interview guide is not a questionnaire; it is a list of themes and general questions that will be brought up during the interview. The guide often contains sub-themes and sub-questions, which will contribute that all the themes get covered and gets deepened.\(^{20}\) During the interview the structure can be changed, you can also make consequence or deeper questions. There might be new and interesting themes that need to be followed up. Even the informant might have greater influence on how the quality interview will go about and what information will emerge.\(^{21}\)

---

\(^{17}\) ibid, p. 70 Table 6.1  
\(^{18}\) ibid, p. 97  
\(^{19}\) ibid, p. 98  
\(^{20}\) A.Johannessen & P.A Tufte, 2003, p. 98  
\(^{21}\) ibid, p. 67
When using a survey – and still sticking to the quality method – you can use so called open-answered questions. So the interviewed person can answer with their own words, which will give a much greater insight. This is particular good when dealing with such abstract questions as questions about attitudes, values and culture.22

2.4 Validity and reliability
Now there will be some enlightnenes on what might be misleading parts in a thesis. First of all the scientist might be insufficient updated within the area that is being studied. This might lead to that certain theoretical aspects, conceptions or earlier results being disregarded. Therefore the scientist should devote a lot of time to go through existing literature. Another problem might be that the scientist questions can not be illustrated in a reasonable aspect. The scientist should think about if the scientist questions are possible to do a research on, or if the questions might be too ambitious. He or she should also think about if there are any ethical apprehensions with the subject and/or the way to go about. A third problem might be that the scientist chooses a design of the research that is not appropriate for the purposes of the investigation.23

Other possible problems might be the way the scientist has chosen the strategically-selection, in the case of this thesis; the wrong kind of managers. May be they will not be able to really contribute with any valid information/knowledge. When it comes to strategic-selection it is important to decide the right amount of respondents in order to get the necessary information. The scientist can also run into problems such as if the respondents would cancel an appointment - falling off by the respondents or if they would answer incorrectly - faulty. In all inquiries there are respondents who do not want to or can not answer. Therefore the shaping of the questions are very important. The respondent has to understand the questions and not feel discomfort in answering them.24

These problems have been taking care of by checking how they answered the questions. If they talked openly about the subjects, or if they were holding back. The questions would be changed, if that was the case, so it would work better for the next interview. The choice of using both strategically-selection and the snowball-method when choosing the managers helps in the way of dealing with the possible problems when it comes to the selection. The information that was received from them was backed up with open-questioned surveys from the staff.

2.5 Procedure
Intensive selection was used in order to get in touch with the “right kind” of people. The customer service of Sweden was called, and was asked for the name and number to the employee manager of IKEA Sweden, as well as for names and phone numbers for people of the HRM department of IKEA Canada. This is how Staffan Lindquist (employee manager, IKEA Retail Sweden) and Marie Bergman (employee manager, IKEA Kungens Kurva) were contacted. Several names and numbers to different store managers of IKEA Canada were also given by this way. Not all of them answered though. When speaking with Staffan Lindquist, he contributed with some more names to call in Canada – the snowball method. This is how I got in touch with the store managers of IKEA Boucherville, Julie Sennot, - and IKEA Ottawa, Joanne Mutter.

There was a personal interview with Joanne Mutter, due to unforeseeable complications the interview with Julie Sennot had to been done by phone though. As I am more familiar with

23 ibid, p. 245
24 ibid, p. 250
IKEA in Sweden I settled with phone interviews with both Staffan Lindquist and Marie Bergman.

For the interviews with the managers an interview guide was used. This was to ensure that all the themes were covered and it also made it possible to go in depth into some of these themes if that was necessary. For the employees, a structured interview was used. The reason for this was that all the participants had to be interviewed while they were working, so there were not any time for any other kind of interviews. The survey consisted of open-answered questions in order to make sure it was not too shallow.

The interviewed employees was picked out by the store manager of IKEA Ottawa. She randomly handed me over to different employees, mostly managers of some sort though. The people of the bed and kitchen department was not to be interviewed though, as they were too busy. There might have been more interesting people to interview that was missed out due to this type of selection; they might have for example been away for the moment. The number of interviewed people was not set from the beginning. As many as possible were interviewed during the time in the store (about 2 hours). Seven employees were interviewed in total. The mean of how long they have been working for IKEA was about 8 years. They had all kinds of positions – customer service, office planer and home furnishing consultant and several sales managers.

There will be a summary of these interviews in the appendix along with the interview guide and the questionnarie.

2.5.1 The store manager of IKEA Boucherville, Canada

The interview with Julie Synnott was made by phone. It was planned to be a personal interview from the beginning but had to be changed to a phone interview, after hand I do not think it had any impact on the outcome of the interview. Julie Synnott was very helpful and took her time to really try to answer all the questions as thorough as she could. The interview took place on the 7th of November 2005 and was about 33 minutes long.

Julie Synnott has about 10 years experience of management work at a retail sail company and yet several years in the HR department at another company in Canada. At the time of the interview she was the store manager of IKEA Boucherville, which she had been for a year. Julie started her carrier at IKEA 2002 and she has been working for Boucherville since the opening of that store.

2.5.2 The store manager of IKEA Ottawa

The personal interview with Joanne Mutter was about a 30 minutes long and it was made on the 10th of November 2005. She was very open in her answers and gave each question time and answered them as well as she could. It felt as if the questions were answered even better than expected.

Joanne has been in retail since she was 16 years old, so she has always worked in this type of industry. Joanne has been working in a smaller Canadian organization before IKEA, where she supervised 25 small stores. She worked there for a long time before she decided it was time for a change. IKEA was looking for an assistance store managers and Joanne got the position for assistant managers for sales. Eight months later, she became the store manager at IKEA Ottawa. Joanne has worked for IKEA for about four years by the time of the interview.

25 Appendix 4,5
26 Appendix 6
27 Appendix 1
2.5.3 The employee manager of IKEA Retail Sweden

The interview with Staffan Lindqvist on the 8th of December was a telephone interview; it lasted for about a 30 minutes. In order to remember the answers a tape recorder during the interview was used, which of course was granted by Staffan. Just like the other interviews the questions of this interview were answered very well, even better then one could wish for. Staffan really was happy to answer the questions and made a great job doing so.

Staffan is the employee manager of IKEA Retail Sweden. He has overarching responsible for Retail Sweden, which has the responsibility of all the stores in Sweden and the service office – IKEA’s service organization in Helsingborg. They are about 4,700 employees in total. Staffan has had different employee manager roles before this position. He has also been living in Brussels where he been working in HR areas. Staffan been working for eight years at IKEA – within assortments, HR and copyright. Now he is in retail, since a few weeks back.

2.5.4 The employee manager of IKEA Kungens Kurva, Sweden

The interview with the staff manager of IKEA Kungens Kurva, Marie Bergman, was on the 8th of December. Just like the other phone interviews it was recorded by a tape, granted by her. The interview lasted for about 30 minutes. She was really helpful with answering satisfactionally all the questions.

Marie works with recruitments and education as the staff manager. When it comes to education she works with the entire store. The other staff managers that she works with handle the recruitments on their specific departments. Marie has been working with recruitment at different companies before she started at IKEA. She started at an IKEA department called Work IKEA, where she was a sales-person towards companies and private customers. She has also been working as a group manager within the customer service, and at the department where the customers can hand in their children, where she worked for about a year. After that she started at the staff department around 2004.

2.5.5 My thoughts about the interviews and the warehouses

As described, the interviews were in general very good. All of the managers’ answers were delightful. They really took their time to think about the answers and made sure that they were as detailed as possible. The atmosphere was relaxing, both with the personal interview and the telephone interviews, it did not feel rushed in any way.

It is necessary to point out that those who were interviewed were a bit biased as they were answering questions about their own organization, plus you have to keep in mind that this is a public document and they might not want to give too hard critics about the way the company works.

It should be mentioned that most of those who were participating in the surveys were Caucasian women of middle age (five out of seven). This might not be representative of the entire organisation, therefore it is difficult to say that this sample will give accurate results. They all tried to answer the questions as good as they could though and they took their time to answer it - no question was left unanswered.

Another thing that might have had an impact on the interviews is me myself. The fact that I am Swedish might have an affect on my own questions. But I have tried to be as open minded as possible listeneing to what the interviewed managers had to say, and also continued up if new interesting questions popped up.

28 Appendix 2.
A pretty funny thing to be added and which underlines the analysis in the next chapter is on my way to the interview with Joanne Muttter, in Ottawa, I heard a radio-commercial for IKEA. I can not really recall what it was about, but the thing that I noticed was that the person who was talking, talked with a very big Swedish accent.
3 Theory
In the third chapter the theories will be explained and the conceptions of the area of subject.

3.1 What is culture?
In order to make a thesis about cross-cultural differences it is necessary to briefly describe what the concept “culture” is. The word “culture” has many different meanings, which all originates from its Latin origin where it refers to cultivating the soil. In the most western languages “culture” usually means “civilization” or “intellectual refinement”. This is “culture in the narrow sense”.

There are many opinions in what a culture contains. A common conception is that culture is associated with human values. The regular conception about the word “culture” has links to “correct behavior”, education and even snobbery. On the contrary the social scientist puts a far wider meaning in the term “culture”, which brings us far beyond just a personal sophistication. In scientific theory culture is considered as a foundational aspect of life. All human beings have culture. Within the social-anthropologists “culture” is a gathering-name on all the patterns of thoughts, feelings and the way to act. The term does not only include activities that concern to refine the intellect, but as well the everyday and simple things that life includes: to say hi, eat, hide emotions and keep a physical distance from others, to love or take care of the body’s hygiene.

Hofstede has another theory on what culture is and what complications it can bring. Human beings are carrying on a “mental program”, which has been developed within the family in early childhood and have been enforced in schools and other organizations later on. Each human being’s mental programming is to some extent unique and to some extent shared with others. Culture is something that you learn, nothing that you are born with, it origins from our social environment rather then from our genes. Culture should be separated from the human nature and from the individual personality (see figure 3.1). Exactly where the boundaries are between nature and culture and between culture and personality is a question that has being discussed among social scientists.

![Figure 3.1 Uniqueness on three levels I the humans’ mental programming.](image)

The most fundamental (but also the less unique) programming level is the human nature. This is the level of culture that all humans have. Our genes decide it. It includes the ability to feel

---

29 G. Hofstede, 2005, p. 17
30 B. Bjerke, 1999, p. 12
31 ibid, p. 14
32 G. Hofstede, 2005, p. 17
33 ibid, p. 16
happiness, fear, anger, joy, shame, the need of being together. What to do about these feelings, how to show fear, happiness and such is however affected by the culture.

The individual’s personality level, on the other hand, is the unique part of us. There are not two human beings that have been programmed in exact the same way, even if they are identical twins who have grown up together. The personality level is based on features that partly are inherited and determined of the individual unique set of genes and partly learnt. Learnt means: modified by the influence of the collective programming - the culture - and by the individual’s unique personal experiences.34

It is on the cultural level where the most - if not the entire - of our mental programming is input. We share the same level and have it mutually with other people who have gone through the same in-learning process and with them who identifies themselves as its members.

The cultural differences find expression in different ways. Of all the terms that are being used to describe the cultural manifestations these four following, together, covers the entire phenomena: symbols, heroes, rituals and values. In the figure 3.2 these have been drawn as the shell-levels on a onion in order to show that symbols represents the most superficial cultural manifestations, values the deepest, while heroes and rituals lands somewhere in between.

![Figure 3.2 the onion-diagram: cultural manifestations at different levels.](image)

Symbols are words, gestures, pictures or objects that have a particular meaning for the people in a certain culture, but not for others. The words in a language or a jargon belong to this category. New symbols are developed easily and old disappears; cultures often copies from each others’ symbols. It is because of this that the symbols have been put in the outer layer.

Heroes are persons – living or dead, real or fictional – who have features that are highly valued within a culture, and therefore become role models. Even Barbie, Batman or, for a contrast, Snoopy, have worked as cultural heroes in USA, Asterix in France and Ollie B. Bommel (Mr. Bumble) in the Netherlands.

Rituals are collective activities that really are not needed in order to achieve certain goals, but are regarded as socially important within a culture. The way to greet and the way to show respect for others, social and religious ceremonies are examples of rituals. In figure 3.2

---

34 G. Hofstede, 2005, p. 18
35 ibid, p. 20
symbols, heroes and rituals have arranged under the term *practices*. Such practices are visible for an outsider; their cultural meaning are however invisible and consists precisely and only in how they are interpreted by the initiated.

The core of a culture consists of values, according to figure 3.2. Values are ordinary tendencies to prefer certain circumstances instead of others. Values are feelings which are either positive or negative – that has a plus- or minus side. It has to do with:

- **Bad** – **Good**
- **Dirty** – **Clean**
- **Forbidden** – **Allowed**
- **Ugly** – **Beautiful**
- **Abnormal** – **Normal**

Values are acquired early in life. On the contrary of animals human beings are poorly prepared to make it on their own by birth. The human beings have - gratefully due to their physicals - a period around ten and twelve years when they have an extremely good ability to seize important information from the surroundings. This is regarding symbols, the language, heroes – like our parents, rituals, toilet-training, and most important our foundational values. By the end of this period this will gradually be transferred to another, consciously way to learn, when we first of all focuses on new practices. This process is illustrated in figure 3.3.

![Figure 3.3 Learning of values and practices.](image)

### 3.2 Today’s international business environment

International businesses must constantly be aware of the key variables in their environments. There are some factors which are very important to understand; like the nature of all kind of international business entities. These factors are ownership, investment, management and controlling system, marketing segmentation, subsidiaries’ autonomy, and consumers’ lifestyles. For the clarity of the different types of international business these will now be explained.

**Global Corporations**

A Global Corporation is a business entity, which obtains the factors of production from all countries without restriction and/or discrimination against by both home and host countries and markets its products and/or services around the globe for the purpose of profits. These organizations around the globe serve their investors, managers, employees and consumers regardless of their socio-political and economic differences.

---

36 G. Hofstede, 2005, p. 22. Figure 1.3
37 K. Becker, 1999, p. 12
Multinational Corporations
A Multinational Corporation (MNC) is a highly developed organization with deep worldwide involvement in obtaining the factors of production from multiple countries around the world, and manufactures its products and markets them in specific international markets.

International Corporations
An International Corporation (IC) is a domestic entity which operates its production activities in full-scale home and markets its products and/or services beyond its national geographic and/or political borders. In return it imports the value added monetary incomes to its country. It engages in exporting goods, services, and management.

Foreign Corporations
A Foreign Corporation (FC) is a business entity which has its assets invested by a group of foreigners to operate its production system and markets its products and/or services in host countries for the purpose of making profits. These corporations are controlled and managed by foreigners to the extent in which to adopt to the rules and regulations of the host countries.

Transnational Corporations
A Transnational Corporation (TNC) refers to an organization whose management and ownership are divided equally among two or more nations. These corporations acquire their factors of production around the world and market them in specific countries. This term is most commonly used by the European countries.

3.3 Company culture
Sometimes culture-anthropologists do research in industrial- and business economical contexts. These types of studies focuses on if organizations can be looked upon as societies in miniature with distinctive social structures, which can be reflected in different patterns for actions, languages, discourses, laws, rolls, rituals, habits, ceremonies, histories, myths and so on. In short, business organisations can be viewed upon as mini-cultures that operate in a wider national culture context, but can be viewed upon as cultures in its own as well. A company’s culture is reflected by the attitudes and values, the manager style and the problem solving behavior by its members.

![Figure 3.4 The strategic recipe in a cultural net.](image)
A certain recipe, shown in figure 3.4, can describe how to organize the organizational culture. Critical questions that an analyzing businessman might ask in order to find out the organizational culture might be:

38 B. Bjerke, 1999, p. 16
39 ibid, p. 39
40 B. Bjerke, 1999, p. 42
A. Stories and myths (for example the history of the company)
   1. Which central conceptions are being reflected in the stories?
   2. How strong are these conceptions among those in the management?
   3. How piercing are these conceptions (through the levels)?
   4. How do the conceptions influence the company’s strength and weaknesses?

B. Rituals and symbols
   1. What language is being used in order to describe the organization and its activities?
   2. What is the dominating attitude among each interest group?

C. Leadership and manager style
   1. What central conceptions are there among the top management?
   2. What aspects are being officially emphasized (for example in the annual report)?
   3. What are the features that they look for in new employments?

D. Structure and system
   1. Does structure/system encourage team working or competition?
   2. What kind of training is given?

3.4 What management is
Management is a word which is often used in the business economical literature as well as in the practical business reality today. Its use goes back in time, till the history of industrialism - when owners got separated from the administration. I.e. when the farmers owned too many manufacture places in order to handle them their selves. Therefore they nominated “bosses” who would take care of the management of some of these manufacture places. Later on the word “boss” got commonly used when the ownership was spread over several individuals and institutions and when a legal form of companies such as “inc” got established and bosses were dealing with the planning, supervising and controlling tasks.

Today “leadership” stands for almost any type of administration at different levels in a company - private as well as public - but administration positions are also within non-profit organizations such as sport teams, trade unions and government institutions. “Leadership” and “bossing” is seldom synonyms nowadays. Some people look upon leadership as a function of bossing: “The boss function to lead is being defined by the process of influence people so they will contribute to the organisation’s and group’s goals.” Others look upon leadership as a “higher competence” then bossing: “A leader is an individual within an organisation who has the ability to influence attitudes and opinions of others in the organisation; a boss only has the ability to influence their acts and decisions. Peter Drucker has pointed out that bosses are people who does things right (inner effectiveness); leaders are people who do the right things (outer effectiveness).41

The management students and their teachers have a tendency to divide the world in two separate spheres: numbers and humans. There are “hard” subjects, which are finance and projecting and “soft” subjects such as leadership and organisational behavior. This dividing enhances by earlier thoughts about; on one hand Taylor’s scientist management and, on the other hand, on social relations. As if there was a question of competing theories. It is only in the lecture room this dividing can be reasonable. Skilful business leaders know that the real challenge lays in ability to seamless combine both of the approaches to a functional completeness.42

41 B. Bjerke, 1999, p. 72
42 J. Magretta, 2002, p. 200
The company management role is to create an organisation that works. Behind all theories and instruments lays a substantial degree of commitment to achieve results, and this has changed our economy and our lives. Management should be looked upon as something separated from individual business leaders. J. Magretta (2002) tried to describe what management really is, but she started by describing what it is not.43

“Management is not about supervising over other persons, it is not about applied national economics, it is not about to set a privileged peg hole in a hierarchy, and it is not restricted to commercial companies.”

J. Magretta (2002)

On the other hand J. Magretta (2002) described that the management purpose is to create value, where value is being defined from out in, by customers and owners.

3.5 Swedish business culture

There is not that much literature about solely Swedish business culture. Therefore literature that discuss Scandinavian business culture have been used. Scandinavia encompasses the countries: Sweden, Denmark and Norway. The reason for this being appropriate is that these three Scandinavian countries often are gathered as one culture group.44

The stereotypic opinion about Scandinavian enterprises is that they exist of export-tendencies multinational companies, this is an opinion widely spread among foreigners. The Scandinavian economical life is both isolated and international at the same time. Scandinavians preserve an enormous proud in their countries, which also is a strong characteristic in their education system. They constantly seek new markets and business opportunities though, and they have a clear strong interest of new applications.45 Few people live in Scandinavia (about 18 million) and they must export because their markets are so tiny.

The Scandinavian culture scores very high on parity between sexes, professions, generations, etcetera. It has a very low value on power distance. The society norm of the Scandinavian type of culture is that the differences in the society should be minimized.

There is not only a feeling of parity in Scandinavia. There is also justice for everyone, a “parity passion” that stretches far in the history. Everyone should have the same rights. Laws and rules are in force for everyone; privileges are not acceptable. In modern terms we can say that there is a strong engagement in democratic values in the Scandinavian countries and a strong feeling for “fair game”.46

The Scandinavian countries are about the individual way, which means for example that:

- Greater value is put on freedom and challenge in the job (compared to training and use of skills);
- There are needs for create specific friendship (not defined by trendy-groups);
- Independence, variation, well-being, individual financial freedom (not expertise, order, duty, security that are held by the organization or clan);
- Valuation standards should be applicable to all (not differ from trendy and not trendy groups).

43 ibid, p. 220
44 B. Bjerke. 1999, p. 227
45 ibid, p. 227
46 ibid, p. 228
Scandinavians do not have an extremely low value on individualism though and they can accept rules and regulations - as long as they are fair.

In the Scandinavian type of culture the hierarchy means that different roles have been established by conventional reasons. There are more vertical communications in Scandinavian organisations and the employees are less afraid not to agree with the boss. Equality means co-determination during the course of work, a democratic decision making. Business democratic fits the Scandinavian type of culture well. The solid anchored parity in the Scandinavian culture has made it easier to introduce less formal, more delegation management styles. This also means less centralized and less high organizational pyramids.

Additionally, there is also literature that points out that many Swedes have a generally conservative approach to life and new ideas in life. For instance, Swedes have a strong tendency to reject proposals that put their social security at risk. Swedes have adopted a rather provincial general attitude toward themselves, and pursues a wait-and-see-policy toward foreigners, their habits, and lifestyles. Swedes are consequently regarded – by themselves and by non-Swedes – as rather shy people, as they are not outspoken and animated. They most often do their best to give short, straight answers to questions, trying not to leave “loose ends” or too much scope for interpretation.

Sweden has experienced very few political changes of any magnitude, thus creating political stability and calm in the country. The same is true of relations between employers and employees in the Swedish labor market. Now, through, EU membership, politicians from other countries and in other forums will strongly influence things that were previously handled by the Swedes internally.

Over three centuries, the Swedes have developed a very high degree of self-determination at the local and regional levels. There is a unique tradition in Swedish history that decisions are taken after discussions and hearings of all concerned. This goes back as far as to the time of the Vikings. Although Swedes are regarded as rather conservative; they are open-minded and willing to accept change when they can see practical reasons behind it.

3.5.1 Earlier researches about Swedish business culture

Ingrid Tollgerdt-Andersson (1996) has made a large interview with Swedish leaders. Totally 44 Scandinavian bosses were interviewed, from which 16 were Swedish, 14 Danish and 14 Norwegian. A defined majority of the Swedish bosses considered that the most important for a successful leadership is to formulate goals and steer the action through them, to like human beings and to care about them, to listen to your co-workers, to create a leading-team and a good cooperating climate and to be honest so that the co-workers can feel confidence and trust their bosses. Several of the interviewed bosses emphasized the importance of to create participation and to get the co-workers to take a greater responsibility. A proportionately large group pointed out the importance of openness. A not so great numbers considered that the most important in their leadership-philosophy was to motivate and inspire the co-workers and to create mutual values and loyalty.

The greater part of the Swedish bosses considered that their relation with the co-workers characterizes of tolerance and openness and that there were very strong desires that the relations should be of that kind. Several considered that it was very important to “have fun at

---

47 ibid, p. 229
48 R. Crane, 2000, p. 98
49 ibid, p. 101
50 ibid, p. 103
51 I. Tollgerdt-Andersson, 1996, p. 80
work”, i.e. well-being is central and the co-workers should be able to talk about non work oriented happenings sometimes.\(^{52}\)

Next question regarded whether the bosses thought and considered it to be positive that a co-worker “jumped over a leader-level”, i.e. if he or she can go to a side-ordered boss alternatively to the leader-level over the nearest. More then half of the Swedish bosses said that a co-worker very well could go “over the boarders” and some pointed out that this is even desirable hence it gives an open organization and it is important with freedom. Some thought that it was a sign of fear if the hierarchies were too strict. Some said though that they only accept a more free and more open organization when it comes to exchange of information and not decision making. Nearly the half thought that it was allowed to go over the formal hierarchies though, but they rather not have a situation like that, hence this could create uncertainty.\(^{53}\)

The majority of the Swedish bosses pointed out that a god boss works through goal-steering and that it’s about put up and set overarching goals and absolutely not to take an interest in detail-steering. Several pointed out that they wanted to leave a certain freedom to the co-workers and this could be a ground for motivation. Some wanted to create participation and thought that there must be an open dialog about the overarching goals and visions. Nearly a third said that they wished to control the business operations through mutual values. United action and delegations were other aspects, which were pointed out. Nearly the half pointed out the importance of following up.\(^{54}\)

To sum it up here are a couple of key characteristics.\(^{55}\)

- Equality and democracy
- Sense of order and honesty
- Private life
- Not to come forward
- Accurate and slow
- Rational and practical
- Process, continuity and change
- No aggressions or confrontations
- The interests capitalism

\(\text{Table 3.1 Scandinavian business culture}\)

3.6 North American business culture
Because of the lack of information about Canada itself the elements of the American culture have been taken and used to describe the Canadian culture as well – here called North America. The countries are not exactly the same, but the differences are not too big. This statement is based on Geert Hofstede cultural dimensions.\(^{56}\) You can see that there are great similarities between Canada and USA. The different dimensions will not be explained, if they are not familiar the explanations can be found at Gert Hofstede’s website.\(^{57}\)

---

\(^{52}\) ibid, p. 83
\(^{53}\) I. Tollgerdt-Andersson, 1996, p. 85
\(^{54}\) ibid, p. 86
\(^{55}\) B. Bjerke, 1997, p. 248
\(^{56}\) http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede_dimensions.php
\(^{57}\) ibid
Due to the size of Canada, the fact that it is built up by a mix of immigrants and their decedents, and Canada is a bi-lingual country - in some provinces you speak English, in others you mainly speak French and in some it’s 50-50 – the Canadian culture is more complex and varying than most other cultures. Just as in the states the white middle-class cultural characteristics are considered dominant, but there are a lot more characteristics then them - native North American Indians, Afro-Americans, Asians etcetera.

Nevertheless, it is generally understood that a relatively clear North American business culture of relevance to leadership exists. In short, North Americans assume that the environment can be subjugated to the human will, given enough time, effort and money. And it should – in the service of humankind. This exploitative attitude towards nature has led to a material richness of North American society, but such culture also ranks preservation of the environment as only a tertiary value. In business, North American managers not only value change relatively highly but also value caution less. This suggests an active or dynamic orientation and a willingness to make risky decisions. Uncertainty of life is accepted as normal, and economic risks are judged by potential rewards. This, together with goal orientation, means that North Americans tend to be on the expressive side. Informality seems to be a theme that runs through the North American value system. North Americans also frequently assume that informality is a prerequisite for sincerity. They may feel uncomfortable faced with formal ceremonies and strict traditions.58

Characteristics of the power distance in the North American business culture are:59

- Subordinates expect superiors to consult them but will accept autocratic behavior as well.
- Ideal superior to most is a resourceful democrat.
- Laws and rules apply to all but a certain level of privileges for superiors is judged to be normal.
- Status symbols for superiors contribute moderately to their authority and will be accepted by subordinates.

It is natural to expect that the typified North American management is very task-oriented and rational, known for solving problems successfully, quickly and decisively. The North Americans accept changes. They are active, action-oriented, and dynamic; are willing to take

---

58 B. Bjerke, 1999, p. 84
59 ibid, p. 90
risks. They also focus very much on decisions. They often work in flat organizations, implicitly structured. They also promote independence and individual initiatives. Freedom and private enterprise in competition is something that they appreciate.\(^{60}\)

To control the day (for the future) also means to control the time. The North Americans looks upon time as a further more environment factor to manage. For them “time is money”; it should be used thoroughly, budgeted properly and should not be wasted. Cultures with a sequential view on time - as the North Americans (and England) - are commonly shortsighted in their business strategies.\(^{61}\)

At present the North American business style is dominating in the world, because of the effectiveness demanded today. A European boss at a company in North America mentioned five key characters in the North American management philosophy, which have contributed to the successful penetration to other cultures.\(^{62}\)

- One is the faith in growth as a vital need, which has an intrinsic value.
- Another one is the faith in profit being a sign for effectiveness and result, which can give society advantages.
- The third is the faith in the free initiative and private entrepreneurship as a system that, although it is defective, so far has been shown to be far more effective then anything else.
- The fourth element in this philosophy is that tough decisions must be accepted on the grounds of the entire organisations well being. Such decisions can be to close down less effective business parts, dismiss weak bosses and to tone down conventional status symbols.
- The final attribute is that change must be accepted in every aspect of the work-terms.

North American culture emphasizes equality among social relations. Their companies have a medium length power distance. Common for these companies is that they plead for participation in a boss decision of his or hers subordinates. The value of equality is sometimes in conflict with the value of individualism and freedom though.\(^{63}\)

Some characteristics that are of relevance are:\(^{64}\)

- They are more orientated towards formulas then towards relations and systems.
- The goals are well defined, not a result from participations afterwards.
- Participators are earmarked, not self-elected.
- The result, not the process, is being evaluated.

\(^{60}\) ibid, p. 91
\(^{61}\) B. Bjerke, 1997, p. 104
\(^{62}\) B. Bjerke, 1997, p. 106
\(^{63}\) ibid, p. 110
\(^{64}\) ibid, p. 114
To sum it up these are the key characteristics\textsuperscript{65}:

- Progress and growth
- Modernity
- Materialism
- Activity- and work oriented
- Informality and achievement
- Freedom and competition
- Knowledge and

| Table 3.2 North American business culture. |

3.7 How to handle an international organizations

The founders’ and important leaders’ values forms undoubtedly the organizational culture, but this affects de regular members as well by steering them to mutual practices. The founders’ and the leader’s values become the members’ practices.

Effective mutual practices are the reason for multinational corporations being able to work at all. Because they hire personnel from several different nationalities they can not predict that these people will have the same values. They coordinate and control their operations by applying same practices worldwide - regardless weather or not they are Americans, Japanese, Germans or Dutch. Practices which are inspiring by the companies’ national heritage but that can be learnt by the employees with different nationalities\textsuperscript{66}.

Most of the multinational companies are operating on many different business areas and/or with several product groups and operates on markets in several countries. They must overlap both national cultures and business cultures. The purpose with an organization structure is to coordinate activities. These activities are carried out in “business units”, each and everyone deals with a certain type of business in a certain country. The shape of a business structure is based on three choices that are being made for each business unit (implicit or explicit):

1. Which of the units input and output should be coordinated somewhere else in the company?
2. Where should the coordination be?
3. How strict or week should the coordination be?

Multinational companies that are operating within several business areas must choose between to coordinate by type of business or according to geographical position. The key question is whether expert knowledge of the business or cultural know-how is the determining factor if the company will succeed. The classical solution is a “matrix structure”. Such structure means that each business unit leader have two bosses, one who coordinates just the type of activity that the unit pursues in all countries, and one who coordinates all the business unit in the specific country. Matrix structures are costly, they often imply that you must have the double amount of bosses, and they can create more problems then they are solving. Nevertheless it is not very likely that one single structure principle suits the company. In some cases the business structure should dominate, in others the geographical co-ordinations should be prioritized. The result is patchwork structure that might not be pretty, but that really looks at the market and what the business unit culture needs. It is obligated, as a variation in the environment where a company is active, that it should correspond to a suitable variation internally. The variations of structural solutions that are recommended not only are valid at

\textsuperscript{65} ibid, p. 122
\textsuperscript{66} G. Hofstede. 2005, p. 304
site, but time as well: it is highly likely that the optimal solution changes by time, therefore it is reasonable to make changes regularly.67

The acquisition of intercultural communication skills has three faces: awareness, knowledge and skills. Awareness is what it all begins with, the understanding of that “I’m carrying a certain mental software because I grew up in a certain environment, and that other people who have grew up in another environment have another mental software - because of the same reason”.68

Knowledge should come next. If we are to integrate with other cultures, we must learn a great deal about these cultures. You should learn their symbols, their heroes and their rituals. And even if we never will share their values we can at least get an intellectual understanding of how their values differ from ours. Skills are based on consciousness and knowledge, plus practice. You must see and apply symbols from the other culture, see their heroes and practice their rituals.69 Intercultural communication can be taught. The employees bosses, at headquarter, and the personnel that communicates with the expatriates should participate in courses for this purpose.69

Since the 1980s there has been a growing interest in non-structural and more informal approaches to organising international firms, where the dominant models have been transnational and hierarchical models of MNC organisational design. The ordinary structure and its fit with strategy are too rigid and inflexible to cope with the high levels of unpredictable change that today’s MNCs face. Instead of formal hierarchical structure the MNCs should have more of a non-hierarchical network design.70

Another important aspect to look into when discussing on how to cope on an international market is the aspect of international human resource management (IHRM). The role of IHRM in knowledge transfer is a very important post because so much tacit knowledge resides within human resources. If knowledge transfer is inefficient or ineffective, the enterprise is less competitive. When knowledge transfer must account for differences in culture and expectations, a difficult task becomes even more difficult. Nevertheless, according to the author of “The Blackwell handbook of Cross-Cultural Management” there is much we do not yet know about how IHRM practices vary across countries and enterprises and that this is a critical area for future research.71

A great amount of literature deals with IHRM on the basis for expatriates. Which are understandable as expatriates are among the most expensive human resources in any internationally operating organization and they are almost invariably in crucial positions for the organisation. IHRM, however, covers a far broader spectrum than the management of expatriates. The complexity of HR decisions in the international sphere and the broad scope of its influence go far beyond the issue of expatriation, to an overall concern for managing people effectively on a global scale.72 IHRM is by definition the strategic, policy, and practical issues related to how MNEs of any type or size manage their human resources, including their approaches to balancing issues of differentiation and integration whilst enhancing the flow of knowledge transfer within the organisation. There are few organisations that would claim they have resolved the problems of ensuring that the messages concerning HRM have been comprehensively transferred from headquarters to the subsidiary countries,

67 G. Hofstede. 2005, p. 358
68 ibid, p. 372
69 ibid, p. 374
71 ibid, p. 123
72 ibid, p. 129
and even fewer that would claim that the two-way learning process is effective. There is much
to be done before we can ensure that the dual requirements of differentiation and integration
are well understood and can be managed effectively in international human resource
management, so that knowledge transfer can be leveraged effectively.73

A quote of the author of “Cross-Cultural Team Building” will sum this chapter.74

“The growing trend toward globalization does not appear to reduce the differences with
which managers working across cultures are being faced. We have to acknowledge that every
form of management is culture-bound and that there is no such thing as ‘the one best way’ of
management.

We must realize that most of our management and training tools are largely influenced by
American business schools, have been developed in a period of rapid economic growth and
are focused on the homogeneous work environment found in the USA. Yet management and
training techniques or philosophies that are appropriate in one culture are not necessarily
appropriate in another. Let us face it: the world does not even agree on what ‘work’ is.

We need to move away from the so-called universal laws and organizational requirements,
which are designed to guide organizational behavior. We need to move towards a general set
of principles, strict in philosophy but loose in application.”

M.Berger (1996)

There is a lot of literature dealing with what ways there are to cope with the negative aspects
of merging companies across borders. A lot of these theories are about how to cope with the
differences of values among the employees though, which are interesting for this thesis. This
is what the next chapter is about.

3.8 Merging across boarders75
It might seem odd to bring about theories about merging companies. But there are very valid
informations in these theories regarding cross culture management as well.

In order to be able to cope with the negative aspects of merging companies you have to
develop a new culture platform (e.g. new corporate values and common symbols) in order to
make employees in the merging companies identify with the new company as an attractive
community. This might be a solution to find answers on coping with the different values
employees from different countries have. It is also important to work on linking the suggested
cultural values with daily social practices, if the purpose is to enhance communication and
collaboration across borders and strengthen the commitment among the employees to the
corporate vision, mission and values.

Initiating a socio-cultural integration process means building bridges over perceived
differences between national cultures, corporate cultures, and professional cultures involved
in a multinational corporation. In order to do this you need to know what different cultures
you are dealing with. One way to do this is to gather several managers and employees and let
them discuss what their past experiences, values and practices they have and use that as the
platform on which company cultural changes could be based on.

73 ibid., p 141
74 M. Berger, 1996, p. 31
75 A-M. Söderberg & E. Vaara, 2003, p. 139
However, in multinational organisations as large and complex as IKEA it may be very
difficult to create something common – and unique- for everyone independent of age, gender,
nationality, educational background and professional interest.

Finally, there is no such thing as organisational cultures, if they are not made sense of and
discussed by those who should feel attached to and identify themselves with them. Rather
than focusing on abstract ideas and values, managerial efforts should therefore be put into
aligning ideas, values and norms around concrete organisational practices. Reflections on
perceived practical and cultural differences, concrete changes in practices and conscious
cultural development should support each other. In such culture building process strong
linkages between corporate vision and strategy, integrated communications and HR
management are crucial.
4 Empirical studies

In this fourth chapter the organization of IKEA will be presented, its history and activity. The chapter continues with a sum of the interviews.

4.1 The history of IKEA

IKEA started its business in a small village in Sweden for six decades ago. The founder of IKEA, Ingvar Kamprad, was raised on a farm called Elmtaryd nearby the little village Agunnaryd in Småländ (1926), located in the south of Sweden. As a young kind, Ingvar already knew that he wanted to do business. He began with riding around on a bicycle and selling matches to the neighbors. He realized that he could buy large parcels very cheap from Stockholm and then sell them in boxes for a very low price, but still make a good profit. From matches he switched to selling fish, Christmas decorations, seeds and later on ballpoint pens and pencils.

Year 1943, by the age of 17, Ingvar received a gift from his father to be able to complete his studies. The gift was used for establishing their own business. The name IKEA comes from his initials (I.K.) plus the first letter in Elmtaryd and Agunnaryd, the farm and the village where he grew up. From the beginning IKEA was selling pencils, wallets, picture-frames, watches, jewelry and nylon stockings – whatever needs Ingvar could find to fulfill with a product to a low price.

When Ingvar did not have time with all the sell meetings on his own, he started to put ads in local papers and started a mail order service. He started to sell furniture, which was made by several local companies near Ingvar’s home. The positive responds was gratifying and the business expanded. He then saw the chance in becoming furniture retail in a large scale. He soon took the decision to stop with all the other products and only focus on low price furniture. The IKEA that we know today was born.

4.2 IKEA’s thoughts and visions

IKEA’s business idea is to offer a wide product mix, form and functional right home furnishing articles to as low price as possible that as many as possible can buy them. IKEA have chosen to stand for the many. But IKEA can not do it on their own. The foundation of the business idea is that they corporate with their customers. First IKEA do their part, then the customers do their part – by using the IKEA catalog and visiting the warehouses, choose the furniture on their own and then get it at the take-it-yourself-store room. The customer usually transports it home and puts it together by themselves as well. This means that IKEA does not have to charge for things that the customer can do on his/her own.

This way IKEA tries to “create a better everyday life for the majority of people” – this is the official philosophy of IKEA. And it is also the title of the small-stapled book where Ingvar Kamprad draws up nine guidelines about aims, treatment of the employees or requests on the products. These guidelines were made already in 1976 and they are still valid and every employee should know them. Or better; feel them.

---

76 http://www.ikea.com/ms/sv_SE/about_ikea/timeline/full_story.html
77 http://www.ikea.com/ms/sv_SE/about_ikea/our_vision/better_life.html
78 http://www.jmk.su.se/global02/jessica/structure/
4.3 IKEA’s organisation

The corporate identity of IKEA within the company is as strong as outwardly. There are on the whole 227 stores in 33 countries on four continents.\textsuperscript{79}

The IKEA retailers operate in a franchise system. The biggest franchisee is the IKEA Group, the owner of 203 stores in 24 countries (November 2005).\textsuperscript{80} Besides that there are 24 stores in 15 countries, which are run by franchisees outside the IKEA concern - mainly on new markets with high risks like Singapore, Israel, Saudi Arabia or Kuwait. During the year 2006 there are 19 planned store openings – Moskva (Russia), Tokyo (Japan), Guangzhou (China), Detroit and West Sacramento (USA) etcetera.\textsuperscript{81}

The IKEA concern is owned by a foundation, Stichting INGKA Foundation, which has its headquarter in Holland.\textsuperscript{82} Although IKEA represents an easily remembered image of Sweden on the outside, the company itself has removed from its Swedish roots in the last decades - at least geographically.\textsuperscript{83}

4.4 Working for IKEA

There is a very strong idea on how it should be working for IKEA, and a quite strong idea on what kind of people IKEA wants. This will be enlightened by giving a few quotes from the IKEA website.\textsuperscript{85}

“Every job requires practical skills, but the qualities beyond your education or aptitude are just as important in the IKEA recruitment process. We look for employees (called co-workers at IKEA) who share our values. We want to attract people from diverse nationalities, perspectives and an approach because we believe diversity makes IKEA a better place to work and to shop.”

\textsuperscript{79} http://www.ikea.com/ms/sv_SE/about_ikea/facts_figures/ikea_in_the_world.html
\textsuperscript{80} http://www.ikea.com/ms/sv_SE/about_ikea/facts_figures/ikea_group_stores.html
\textsuperscript{81} http://www.ikea.com/ms/sv_SE/about_ikea/facts_figures/ikea_group_stores.html
\textsuperscript{82} http://www.ikea.com/ms/sv_SE/about_ikea/facts_figures/ikea_is_organized.html
\textsuperscript{83} http://www.jmk.su.se/global02/jessica/structure/
\textsuperscript{84} http://www.ikea-group.ikea.com/PDF/IKEA_FF_0405_GB.pdf
\textsuperscript{85} http://www.ikea-group.ikea.com/work/why.html
“The people and the values of IKEA create a culture of informality, respect, diversity and real opportunities for growth. These values include.”

“This means we respect our colleagues and help each other in difficult times. We look for people who are supportive, work well in teams and are open with each other in the way they talk, interact and connect. IKEA supports this attitude with open plan offices and by laying out clear goals that co-workers can stand behind.”

"Maintaining a strong IKEA culture is one of the most crucial factors behind the continued success of the IKEA concept."

Ingvar Kamprad, founder of IKEA.

4.5 The IKEA stores

The IKEA store in Kungsens Kurva, Stockholm was built as early as 1965 – the one after the first IKEA store, built in Älmhult 1958. IKEA Kungsens Kurva is the largest IKEA store in the world with its 56,200 m², compared to the 9,200 m² store in Ottawa, Canada. IKEA Ottawa was built 1979 and the 29,700 m² store in Boucherville, Canada, was built as recent as 2003. There are totally 14 stores in Sweden and 11 in Canada.\(^{86}\)

The employee manager at Kungsens Kurva is called Marie Bergman, the store manager in Ottawa is called Joanne Mutter and the store manager for Boucherville is called Julie Synnott. These are the persons that have been interviewed for this thesis. The results from these interviews have been presented in the appendix and will be analyzed in the next chapter.

\(^{86}\) http://www.ikea.com/ms/sv_SE/about_ikea/facts_figures/ikea_group_stores.html
5 Results and Analysis

In this sixth chapter the subject will be analyzed, the study in its whole and the results from the interviews will be explained. Additionally there will be a comparison between the gathered empirical material and with the selected theories. My own thoughts will also be a part throughout this chapter.

Are there any differences in how IKEA in Sweden and in Canada are managed? If so; are they a result of national business culture differences? If not; why are there no differences?

5.1 The disposition of the analysis

The analysis will start off by discussing what particular business cultural aspects was found in IKEA Sweden. As the business culture of IKEA Sweden will be used as a base for the comparison with IKEA Canada it is interesting to see to what extent IKEA Sweden is a result of a typical Swedish business culture. Therefore the results from the interviews will be compared to the theories about Swedish business culture. The business culture of IKEA Canada will be the next subject of the discussion. The results from the interviews from IKEA Canada will be compared to the ones from IKEA Sweden. The reason for this is to see what the differences are in the way of managing IKEA in Canada and in Sweden. The differences will be compared to the theories about Canadian business culture in order to try to answer if the differences are a result of the Canadian business culture. By the end of the chapter there will be a conclusion from the analysis, a conclusion that hopefully will have the answer to the problem statement.

5.2 Business culture

As explained in chapter 3.1 it is necessary to know what culture is when talking about cross-cultural differences, and when dealing with business culture on the whole. There are some key elements when it comes to culture. Those key elements are that culture is associated with human values and that it has links with the correct behavior, explained by Björn Bjerke24. Culture is something that you learn, nothing that you are born with, it origins from our social environment rather from our genes, regarding to Hofstede27. As further explained in chapter 3.1 a business culture can be looked upon as societies in miniature. A company’s culture reflects in the attitudes and values, the manager style and the problem solving behavior by its members.33 These explanations what business culture is will be helpful when finding the core cultures in IKEA Canada and IKEA Sweden.

5.2.1 IKEA Sweden’s business culture

When speaking to the managers, both in Sweden and in Canada, there were indications of that management of IKEA Sweden is very human oriented. They are very keen on making sure that the staff are happy and the side effect of that will give them incentives to work a lot better. The Swedish management encourage own initiatives rather than restraining the employees with regulations and restrictions. They are very open to talk to their staff and they encourage people to take risks and dare to make mistakes. It is by your mistakes that you are learning. Another typical aspect of the cultural aspect in IKEA Sweden is that the management do not want the staff to be 100% in tuned with the norms and values in the company, as they will not think on their own if that is the case.

The communication in IKEA Sweden works vertical and the employees are not afraid to disagree with the boss, something that the staff manager of IKEA Kungens Kurva pointed out. The management style is informal, for example they address each another with their first name. The management style is also based a lot on delegations – more or less everyone have something to say about changes in the company. There is also a fair justice for everyone and a strong engagement in democratic values - something that all the interviewed managers agreed on. You could see this in the way that they are making decisions, nothing is decided until
everyone involved have said something about it, and they are waiting with the decisions until everyone has got information about it. They have an open-door policy, everyone is welcome to go and speak to their boss if there is something on their mind.

The managers of IKEA Sweden are the kind of people who often start up with things and are pretty good at making contact and create team-work. They are not withdrawn and do not hold back – on the contrary. They often want to jump into projects and participate.

Everything seems to be well organized for new employees, for example the three introduction steps, the PI when applying for an opening and the ‘Voice’ questionnaire. Honesty among the employees is something that the manager of IKEA Kungens Kurva looked for in an employee – an important aspect if such an open unstrict management style would be affective.

They do not hide that it is a Swedish company – on the contrary. The Swedish flag outside the store, the store’s colours are the colours of the Swedish flag, and the Swedish names on all the different products underlines that it is a Swedish company. (Read more and see pictures from IKEA Ottawa in Chapter 5.4.2).

These are the things that was the results of the interviews from IKEA Sweden, in order to see to what extent it is a typical Swedish management style this will now be compared to the theories on what a typical Swedish business culture is.

Scandinavians, in general, are said to preserve an enormous pride in their countries as mentioned in the theory part. This might be the answer to why you so clearly can see that IKEA is a Swedish company. They take great pride in showing it is a Swedish company. But there is also a matter of marketing strategy; being a Swedish company is what separates them from other furniture stores - what makes them unique. It is a Swedish company and it should show, no matter where they are.

The theories mentioned that Scandinavians managers are about the individual way, and that a greater value is put on freedom and challenge in the job. This is something that matches the results from the interviews in IKEA Sweden. You may make mistakes as long as you learn from them. On the other hand some theories pointed out that Scandinavians have generally conservative approach to life and new ideas in life. They are also said to be shy and not very outspoken. This generalisation about that Scandinavians might be true, but at the upper management at a company such as IKEA, there is surely not room for that kind of personalities. In order to be in the upper management you need to show some guts and not be afraid to make important decisions. Having a shy and withdrawn kind of personality would not work when you need to make decisions that might affect hundreds of employees. On the contrary, the management in IKEA Sweden are said to be good at making contact and create team-work. They are definitely not withdrawn and people who will hold back, they often want to jump into projects and participate. In this aspect IKEA Sweden is not that Scandinavian if you compare it to the theories about a typical Scandinavian.

Sense of order and honesty were also some of the key characteristics discussed by the end of chapter 3.4. This matches IKEA Sweden when it comes to how the company is organized. They have plans for everything – from the day a new employee sets his/her foot in the company and for a long time ahead. They believe that it is important that a new employee are familiar with the IKEA way – either they should have the right values or they will be taught the values of IKEA. It is also said that Scandinavians have a low value on power distance, and that they are not really have any acknowledged society classes and privileges are not acceptable. This is something that you easily can see in IKEA as they have – as mentioned
earlier – an open door policy and everyone is being involved in major decisions and as a upper management you do not have any special privelegies - everyone are even wearing the same type of clothes. This is also the main value of IKEA; it is important that you feel like you can talk to your boss about anything. No one is more important then the other. The employees should be open and social, especially those who are working as a sales person.

Important pointers to be a successful leadership that was described by a majority of Swedish bosses is; to formulate goals and steer the action through them, to like human beings and to care about them, to listen to the co-workers, to create a leading-team, to be honest so that the co-workers can feel confidence and trust their bosses. This is key characteristics of the type of management you will find in IKEA Sweden. Everything is very human orientated and a lot of energy is put on that co-workers should feel confidence and trust to and from their bosses. If not they would not be temptted to try new ideas and come up with new ideas and not be afraid of making mistakes.

In conclusion; IKEA Sweden has a business culture that are well in tune with a typical Scandinavian business culture and it will be a good base for analyzing to what extent IKEA Canada has a Scandinavian business culture.

5.2.2 IKEA Canada’s business culture compared to IKEA Sweden
The results from the interviews are being revealed in the table 5.1 and 5.2. The questionaries of the employees will not be used in the analysis, they have only been used in order to enhance the reliability of the interviews of the Canadian managers. In this table there is some indications that there are some differences in how IKEA Sweden and IKEA Canada is managed but as will be discussed later; there are even more similarities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>J. Sennot-Canada</th>
<th>Decision making</th>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Recruitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Long decision making process.</td>
<td>• Open-door policy.</td>
<td>• Flexible people.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Everyone needs to be aware of new decisions.</td>
<td>• First name basis.</td>
<td>• Culture training.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Seldom only one person is taking the decision.</td>
<td>• Not a pushy selling style.</td>
<td>• Voice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Mutter-Canada</td>
<td>• Less directions from the top.</td>
<td>• More people at the customer service.</td>
<td>• New employees should be in line with the values of the organization. And they should know about IKEA, if not they will make sure to explain it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A lot participations.</td>
<td>• The decisions are made from the group, not from one person.</td>
<td>• Looking for the right character.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Everybody can speak and be heard.</td>
<td>• Being this democratic can take too long to get some things done.</td>
<td>• Regular meetings to see how they are doing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The decisions are made from the group, not from one person.</td>
<td>• There might be some differences when it comes to children for examples at IKEA Canada compared to other companies in Canada.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To start of the organization of IKEA Canada is flat, they use an open door policy. The employees are welcome to come and talk to their superiors if they have something on their mind and they adress each other with their first names. The superiors are judged to be quite normal persons and not privliged with any status symbols that contribute to their position - even the store manager wore the same clothes as the part time working co-workers. The store manager has an office for herself, but the door is always open and she is more or less always walking arround talking to the other employees. The atmoshpere arround the store managers is very open and friendly, all the employees seems to be comforttble talking and making jokes with her. The management understands that co-workers will make mistakes and that people are allowed to grow at their on pace and the relationship between everyone employed — staff or

| **S. Lindquist**-Sweden | • Good at making decisions and being simple and clear.  
• Flat organisation.  
• Everything is very tight from department manager, to production manager to co-worker.  
• Very little top-down decisions.  
• Sometimes you can feel that it takes too long before something is getting implemented. | • It is a family company with a great openness.  
• Joint forces. | • If we feel that the person matches our values and culture he/she matches the job as well.  
• IKEA-ketchup programme.  
• The employee should match our values  
• He/She should be flexibility.  
• Development meetings.  
• Voice. |
| **M. Bergman**-Sweden | • The relation is very good.  
• Open-door policy.  
• First name basis.  
• That there shouldn’t be any distance between the managers and the co-workers.  
• Little hierarchy. | • Lot up to the individual and human being.  
• Believe a lot in the individual.  
• It is okay to make mistakes just as long as you are learning from them.  
• Encouraging own thinking and initiatives, questioning, trying and making mistakes.  
• Prestige less-ness.  
• Everything in a simple matter. | • Educations from the first interview.  
• Several evaluations.  
• Open, honest, straight forward and clear in what they think, prestige less.  
• Often check-up meeting.  
• Introduction courses.  
• Not team-building the entire store. |
mangement - seems to be very important. IKEA Canada is well organised with systems for how to take care of new employees. As soon as a new employee sets its foot in the company – if he or she are not allready familiar with the IKEA culture - he or she will be taught the “IKEA way”. Everything seems to be human orientated. They take a great value in making everyone happy working for IKEA – they organise trips and sport activities for the entire store. It is up to each store manager to what extent though, but it is normal to have a big kick-off party when the new IKEA cataloge comes out. IKEA Canada is even more for doing things for the employees then IKEA Sweden. In IKEA Sweden they do it department by department, but in IKEA Canada they do things together through out the entire store. The personal do not approach the customers, they let the customers come to the personal if they have any questions or are in need for any assitance. Another thing that points out that the customers are very important for IKEA is that what one of the employees of IKEA Canada said:

“Now I do not notice the products as much anymore. I notice the volumes of customers.”

Employee of IKEA Ottawa (2005)

This is a good example of that IKEA cares a lot about the customers. It is not about the products really, it is a bout the customers.

So far everything is well in tune with how the management works in IKEA Sweden – a typical Swedish management style.

The few differences that nevertheless were:

- The store managers mentioned that sometimes it could be annoying that everyone need to be involved when a decission is to be made.
- IKEA Canada has more people at the customer service then in Sweden. They promote the IKEA ways of shopping a lot more in the stores than in Sweden. In the store of IKEA Canada you can find DVD’s playing explaining the IKEA way of shopping – why you need to bring your furniture home yourself and put it together yourself.
- IKEA Canada has team-building activities through out the entire store, while IKEA Sweden has it department by department.

There are not that many differences between IKEA Sweden and IKEA Canada. A matter of fact, both Julie Sennott and Joanne Mutter mentioned that Canada has a lot similarities with Sweden and the rest of Europe, maybe even more then with the United States. Something more to have in mind regarding the opening statement (Chapter 1.4); that Canada might be a better market for Swedish companies then American markets.
5.3 The reasons for the differences of the business cultures
The reason for the Canadian store managers thinking that making a decision takes too long is a result of the typical North American business culture. North American business management not only value changes relatively high, but also values caution less. This suggests an active or dynamic orientation and a willingness to make risky decisions, where uncertainty in life is accepted as normal. One thing that is mentioned in the theory part is that North Americans looks upon time as a further more environment factor to manage. For them “time is money”; it should be used thoroughly, budgeted properly and should not be wasted. This is not really how IKEA works when you think of how they are making their decisions. They are allowing mistakes to be made, something that will cost time. Additionally IKEA in general are very careful, sure they do establish in new markets all over the world, but they are really making sure that everyone regarding a change has made their point - they are not willing to take risks as a North American manager in general would do.

As mentioned earlier; the customers are very important to IKEA as they are somewhat a part of the company – they choose there furniture on their own, transport it on their own and even put it together on their own. This is not common at all in Canada and it is something that IKEA Canada has to make the customer understand. That is why they have DVDs running in the store to explain how it works and why it is like that and that is why IKEA Canada has to have more staff at the customer service then in Sweden..

The reason for having team-building activities throughout the entire store in IKEA Canada instead of department by department in Sweden is that the Canadian people are not that familiar with the Swedish business culture, so IKEA Canada has to work more on the team-building activities in order to spread the Swedish culture throughout the company. This will be discussed even more later on.

These are the main differences between IKEA Canada and IKEA Sweden – they are not that many as expected in the beginning of this thesis, but while working with it I understood that there are reasons for not finding that many differences. These reasons will be discussed in the following chapter.

5.4.1 Maintaining values and culture in a multinational company
The IKEA management can very easily be compared to what Peter Ducker says is leadership – “a leader is an individual within an organization who has the ability to influence attitudes and opinions of others in the organization”. This is just exactly how IKEA wants their managers to be, the leaders should be the role-models and steer the co-workers into the IKEA business culture. As J. Magretta (2002) described what management should not be. It should not be about supervising over other persons etcetera. The purpose of management should be to create value, where value is being defined from out in, by customers and owners. This is exactly how IKEA works; they make sure that values are spread throughout the entire organization, even out among the customers. As presented in chapter 3.6; the founder’s and important leaders’ values form the organisational culture, and this affects the regular members as it leads to mutual practices. The founder’s and the leaders’ values are becoming the members’ practices. IKEA are making sure that the leaders are well familiar with the values and interpret those to the rest of the members of the organization.

In order to be able to get a multinational corporation to work it needs to coordinate and control their operations by applying same practices worldwide, exactly how IKEA does. They have a well structured plan on how everything should work, and all the stores look more or less the same. An international organization should also be flexible; it should be able to correspond to a suitable variation internally as the optimal solution changes by time. IKEA’s structure is
pretty determined – which Julie Sennott says is necessary as it is a winning concept. But they are also looking for flexibility when they are hiring new people – regarding to Staffan Lindqvist. So maybe they would change and adjust if they had to. It is very important for an international company to understand that everyone is carrying a mental software, each different from one another. It is necessary to know what symbols other cultures have, who their heroes are and what rituals they have. IKEA understands that there is something like a mental software, everyone of the managers that have been interviewed do underline that it is very important to be familiar with cultural differences. Joanne points out that it is important to know about these different culture rituals so you do not say something that might offend anyone. To what extent they do something for the differences is questionable though. They make sure that the people they hire are people with the same values as IKEA. There are not any really strong indications on that IKEA care much about other countries’ culture. Some of the co-workers that answered the questionnaires said that they found that there are some differences at IKEA compared to other Canadian companies. For example; they thought that Swedish people are more laid back and that might be one of the reasons why they – at IKEA Canada - do not approach the customers in the same way as they normally do in Canada. A Swede would rather be left alone while shopping and be able to browse around among the merchandise on their own. In order to sell as much as possible you need to be on the same “level” as the customers, so in that sense it is not good that IKEA is that “stuck” on their norms and values. If the customers are used to – and want to have - a service where they do not have to look for someone to help them; IKEA should try to meet these demands and not be so stuck on the IKEA way of doing business. On the other hand; being so spread out over the globe may be this is the only way to do it though, otherwise IKEA will get lost - as Julie Sennott so well put it.

The theories about merging across borders (Chapter 3.6.1) described that it is crucial to build strong linkages between corporate vision and strategy and integrated communications in cultural differentiated environments. This is something that can be seen in IKEA, their culture, vision and strategy is reflected everywhere – in the IT, finance and customer service world wide.

Regarding to Hofstede culture is something that you learn.27 It does not matter if it is about social culture or business culture. You can see that IKEA is doing whatever they can to keep the strong IKEA culture. As culture is something you learn IKEA has an introduction – both in Sweden and in Canada – where they are talking about how things work in IKEA. They even talk about their values and how they want things to be done by the very first interview. They also have follow ups to ensure that the new co-workers have adapted to the culture. The way that IKEA handle their interviews is something that is anchored in Hofstede’s theory as well (figure 3.1). On the top of his triangle there is the personality, which is a combination of inherited things and things that are learnt, this is something that is specific for the individual. Sorting who already are in tune with the IKEA culture and with their values is a way to go around this. If the personality does not fit with the values and culture of IKEA, then you will not get hired – it is too difficult to change their personality. Cultural level is the biggest part of our mental programming, we share the same level with other people who have gone through the same in-learning process.28 This is typical for how IKEA creates and maintains their culture. They make sure everyone goes through the same in-learning process. How IKEA maintain their values and culture will now be explained.

5.4.2 How IKEA maintain their values and culture
In order to enhance the culture in IKEA, they make sure to interpret symbols – one of the shell-levels in the onion-diagram (figure 3.2). These symbols are pictures or objects that have a particular meaning for the people in a certain culture. Examples of these symbols in IKEA are
all the Swedish details like the Swedish flag, the Swedish colours on the building, that everything is named by a Swedish place, the Swedish pictures in the restaurant, the Swedish food etcetera. They even have a deli by the exit selling Swedish bread and jam etcetera.

Figure 5.1 Pictures of IKEA Ottawa.

As mentioned earlier there is also a marketing reason why they have these pictures in the store. IKEA wants to underline the Swedish culture because they want to be associated with nature and good quality, things that some of these pictures can describe. There is also a typical Swedish house by the exit, a house from the Swedish archipelago - where houses must withstand rough wind and weather - enhancing the associations with good quality. As mentioned there are also radio commercials in Canada for IKEA, where they are talking with a strong Swedish accent.

Another shell in the onion-diagram is heroes, persons who have features that are highly valued within the culture – so called role models. A great example of this is the founder, Ingvar Kamprad. IKEA Canada have pictures of him hanging on the wall, and his nine points is spread throughout the entire organisation.

The team-building activities, such as the yearly parties, ski trips - that are common in both Sweden and Canada - are something that fits well with the rituals. These rituals are collective activities that are not really needed to achieve certain goals, but are regarded as socially important within a culture.

The recipe figure shown in figure 3.4 describes how the IKEA culture manages to continuously live. They have both the myths – Ingvar Kamprad himself and his history, a strong Scandinavian type of leadership style, team working as a structure and training about the way to do things in IKEA.
6 Conclusions
The seventh chapter is where the presented problems from the first chapter will be answered and there will also be a conclusion out of the theory and the empirical parts. Additionally some of the thoughts and suggestions on what further research there is to be done about this subject will be presented at the end of this chapter.

6.1 The conclusion
There were not that many differences between IKEA Canada and IKEA Sweden. There were some but they were not really because of the Canadian national business culture. Those differences were a result of the lack of knowledge in Canada about a company such as IKEA and to ensure that the IKEA culture and values are kept strong throughout the Canadian stores.

The reason why IKEA has such a strong business culture is to survive, if they kept on changing their values and culture to meet all the different cultures all around the world they would get lost. IKEA, as a company, is in tune with the theories on how to manage a multinational cooperation in general. They do a great job preserving their culture by making sure that the employees and managers are in tune with the culture – through questionnaires such as “Voice” and regular meetings. The effort on keeping and pushing for the culture and values are stronger in the foreign country. This is rather obvious as the way of manage IKEA are in tune with the way to manage a Swedish company in general. The fact that IKEA Canada works more on having team-building activities with the entire store, compared to how they do it in IKEA Sweden – where they do it department by department – shows that Canada are working harder to keep the culture and values within the entire store. Even a simple thing such as IKEA Ottawa has the picture of the founder, Ingvar Kamprad, hanging on the wall on the way to the staff’s lunchroom – which IKEA Sweden has not – shows that the IKEA Canada tries harder to push for the company culture, values and norms then in Sweden.

IKEA do not have a very difficult job in keeping the culture and the values in IKEA Canada. The way to manage IKEA does not interfere much with the general way to manage a typical Canadian company. Canadian companies might even have more similarities with Swedish companies then other American companies.

There are some parts that do not fit with the theories on how a multinational company should be managed though. IKEA as a whole do not really care too much for the different cultures world wide. They check that the values of the candidates for new employment matches the values of IKEA, if they do not they either teach them the values or just do not hire them. This might be the only way to make sure that IKEA keeps its strong culture though, as IKEA is undoubtedly a winning concept.

The management of IKEA should have in mind that the managers from each country should get together. Not only for discussing new products, but to learn about how they work and how they see on management for example. The managers of IKEA Canada did not really new much about management in Sweden, or in Europe for that matter. This is something that is necessary in order to understand each other and be able to adapt to the IKEA way of management.

This is my conclusion of my research and I believe that the questions for the research have been satisfactorily answered:
Are there any differences in how IKEA in Sweden and in Canada are managed? If so; are they a result of national business culture differences? If not; why are there no differences?

6.2 Reflection about the work
Working with this thesis has been a real challenge, not only because of the fact that I am writing it on my own, but the topic is a major one. There is so much literature, there is so many angles that you can approach from and so many things to include in the analysis. But I would not hesitate to do this work again. It has been a pleasure to become more familiar with IKEA and how they work. I find international management to be a very interesting topic as I think it will become more and more important as the globe, metaphorically, is shrinking. This research has also taught me a lot about how to manage an international company.

If I would have re-done this work I would have tried to get in touch with managers that have been working both in Sweden and in Canada – managers that are more familiar with the differences between the two countries. I would also interview more of the co-workers – both in Sweden and in Canada - to see if the norms and values are really stretching throughout the organisation. Nevertheless; I believe that the interviews are reliable. The fact that I visited Canada myself gave a greater understanding how things worked over there. All of the interviewed managers have been working at other places before they started working at IKEA, so I believe that they have been able to tell a reliable reflection what particular things are outstanding for IKEA.

Having a qualitative approach gives the analyze a subjective character as it is your own thoughts that you are basing the analysis on, it is not based on data – which might be a more reliable approach. My conclusions are surely subjective, but everything is based on either facts from the theories, from my literature or on the answers from my interview.

6.3 Proposal to further research
To get a greater understanding on how IKEA Canada a quantitative approach on the research could have been used instead, based on the different stores throughout the entire country. The fact that I have only looked at two of the Canadian stores might have had an impact on my results, getting a broader base for the analysis would be a very good idea.

I would also suggest that further studies should be made on how Canadian business culture really is. I think Canada is a really interesting market, but almost all the literature about North American business culture are discussing how it is in the United States. This thesis has been about the differences between IKEA Sweden and IKEA Canada, there were not that many differences though. It would be interesting to take a greater look on the differences between IKEA Canada and the Canadian business culture and to see what problems those differences cause. It would also be interesting to make some research on how the bi-lingual aspect reflects on how much it interferes with the way that companies in Canada are working.

6.4 Final words
I would like to thank everyone involved in this project, especially the managers of IKEA Boucherville, IKEA Ottawa, IKEA Kunges Kurva and IKEA Retail Sweden. They all have been to a great help in order to make this thesis. I would also thank my tutor, Boel Wiklund, who been helpful through out the entire work.
7. List of references

**Published references**


**Unpublished references**


**Interviews**
IKEA Canada
Julie Sennott – store manager – IKEA Boucherville Date: 2005-11-07 Time: 30 minutes

Joanne Mutter – store manager – IKEA Ottawa Date: 2005-11-10 Time: 30 minutes

IKEA Sweden
Marie Bergman – employee manager – IKEA Kungens Kurva Date: 2005-12-08 Time: 30 minutes

Staffan Lindqvist – employee manager – IKEA Retail Sweden Date: 2005-12-08 Time: 30 minutes

**OTHER**
Boel Wiklund – my tutor – University of Stockholm Date: 2005-09-05
Internet
http://www.seb.se/templates/Publikation___46689.asp Collected: 2006-01-1
Appendix 1 Report from the interviews in Canada

In this appendix the interviews in Canada will be presented. Exactly all the answers will not be presented; only the most interesting answers and pointers.

1.1 About IKEA in general

1.1.1 Expectations before working with IKEA:

“That it was a culture-oriented company that had a strong vision or where they wanted to go. They invested a lot in their people and their own development. A part that interested me at that point because often there is some company that their vision is not clear you don’t really know where you are going and what you are doing. IKEA was pretty structured and they new exactly where they wanted me to be, something that I looked forward to.”

J. Synnott (2005)

“My expectations were that I was going to work in an environment that was very similar to shopping and respected to the customers and a company that are product driven. And I also expected that it should be fairly informal. I made some research on how IKEA works with their human resources, and what their human resource idea is. So my expectations when I was coming in were that I was to be joining a large organization, with opportunity to grow.”

J. Mutter (2005)

1.1.2 Cultural differences expected before working for a Swedish company in Canada:

“I know they were open-minded and close to their people and that’s about it. I didn’t really think about these differences at that time.”

J. Synnott (2005)

“I don’t think I gave that much thought, coming in. But since I’ve been here I’ve learned a lot. The company that I worked for prior was different then IKEA, so I think some of it has to do because of the fact that it’s a very strong culture within IKEA. A way of working that I think comes very much from the history of being a Swedish company. I think it’s very democratic; there is an opportunity for everybody to speak and to be heard. The decisions are made from the group, not from one person. The decision isn’t made until all the elements are considered.”

J. Mutter (2005)

1.1.3 IKEA Canada’s values and norms:

“I think it’s about the same across the world. Because IKEA has a really strong value for the culture, value for the concept and I think if you go in Canada or in any other country is still going to focus on the same things. And that’s something that IKEA can be proud of. They have like 220 stores across the world. And if you are going in China, in Sweden, in Canada, anywhere you are going to see it’s the same culture. You can go visit any store and you still
going to have the same Swedish-ness feeling. We have some really good communications around the world and it seems that everybody has the same value for the culture at IKEA.”

J. Sennot (2005)

1.1.4 Thoughts about how the Canadian people look upon IKEA:

“I think the reputation is very good. I think many know that we are a Swedish organization but a lot of them don’t. When people research us they are quite impressed with environmental and social responsibility that the organization takes upon itself without being demanded by the government to do so, it’s just a part of the way that we do business. I think they like the customer service that we offer because we are not pushy, we don’t try to make people buy more. We allow people to browse, so it’s a self choice environment and I think they feel that – the lack of pressure, like that they have to make a decision immediately. It’s a lot pushier atmosphere in furniture stores in Canada in general; many businesses offer a commission based salary. So it’s very important for those individuals to sell a lot. It’s important for us as well to sell a lot, but we just do it in another way.”

J. Mutter (2005)

1.2 Recruitment

1.2.1 Wanted qualities when hiring a new employee, how to follow up with new employees, and how they’ve adapted to the IKEA Team:

“Staff: We are looking for people that are good communicators, because they are working with the costumers. Mostly students. 65% are students here. So we want people that are flexible. Good availabilities. Good communicator and that they are passionate about furniture.

Management: Of coarse leadership are number one, communication skills. We are looking for people that have the same values as IKEA. And we are looking for people that are looking for taking responsibilities, simplicity, and humbleness, people that are cross-country conscious.

When new employees are hired they have an orientation day, they do culture training. Each year we have a survey for the employee’s satisfaction that is called “Voice”. It’s an anonymous survey that co-workers fill. Do we meet their expectations, how they feel about their managers, how they feel about the steering member, do you think we are living our vision day to day? Then we get the results of that, and doing action plans.”

J. Sennot (2005)

“We look for the same thing for both management and staff. We look for people who are in line with the values of the organization. We are looking for people who are open to learn, a good attitude about what they are doing, that knows that the customer is the most important person in the building. We look for people who will fit with IKEA, who wants to work for IKEA because they like the company that IKEA is. That they know about IKEA, if they don’t know about it we make sure we explain it. People who are not bothered with a challenges. People who are looking for the better way or the quicker way to do something. Rather then come in and do the same thing, the same thing…staying in that box. And depending on the job we have to look for certain competencies, certain specialisations, but generally speaking we are looking for the right character, the right person verses the competencies.
In Canada we have a rotation program. When a new manager comes in to the building, they spend the first six weeks, working in different areas of the store. It’s very important no matter what area you are in that you understand how the whole store works. Even if they are new managers they will work in the area of the logistics. So they’ll be here 4.30 in the morning helping unloading the trucks and get the merchandise out to the sales floor.

We do that and we have regular meetings to see how they are doing. About what she’s at, how everything is working out. Does she need more time to spend in a certain area? And the routing schedule can be changed after that, so it’s very flexible just to make sure she gets a good handle on things. This will include spending time in different departments, but also includes in going to specific programmes. They have to go through a safety program, a culture day, so you get a feeling of what the company is about, the values and how we operate, our business, and enviro training. There is something that is emendatory that you need to go through within 2, 3 or 6 months so we make sure that those are also planned in.”

J. Mutter (2005)

1.3 The business culture at IKEA

1.3.1 The relation between the managers and the co-workers:

“It’s a really open relation that we have. We have an open-door policy. Every office that we have in the store is not a closed office, so everybody can come at any time, they don’t have to have an appointment. Everyone is on first name basis with each other. “

J. Sennot (2005)

“Good, I hope. IKEA has a tool that we use called Voice, it’s a co-worker survey. Everybody does it, once a year. And we get a feeling for how things are going in the store. I hope we already know, I hope none of it comes as a surprise. We have a very open way of communicating here. We have a venue that if someone can’t talk to their manager about something you can talk to their manager, you can talk to HR manager and you can talk to the country manager. Put your thoughts down and send them to her. It’s very open. We feel that if people have concerns or if they want to participate in something else or if they have good ideas and suggestions, we want to be open to insurance that they have a forum that they can come to. We also have co-worker drop-in. Once a month I sit in the meeting room with the HR manager and any co-workers are invited to come over those two hours to talk about anything that they want to talk about. And then I need to explain about their concern maybe why it is as it is or how I am going to address it.”

J. Mutter (2005)

1.3.2 Making the decisions:

“It’s a long process. When we make a decision we have to make sure that everyone that’s concerned is aware of it. They give their idea. So it’s a long process. When we do a change, or a big decision is being made we make sure that we have the by end of the people and that they’re involved by it and passionate about it. We are making sure the decision is going to be a success.

We are not using that for every decision. The day to day decisions, we have a meeting, we talk about it. It doesn’t happen often that only one person is taking the decision. But of course
when it’s a major one it’s a longer process but I think we have a sense of urgency too. We need to take a decision fast too.

The impact ability depends on what. It can be as fast as you see results within a week, within a couple of months – if you for example are re-modelling a complete department in a few weeks. But it depends of the scale of the change.”

J. Sennot (2005)

“The structure is that I have 8 or 9 mangers that directly report to myself, and each one of them represents a part of the business, we meet once a week as a group, we meet for about three hours. It can be along process, if u let it. But we try to put mandates in, come prepared to talk about it. Come with your concerns talk to your managers, talk to your teams, and come prepared to talk about it so we can put it on the table so that when we leave we have decided how we’re going to take it. There is less directions from the top here then in other organizations that I’ve worked for. There is a lot more participation in what the direction will be and how it will be taken here.”

J. Mutter (2005)

1.3.3 Importance with clear and precise work tasks, both management and for subordinates:

“We give them the five key tasks, which you will be measured on, which you will be followed up on, at every level of the store. Doesn’t matter if you are a cashier, the manager, store manager, you have your five clear key tasks. But of course, IKEA put a lot of importance to the co-workers to take their own decisions and responsibilities.”

J. Sennot (2005)

1.3.3 Employee incentives, team building activities and or social events:

“When we end a long project we have celebrations. We also do retreats, off site meetings for managers, for co-workers we have the business plan lounge, and for all our expectations for the upcoming year – we do a big party there, the Christmas party, happy hours, we do a lot of things for the co-workers.”

J. Sennot (2005)

“Every store has to decide how they are going to operate, but we have two big celebrations a year. One is after the catalogue has dropped, because that is the most busy part of the year. Then we have a holiday party, in around the December time period. When it comes to incentives, there is a bonus plan that rewords people for having worked and achieving the results that we set out to achieve. The social events are for everyone, the staff and the management.”

J. Mutter (2005)

1.3.4 Employee turnover rate:

1.4 Culture differences

1.4.1 How the Swedish culture appears in the company and if the company tries to keep the Swedish way of working:

“We have the Swedish flag, in the restaurant with the Swedish food, the Scandinavian furniture, the colours; we have very strong Swedishness feeling overall. And even our offices are very Swedish. We celebrate Midsommar, with the customers; we do a big thing about it. Maybe not to the extent that Swedish do, but we have the clothing. It doesn’t feel weird though, the customers love it.

Yeah, it absolutely feels like the company tries to keep the Swedish way of working. We need to stick to the concept. The concept is really strong, it’s a platform for all IKEA stores for being sure of that everywhere across the world we have the Swedish concept. We make sure that in every working field we stick to the concept – finance, sales, HR, marketing.”

J. Sennot (2005)

“It’s the foundation. It’s the foundation of the owner and what his upbringing and what his history is and the values he has for the Swedish culture it’s very ingrained in the organization. And I think it comes out with two main areas. The way that we work, the working methods approached to business and the way that we work with each other.

We have a picture Ingvar Kamprad on the way up to the co-workers lunch room. And he’s in all the manuals, he actually has a manual that is called ‘the concept’. And it’s very obvious that it is based from his history and his upbringing and the influence on being a Swede has had on him.

I feel that the company most definitely tries to keep the Swedish way of working here in Canada.

I don’t know if it is a difficulty or any complication but it’s a challenge to keep in mind the Swedish way and how to interpret it. Sometimes being as democratic as we are can take too long to get some things done. “

J. Mutter (2005)

1.4.2 Contact with managers of Swedish descent and any differences in the way they work:

“We have one trip to Sweden each year, to do a little bit of bonding with managers. But to say that we have regular contact – no.

Maybe there are differences in their day to day life and their way in seeing things, their global vision. But we don’t get to see each other that much so I couldn’t tell. Talking business wise is the same thing.”

J. Sennot (2005)

“We have a store manager program, where we are put together in different groups. So in total I got together four times in the past two years with managers from around the world, and of
course I worked together with some Swedes there. And actually next week I’ll be in Sweden.
We go once a year to Älmhult to look at the products.

We also had one gentleman working here up until one month ago. He worked in the Älmhult store, Denmark and is now in UK – to get a different experience. He had a unique insight of IKEA, because he had worked in the store in Älmhult. He had a different way of approaching some things, some things he was much more direct then we are. And he placed importance on some things differently then we did - more direct with his product and how he wanted his product dealt with and little less in working in partnership with some of his communications partners or logistics partners. And there were a bit differences in the way how people are treated, he was much more reserved and respectful, and a little bit more of a challenge being able to put something on the table - but that’s maybe just him.

We like Midsummer. We have an event for Midsummer. Because we are in Ottawa we have the embassy that we work with. So the embassy and we works together on Midsummer and Lucia. We have a big celebration for Lucia at the museum of civilization. Were IKEA provides with the catering, so there is Swedish meals there. The tickets are sold out within an hour. It’s about 700 people that are able to go.

Within the store there is a great influence when it comes to the food and the Swedish food market by the exit, the way that the store is set up and the product that it offers. Every product is named after somewhere in Sweden. The national colours for the flag; blue and yellow. Scandinavian furniture design. There is a lot. But I think it’s really important that what makes us distinct, it is such an important part on what IKEA is. It is important that we are aware of it and that we understand it to the degree that we need to. And that we allow it to influence the ways that we operates.”

J. Mutter (2005)

1.4.3 How the IKEA culture in IKEA Canada measure up to Ingvar Kamprad’s ideas of what spirit that should run through IKEA:

“Yes, it does. Kamprad’s nine points are the base of our culture, and it’s really strong, we have it everywhere in the store. Each co-worker has culture training, cultured through training that reinforces the nine points of Ingvar Kamprad.”

J. Sennot (2005)

“I would hope so. For our store whatever we know about it and however we interpreted it I think we have presented it in the best way that we can.”

J. Mutter (2005)

1.4.4 Benefits in being aware of the existing culture differences between the countries:

“It helps to see where you are coming from, what our expectations are. In Europe, if you want to compare with Canada, we have to do some educations on the customer side. Because IKEA is a self-served, self-choice company and customers here in Canada are not used to that. So we need to educate them because when they buy furniture otherwise they have free deliveries and they get their furniture two or three days later. Here, with the IKEA concept, you buy your furniture and you go pick it up yourself and you put it in your car and you put your furniture together in your place. It’s not Canadian, so we have to do our work around that.
We employ more people at the customer service, and we also have DVDs running in the store explaining to the customers how to shop, why we are doing things the way we are, why do we have flat pack, why do you build your furniture – it's to save cost!"

J. Sennott (2005)

“I don’t know if it’s particular between Sweden and Canada. But I think it’s very important, in general, to be aware of cultural differences. You can take the wrong approach sometimes; you can say the wrong things sometimes. If you don’t know the differences in the cultures or the differences in how people priorities or the fundamental values.

I think that’s one of the areas that we have the opportunity to do even more, but as a global organization we operates in a lot of different countries. And we are looking on how is the local culture influence they way in which IKEA exists in that market. That’s were I see Canada and Sweden are very similar. And it hasn’t been a lot of need for us to be really different culturally. But I can certainly see it in other countries, based on my assumption – like China for example.”

J. Mutter (2005)

1.4.5 Experiences that the fundamental assumptions and values are different between Sweden and Canada:

“We have some differences, but I think that if you go to Sweden and then you go to Canada you feel that it’s a bit the same. It’s not like you go to China, it’s not that different”

J. Sennott (2005)

“I think that there might be some differences when it comes to children for example. In Sweden it seems like they put it on top of everything. I can certainly see that here in IKEA because we got a different way of working with our whole children range. For example the standards that we put in place for safety to make sure that the little customers are well taken care of, and the barn in the front for the children. I don’t know if the Canadians always put their children at the top.”

J. Mutter (2005)

1.5 Differences in management

1.5.1 Views on management and how a typical Canadian company is managed, and how IKEA is managed:

“It has a total influence. Because the managers are the one that train the co-workers, they are the one that follow up on co-workers, they are the one that insure that we are happy and basically they have the total influence.

I think a typical Canadian company is people oriented. When we sometimes talk about US companies moving to Canada, we have a little bit of culture differences, because Canadian people are open, we give a lot of latitude to our people, but sometimes US companies are coming here and it’s ‘tat, tat, tat, tat, tat’. They have difficulties with the community, co-workers; they are not used to it. So they have to be able to adapt to the Canadians, because no
one wants to shop there if it is like that. A typical Canadian company is very people oriented. Canadian companies have more similarities with European companies then American.

The way how IKEA is managed is a Canadian way. Canadian companies are quick, lean and simple at one point. And IKEA is working out to be simpler paper work wise; when a decision is taken it doesn’t have to have involve four people before taking the decision. We working on better retailing, on being closer to the people, on the process to be quicker, leaner and simpler and I think it’s going to be even more like a Canadian company.”

J. Sennot (2005)

“It is very important for manager to be good leaders. I think the most important thing that a manager can do is to understand who their co-workers are and what their needs are. I think you can greatly impact your business and make the place that you work a better place to work at, if there is that understanding. I think a good solid manager is a good leader who leeds with their head and their heart. And if both of those are in sync then I feel the manager’s roles are extremely important.”

J. Mutter (2005)

1.5.2 Impact the Canadian union have on the employment situation at IKEA:

“The impact isn’t that very strong. In retail in Canada it doesn’t bring much. Because I think the IKEA co-workers in Canada are really well treated, we are above what competitors offer. I don’t think union will bring much, to the retail organizations overall in Canada.”

J. Sennot (2005)

“The unions work a little bit different from what I understand they do in Europe. We don’t have union in this store, but for example the Montreal store does. If the co-workers weren’t happy that would be an option that they could go to. It has been attempted to start a union for this store, many years ago, but the majority didn’t think it was necessary so it didn’t happen.”

J. Mutter (2005)
Appendix 2 Report from the interviews in Sweden

In this appendix the interviews in Sweden will be presented. Not exactly all the answers from the interviews will be presented; only the most interesting answers and pointers from these interviews will be mentioned.

2.1 About IKEA in general

2.1.1 The expectations before working with IKEA:

“My expectations were, partly, most definitely that their values and culture was something that I got attracted to. I could feel that it inspired me and that there were possibilities for development. The second part was that we are working internationally, globally, and we own what we call the pipe-line – all the line from the point of developing a product until it reaches the customer. To get to work for a company that works globally and from A to Z with the entire assortment is rather unique from my point of view. That were my expectations, and of course that I would have the possibility to move around. This is the third job that I have within IKEA during these years. It feels really good.”

S. Lindquist (2005)

“The goal was to work with staff questions as that were what I’ve been studying for. That is what I am hyped about and I find fun. You know that you have to show who you are, but I applied for the staff department. But there wasn’t any available position by the time I started, but I decided to try IKEA and to see how it is as a company and from that making my decision if I’m staying or not out. But I felt it was so good that it was worth to continue, as I was challenged all the time and there is so much to wherever you work.

What I mean by that you have to show who you are is that you might not end up at the position that you want right at once. There are many that starts at another position than the one that they aim for until there is an opening. By doing so you are already in the company and then you are better of, as they recruit a lot internally.

When it comes to my expectations on the structure it’s about what you hear; that it is a family company with a great openness.”

M. Bergman (2005)

2.1.2 Experiences from other positions within IKEA and the comparison of their culture:

“The values that we work with are very similar, but the culture is more alive on the floor, really. When you are with many colleges, that’s when you notice that there is a certain personal-profile within the company. We are a very action strong company; we are good on making decisions and simple and clear. This is something that you definitely notice when you come to Retail.”

S. Lindquist (2005)

2.1.3 Description of the values and norms of IKEA Sweden:
“What I feel is one of the fundamental values are for example to work together. This is something I feel we are good at. If we have a joint task to solve, we solve it. I think that simplicity is still very important for us. One word I really like is; joint forces. This is about us being good at produce things and to solve stuff. That is what I think is our values; together, joint forces and that we are relatively simple.”

S. Lindquist (2005)

“I’ve noticed that they are very human. It’s a lot up to the individual and human being. They believe a lot in the individual. Which I think it’s very fantastic that you give the individual chances all the time. It’s a lot about leadership, with wrong leadership you can sink a good individual, with right leadership you can push up every individual.

The values are simplicity; that you should try to find simple solutions. It is okay to make mistakes just as long as you are learning from them.”

M. Bergman (2005)

2.1.4 How IKEA Sweden points out their position regarding their values and norms:

“We nurse that when we recruit people we check the values and we put a lot of time on that on the interview occasions. We have a document called “Improvement through our values” and we have trained a lot of people in when you are hiring and so on, that’s the way to go. We talk a lot more about values at the hiring interviews then the specific job. If we feel that the person matches our values and culture he/she matches the job as well. Somewhere around there is the most important point, that we work with these questions all the time. Then we have the so called IKEA-ketchup programme, where we take in the managers for a week and work with these questions so they can be the carriers of this message. As a leader you carry the leading message. We work a lot with that. It can also be small groups, working groups, which sits and discuss and work them through. We are working quite continuous with this in different dimensions. “

S. Lindquist (2005)

“We have plans for the employees. Right from the first interview we make sure that we talk about our values and how we want it to be here and how it is here. From the first interview until you are employed we have educations. We have evaluations divided in three steps. The first step is after the first month, then after about three months and then a final step after six months. Here we can see if we live up as role-models, and not complicate things, that they are straight forward and open, honest and clear. That’s how we want them to be. I think the Swedish upper management has anchored this well out on the stores. Then it’s our task to anchor it even further.

But we always have to question in order to develop and move on. If my employee’s values and norms match IKEA’s to 100% then no developing occurs. We always want to find better solutions. Then if they aren’t in tune at all with the values it’s going to be hard to go to my job. The best thing is if it is in tune to the main part, but not to 100%, because it’s then when you questioning things and think about what you are doing. We encourage own thinking, dare to questioning, dare to try and make mistakes – that is something you can fix afterwards.”

M. Bergman (2005)
2.1.5 How the Swedes sees IKEA as an organization:

“If you look at all the measurements that you do today, IKEA always is being ranked if not as number two, as number one, among economists for example. The thing that is very interesting is that those who studies IT and technology, among them we are among the top ten as well, something that we wasn’t before. Regarding to that I think the country sees very positively at IKEA and I think that has to do with that we are growing, first of all, even when it was an economic recession we still hired people. So we had a tailwind in those segments. Further more I think people are attracted to home furnishing, and that we are working globally is something I think attracts. I also think that the multiplicity of professions that we have attracts. I think those are the three main things.”

S. Lindquist (2005)

2.1.6 IKEA described in three words:

“Global, this is important. Strong business culture. Possibilities.”

S. Lindquist (2005)

2.2 Recruitment

2.2.1 The wanted qualities when hiring new managers and co-workers:

“We look at if our candidates match our values. We have definitely also come to the point where we want to grow, so we need new competence, so that’s something we look for as well. We look a lot on values. One thing that also has become important is flexibility, how moveable people really are. Since we are growing so much as we do. We look for competence, but mostly values.

There isn’t any general employment-test, but we use something called Predictive Index or PI87, there is also a Thomas test which is commonly used. But PI is the thing that we use the most, it is important to say that the test isn’t a determining factor for employment though. It is to help the one who recruits with navigating among the questions. We don’t have anything like ‘if you pass the test you’ll get the job’, but we use it to some extent a lot.

The Thomas test is used in 30 % of the IKEA organisation globally, and the PI test is used up to 70%.”

S. Lindquist (2005)

“Open, honest, straight forward and clear in what they think, prestige less. That they can see that no matter where you are in the chain and what role you have you’re as much important as anyone else. It is the goal that is important. We want them to be spontaneous and happy. This is depending on what positions that you are applying for, as a salesman you need to be more open then if you are working behind the scenes, and then it might be other qualities that matter more.”

M. Bergman (2005)

87 http://www.johnwatsongroup.com/client_list.html
2.2.2 How they follow up on how the new employees have adapted to the IKEA culture and method of working:

“It is very important they get information about IKEA and that they get a good introduction. We have a good arrangement, but it’s not always that you go by the book. But we put a lot of weight in the introduction. It is also important that the individual that are higher up in the organisation is being followed up continuously. We also work with, something which I think is very good, development meetings. That is also a way of follow up on the development and sees where it is going. The third thing is that we notice how it works internal; we have a tool called ‘Voice’. It is a very good tool that each company has every each or third year. It is about everything from the business culture, your own assignment, motivation, grading the leadership and so on.”

S. Lindquist (2005)

“That is up to the managers. We use to have check-up meeting often. Where we ask how they are feeling, what they are thinking and that you just checking up on what’s going on in general. We also have a meeting after three months, which are more thorough. But it is the day to day conversations that are important.

We also have introduction courses where they get to know how IKEA works, when it comes to service and such.

We don’t feel like we are pushing for the business culture, really. We mostly talk about the history of IKEA and that kind of stuff. And it’s pretty much of the culture that is braided into that, but it isn’t like we are propagating for it. It is mainly in step three that we are starting to talk about the values, not in the first step.”

M. Bergman (2005)

2.3 The business culture at IKEA

2.3.1 The relations between managers and co-workers:

“It is impossible to give a general answer on this matter, but hence that we are working a lot with trying to work with a clearly inspiring leadership. That is the message that we are trying to use. From department manager, to production manager to co-worker everything is very tight. There are of course some bad examples as well.

I don’t feel that there is a certain class distinction. We are a rather flat organisation in that sense. In one store you have one store manager, then the function manager, then the department manager, then the group managers and the co-workers. That is the layers, there isn’t more to it.”

S. Lindquist (2005)

“The relation is very good. Our managers are out and working daily, they don’t hide in their offices. We are out working in the store; it’s of course different from department to department. We are present bosses who often give feed-back. There is an open-door policy, we have open-plan office, no closed doors. The store manager is mostly sitting among the rest of us. We all are on first name basis with each other.”
2.3.2 The decision making

“I think that the way that we are working today – as we aren’t a top-down organisation – we work a lot with trying to describe norm pictures, where we want to go and then within those frames we are trying to get in and make clearer and explain. IKEA was built once upon a time, but if you are putting people in motion and by doing that you can move forward to the goals that you have. I feel that it’s very little top-down decisions, as that isn’t the IKEA culture.

Sometimes you can feel that it takes too long before something is getting implemented, but some things are very fast. If we are talking about some decisions they can be challenged on their way.”

S. Lindquist (2005)

“Due to the fact that the managers are out and working in the organization the ability for a decision to get fulfilled is great. The decisions that are taken by the management group are being made. Then, of course, it depends on what kind of decisions you are taking.

It has a lot to do with give out information, when that is distributed it’s a go. First of all is the management group and the store manager who makes the decisions about changes. The management group includes about ten people.”

M. Bergman (2005)

2.3.3 The employee incentives, team building activities and social events:

“It is very much up to each store manager. But it is very common to celebrate successes or by other reasons. It can occur that you have an international kick-off before a season start or because of other reasons.”

S. Lindquist (2005)

Team building can be for each department, but it’s not as if we are team building the entire store. We have parties for the employees once every year. We have Christmas get-togethers before Christmas. There are in-house bandy teams; we have a co-worker club that puts together ski trips every year. It is very common that people are meeting up on their spare-time.

The unity is very strong.

Both managers and employees participate in these activities. There are no limits if you are only working extra or whatsoever.”

M. Bergman (2005)

2.3.4 The employee turnover rate is:


2.4 Culture differences

2.4.1 The ways that the Swedish culture appears in the company

“It is everything from the fact that it is a Swedish company, that it is Scandinavian design and that it is a so called Swedish management philosophy that is prevailing and a little bit on the way that Swedes acts.”

S. Lindquist (2005)

“We are Swedish/Scandinavian company and it shows on how we furniture in the exhibitions. The fact that we are on first name basis with each other shows that we are Swedish. I don’t think that is very common otherwise. That there shouldn’t be any distance between the managers and the co-workers. I think Sweden has less hierarchy then other countries companies. This is characterized in IKEA stores in other countries. That you are straight forward and can talk to the store manager if it’s something on your mind.”

M. Bergman (2005)

2.4.2 How the IKEA culture measure up to Ingvar Kamprad’s ideas of what spirit that should run through IKEA:

“I feel that the IKEA culture, in a Swedish perspective and in some “mature” IKEA countries, is measuring up to what Ingvar Kamprad’s idea was on what spirit should go through IKEA. On the new markets and in the new IKEA countries I feel that there is a bit left before you can say that.”

S. Lindquist (2005)

“Yes, for example the prestige less-ness and that you should make everything in a simple matter. That it is okay to make mistakes - that is how we learn. We don’t have any picture of Ingvar Kamprad though. But I think his nine-step-ladder is all positive.”

M. Bergman (2005)

2.4.3 Views on management

“A typical manager at IKEA Retail is often a communicative person, high energy level, drifty, ability to hasten things and willing for change.

I meet colleges from other countries daily, through internal working systems, or at least weekly. Sometimes I have experienced that some foreign colleges find it hard to adapt and understand when it comes to employee questions and the way to manage IKEA. You can see, in some cultures, that there is a more top-down organisation and that the bosses make the decisions. But that’s not our culture. Some countries that are used to that can feel that it is a bit unclear and that we aren’t drifty.

I find that Swedish managers are often the once who start up with things and are pretty good at making contact and create team-work. They are definitely not withdrawn and don’t hold back. I feel that they often want to jump into projects and participate.”

S. Lindquist (2005)
“We exist all through the entire organization. With clear management and clear direct-lines and goals things gets a lot easier. I think IKEA separates from other typical Swedish companies when it comes to the own initiatives and questioning. We don’t think that ‘this is how it always has been and this is how it is going to be’."

M. Bergman (2005)
Appendix 3 Report from the surveys for the staff in Canada
In this appendix the surveys for the staff in Canada will be presented. Only the most interesting answers and pointers from these will be presented.

3.1 What they learnt during the introduction education:

“We learn about culture, where it’s coming from.”

“About IKEA – where it started, by whom and how the company operates”.

“”We were introduced to the Swedish culture through videos and reading material during a day-long introduction called “Culture Day.”

“I learnt about Sweden and it’s culture and had the opportunity to be in Älmhult.”

“About the Swedish culture and diversity.”

“The IKEA culture, IKEA’s philosophy and goals and its day to day business practices.”

3.2 What perception they had about IKEA before working there and if they have changed during the time they worked for IKEA, and if so; in what way:

“I am not looking at IKEA the same way as a co-worker then a client. I understand more about the concept and culture.”

“I did not have a perception. IKEA is constantly changing – growth in co-workers and different ways of working.”

“My perception was always that of a ‘fun’ destination, where I would get a lot of inspiration for decorating, ideas for gifts, great prices and the most current design trend. We have gotten even better at all of the above, with better quality-construction too.”

“That you had to build all your furniture – meaning cheaper price. Not much has changed, but the furniture is easier to build and better made – still low price.”

“I thought IKEA was an amazing store too, with lots of fun and unique items. I always saw products I needed. Now I don’t notice the products as much anymore, I notice the volumes of customers instead.”

3.3 What differences they can see from other organisations:

“Compared to others, IKEA is a lot more focused on training and learning then just working for money.”

“Management levels are different. We are not in your face like other retailers. There is more flexibility at store level to make changes.”

“It’s not so ‘top down’ here.”
“Although IKEA’s focus is, of course, to sell – our approach is very different. A better everyday life for the many – includes not only how we treat the customers but how we work together.”

“The big differences is the openness and family atmosphere and job security at IKEA.”

“The training to all employees and explaining the IKEA way.”

“It definitely differ from other retailers. Ways of working are different – it’s harder work and more physically demanding. The volume of customers is huge!”

3.4 Does, or does not, the Swedish and Canadian way of work differ:

“Canadian living is more on a fast speed. There is and will be a difference at a cultural level between the too.”

“IKEA focuses more on a concept – the way of working between departments. IKEA has more flexibility with the way managers can run their business.”

“Very similar except for IKEA philosophy and emphasis on maintaining its culture.”

“I’ve worked at many different places and I have found that IKEA understands that co-workers will make mistakes in their learning process – people are allowed to grow on their own pace.”

“The difference may be in the way we approach customers here in Canada. I would say maybe Sweden or Swedish people would rather be left alone while shopping. They are more self-sufficient.”

“Swedish people are more laid back.”

“Maybe it was different when I first started 5 years ago, but now I see it similar to other retailers – pressure to meet sales goals is more dominant now. Expectations to produce sales are much higher. Canadian’s way of working usually does not put too much emphasis on looking after the co-worker – Swedish way of working is more aware of the co-workers. Canada does not practice this philosophy in Canadian IKEA stores as much.”
Appendix 4
The interview guide for the management-department in IKEA Sweden.

Introducerande frågor

1. Vilken position har du i företaget idag? Vad innebär den? Vilka har du direkt kontakt med?

2. Beskriv i kort din bakgrund innan du fick din position på IKEA.

3. Hur länge har du varit anställd hos IKEA, och hur länge i den här positionen?


6. Hur skulle du beskriva IKEA Sveriges värderingar och normer?

7. Hur försöker IKEA Sverige poängtera sin position vad det gäller värderingar och normer? (Blända de anställda och ut bland folket) Vilka metoder används?

8. Hur tror du svenskarna ser på IKEA som organisation?


Nyanställda

10. Vilka kvaliteter söker ni när ni anställer nya chefer och medarbetare?
    Hur finner ni dessa, används det någon form av generell anställningstest?
    I vilken utsträckning används Arbetsförmedlingen?

11. Hur följer ni upp de nya anställda - hur de har anpassat sig till IKEAs arbetskultur och arbetssätt?

12. Hur skulle du beskriva relationen mellan arbetsledare och anställda? Känner man av någon sk. ”klass” skillnad?

13. Hur stark är genomslagskraften på beslut från övre ledningen tills man kan se resultat inom organisationen?
    Hur går ett beslutstagande till i stora drag? En som beslutar eller är det många som hörs innan?

14. Erbjuder ni de anställda någon form av ”team building” aktiviteter eller andra sociala aktiviteter (fester, idrottsvenemang)? Vilka används vanligen i såna fall? Är detta varuhusvis, eller något som kan ske nationellt?
15. Vad har ni för omsättnings frekvens bland de anställda?

**Svenska affärskulturen**

16. På vilket sätt känner du att den svenska kulturen syns i företaget?

17. Känner du att IKEAs kultur väger upp till vad Ingvar Kamprads idé om vilken anda som ska genomsyra IKEA? Kan du ge exempel på något?

**Övriga frågor**


19. Hur är en typisk arbetsledare hos IKEA? Tillbakadragen och försiktig eller framåtgående med snabba besluts taganden?


21. Vilken roll har regeringen och facket på att arbeta för IKEA Sverige? Hur stor påverkan har de?

**Internationellt**

22. Hur ofta träffar du kollegor från andra länder?

23. Upplever du att det finns något utländska kollegor har svårare för att ta till sig eller förstå vad det gäller personalfrågor eller sättet att leda IKEA?

24. Vad är de främsta frågorna du får från dels personal avdelningarna runt om i Sverige och dels från utomlands? Några speciella komplikationer?

25. Har du själv märkt någon skillnad i arbetskulturer vid internationella möten? Är svenskar mer tillbakadraga än andra, finns det andra karaktärsdrag du lagt märke till?
Appendix 5
The interview guide for the management-department in IKEA Canada.

**Introduction questions**

1. Describe in short your background before you obtained this position.
2. What position do you hold in the company today?
3. How long have you been employed by IKEA, and how long in this position?
4. How long have you worked for IKEA?
5. What kind of expectations did you have of IKEA before working with them? Have they changed now? If yes, in what way have they changed? Structure, style, people
6. What cultural differences did you expect before working for a Swedish company in Canada? Did Ikea meet those expectations?
7. Have you worked for another organization before IKEA? If yes. Do you have any examples of how to manage the company that might be outstanding for IKEA?
8. Do you have any other experiences from other IKEA stores? If yes. Which one/once? How would you compare this IKEA store to others?
9. How would you describe IKEA Canada’s values and norms?
10. In what way does IKEA Canada try to demonstrate its standing position when it comes to values and norms?
11. How do you think the Canadian people look upon IKEA as an organization?
12. Describe Ikea in 3 words.?
13. Why do you think Canada is the right market for IKEA?

**New employment**

14. Are you familiar with the Thomas-test? Do you use it?
15. Are you familiar with the SL2-method? Is that something that you use?
16. What qualities do you look for when hiring a new employee?
17. How do you follow up with new employees, and how they’ve adapted to the IKEA Team?
18. Where or to who do staff direct their questions or concerns.
19. How would you describe the relation between the managers and the co-workers?

20. How great is the impact ability on a decision at the upper management level until you see results within the organization?

21. Do you use professional titles when addressing co-workers, management or is it on a first name basis?

22. Does your company offer employee incentives, team building activities and or social events? Which are more commonly used?

23. What is your employee turnover rate?

**The Swedish influence**

24. In which way does the Swedish culture appear in the company?

25. Do you feel as if the company tries to keep the Swedish way of working in Canada?

26. Have any complications occurred for the company when trying to work in the “Swedish” way?

27. What negative aspects do you see in the IKEA culture; in the way that it is organized and the way it functions? What would you like to change?

28. Do you have any contact with managers of Swedish descent?

29. If yes. How often? Do you see any differences in the way they work?

30. Do you think that the IKEA culture in IKEA Canada measure up to Ingvar Kamprads ideas of what spirit that should run thru IKEA? Which might that be?

31. How do you see on IKEA’s way of
   A. Delegations       B. Team-work
   C. Informality

   A.  
   B.  
   C.  

   Negative 0 Positive

32. Have you experienced that the fundamental assumptions and values are different between Sweden and Canada? If you have. How do you handle it?
General questions about culture differences

33. Which benefits do you see in being aware of the existing culture differences between the countries?

34. How important would you say that is?

35. Are there any differences that you find particular hard to accept?

36. Which differences are most important to be aware of?

Widespread questions

37. How do you see on management? (What it is and how great influence it has on the outcome).

38. How would you say a typical Canadian company is managed?

39. Generally speaking, how is IKEA Canada managed? Do you find it to be a particular uncanadian way to run a company? If yes, what are the main differences and if not, why not?

40. How much is the difference in the way to work at IKEA Canada compared to the national culture of Canada?

41. How do you find that IKEA solves the culture differences between Sweden and the other countries?

42. What role does the government and the union has on the work at IKEA Canada?

43. How great impact do you feel the Canadian union have on the employment situation at IKEA?
Appendix 6
Interview questions for the staff at IKEA Ottawa, Canada.

Interview question for the staff

1. What is your position at the company?

________________________________________________________________________

2. For how long have you worked at IKEA?

________________________________________________________________________

3. What did you learn during the introduction education?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

4. What perception did you have about IKEA before working here? Have they changed during the time you worked here and if so, in what way?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

5. Do you have experiences from other organisations and which differences can you see?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

6. In comparison to jobs that you have held aside from IKEA do you find that the Swedish and Canadian way of work differ? If so, in what way? Or don’t you find any differ at all?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________