

The new job market - the same challenges

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This article was written by request of the journal *Personalechefer i Danmark* (Directors of Personal in Denmark) to be presented in an issue discussing the theme The new job market. The concept of a new job market is based on the idea that today the way of managing and recruiting new staff is presenting a range of new challenges because of the more and more diversified groups of people that are becoming a part of the labour market. This is due to immigration of people with different cultural background, as well as on the idea that the upcoming generations, broadly speaking, are representing different values and attitudes, than currently represented by the majority of the workforce.

Opening

If you were beamed down to Earth from an alien planet to observe mankind and the relationships between people, you could be easily forgiven for thinking that people's favourite pastimes were trying to change other people. A little abstract perhaps, but how often do we come across the opinion that if only they were like this or like that or if only they didn't do this or that, and then we would be so much happier and everything would be so much easier! If others live up to our expectations, we are happy and feel secure. If not, we do everything we can to get them to live up to our expectations. We entice or threaten them with rewards or punishment, with pedagogical skill or sheer brute force. But how often does it succeed and have a happy ending for both parties?

No one is born into this world to live up to your expectations - not even your children, let alone your employees!

If others live up to your expectations, it's not necessarily because you want it, but because they chose to do so. The choice is not yours, but theirs. Kierkegaard says that if you want to help another person, you must start there where that person is. Kierkegaard also says the same about being able to move on, learn more about yourself and life - you must dare to risk losing your footing.

This is true of a couple's relationship, the relationship to our children; basically relationships to all other people and therefore, and not least, in leadership. A leader must meet the employee where they are! The others may seem strange, their thinking illogical and intricate, and their values way out. Many, and more and more of those we meet, are from another generation, another culture, another world, which makes the challenge even greater, but also more interesting and educational.

Self-knowledge

How well do you know your employees and their needs? What makes them happy, satisfied, involved, productive and creative? How good are you at meeting them there where they are? This is what leadership is all about! If you want to grow and help each employee to realize their full potential within the organization, reflection and change starts with oneself. All of us, regardless of role and function, must dare to lose our footing and move to where our fellow man is?

To practice good leadership requires knowledge of human nature and perhaps most importantly, that you know yourself - know who you are. When do you feel good about yourself? When are things not going so well for you? And, not least, what is the cause. Why? What are you good at and what makes you stressed and sometimes causes you to act inappropriately - shout, scream, give orders, cry, give up, withdraw into yourself, be sarcastic or quiet? You must know this before you can practice good leadership, before you get the courage to dare.

So, know yourself, find out where your employee is and meet them right there. It is the easiest and the hardest thing in the world - all at once.

Perhaps it is true that there is a "New job market" on the way, but hasn't there always been? Or maybe the "New" sets greater demands on human resources management than the "Old" that we are moving away from. Maybe, but have the above requirements not always been the same? The better you know yourself, the better you are to meet other people where they are, the better your prerequisites are to practice good leadership.

Focused Leadership

A dear child has many names. My starting point is in Garuda's Focus Model that I will expand on in the following. The model is only a model - a tool to manage or get an overview of a complex situation. You can probably find many other models that are just as useful. What's good about the Focus Model is that it has been proven in many situations and in many cultures. My book "Focused Leadership" in which the model is described, is even translated into Arabic and used as a textbook at Basra University, just as the model is used by consulting firms in foreign cultures such as Lebanon and Japan. Regardless of culture, religion, political system and human nature, it is my experience that everyone agrees with the model's basic prerequisites. Therefore, they can use the model. Among those who are passionate about sport, especially men's handball, there are many who know that the model and the underlying test (in a handball version) has been a key tool since 2006 for team building and individual mental training for Ulrik Wilbæk and Peter Bresdorff-Larsen, in their efforts to optimize the Danish national men's team and each player's contribution. Peter calls it Colour Training. It's a 4-stage rocket: Get to know yourself. Get to know your team mates. Learn to accept your team mate for who he is, and finally, learn to respect him for who he is and what he stands for. It is team building and mental training in one.

Happiness Corners

We all have a happiness corner. A happiness corner is the corner where we feel cheerful, happy, in harmony with ourselves and our inner nature. It is the corner of the mental state where we experience that things just glide, there is no resistance, we are in the zone and one decision seizes the next one - effortlessly. It is where we realize ourselves in accordance with our own nature.

There are 4 happiness corners in my model. In reality, there are probably many more, but remember, it's only a model.

The Baser's happiness corner

Once the Baser has the sense of having control over life he is at ease with himself. He finds happiness in that things are in order and the future is planned and predictable. He knows what he has and can respond accordingly. Therefore, he regularly takes stock over life's progressive process and only takes enforced decisions if he cannot predict the consequences in advance. He safeguards against unhappiness by expecting the unexpected. He has control of the details and knows the rules. "If only everyone did as I do then it would make so many things a lot easier," he says. *It could also be a she – there are no gender differences here.*



The Baser in his Happiness Corner

Unhappiness sets in and the feeling of happiness disappears when things don't go as planned, because life's unpredictability spoils the plans. When that happens, we become stressed and agitated, and the question is raised: Who's to blame? Have I counted wrong? Is there a detail or a rule I've overlooked? Is there something I've forgot to check?

The Result Creator's happiness corner

Happiness for the Result Creator is to be at the forefront. They are best when there is something at stake. In that state they are in a restless repose – they are only themselves when in motion. They set goals, ambitious goals - specific goals. Everything is about getting results, winning, being the best. They are pushy, take chances, are impatient and go straight to or over the line. It is about bragging rights. Self-realization lies in the joy of achieving the greatest possible output, to compete, to achieve better results and gain recognition for it.



The Result Creator in his Happiness Corner

Unhappiness sets in when things don't go as promised and hoped, when ambition may be dampened or "failure" is just around the corner. When that happens, we get disappointed, angry and maybe a little aggressive. The feeling of happiness disappears. "We were so close, but if we just put in a little extra effort, then we would have succeeded - we would have achieved the goal," he says. In which case, happiness would not have disappeared.

The Integrator's happiness corner

For the Integrator, happiness is helping to create a community of like-minded people, where they stick together, they are contented and try to anticipate and meet the expectations of others. They listen to each other, take individual considerations, moderate disagreements and conflicts of interest and try to get everyone pulling in the same direction. The Integrator thrives in the role of coach, mentor and rallying point. They safeguard against unhappiness by seeking consensus and sharing unpleasant decisions.

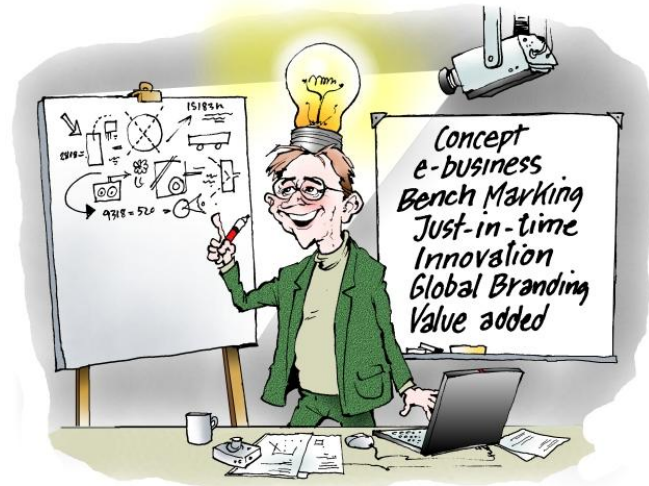


The Integrator in his Happiness Corner

Unhappiness sets in when unity disappears and dialogue is replaced by criticism and inhibition, and the feeling of acceptance disappears. When that happens, we feel pain and we are no longer ourselves. We suggest compromises, back off and try to live up to the expectations of others. "We must simply learn to understand each other better and then everything will be ok again," he says.

The Developer's happiness corner

For the Developer, happiness is to be creative, to see new opportunities, to create change, see and show the way forward. Worst of all are constraints, lack of vision, reactionaries and conservative apathy. The driving force is butterflies in our stomach, the feeling of happiness when ideas are fostered and we tell about the amazing opportunities that nobody else has seen. Things are just waiting to be realized. We create the future. Anything is possible. Being proactive is the best way to guard against unhappiness.



The Developer in his Happiness Corner

Unhappiness sets in when ideas go up in smoke and visions, in reality, are reduced to pipe dreams and we reluctantly have to admit that the world isn't ready to recognize our genius. We have not been understood, because we have not been good enough at communicating, we didn't go into the details. Then we feel pressured, recognition disappears along with the butterflies in our stomach. "If only there hadn't been all the bureaucratic rules and reactionaries," he says.

Detour to happiness

We have it best when we can and are allowed to live according to our own nature. Therefore, when crisis, pressure, disagreements and difficulties pile up, it is most natural for us to seek out the happiness corner - to be safe. We seek what we know and confirm, yet again, Einstein's definition of insanity. True insanity is repeating the same behaviour in the hope of getting different results (or that it will have other, more positive consequences).

It is here we must learn to dare to lose our footing. What will happen if I let go of control? What happens when I don't see failure as a setback, but rather as a step forward? What happens when I accept conflict that I, despite all efforts, cannot be equally appreciated by everyone? What happens when I accept that the dream, self-realization of the big vision, cannot be accomplished?

The paradox is what created the unhappiness, or was the reason we lost happiness, the reason we were pushed out of our happiness corner, maybe it has just been our efforts to maintain happiness and the way we tried to do it.



The Baser's way to return to happiness

The Result types return to happiness

It is the same for the Result Creator. Instead of trying to rediscover happiness through faster and riskier decisions, they may have very easily rediscovered happiness by moving to the Integrator's corner, being patient, seeking harmony and a common understanding of goals and means.

The Baser's return to happiness

Instead of the Baser's quest for more control, they should maybe have let go and moved into the Developer's corner to retrieve their happiness. In the corner where control, rules, framework and fixed structures, are an obstacle to happiness. This is what the cause of all unhappiness is for the Developer. However, it is of course difficult for the Baser to see any happiness in this corner that is so foreign to them.



The Resultat Creator's way to return to happiness

The Integrator's return to happiness

Instead of the Integrator's patient and tolerant search for acceptance, agreement, togetherness and common understanding, and striving to keep oneself and others in this happiness corner,

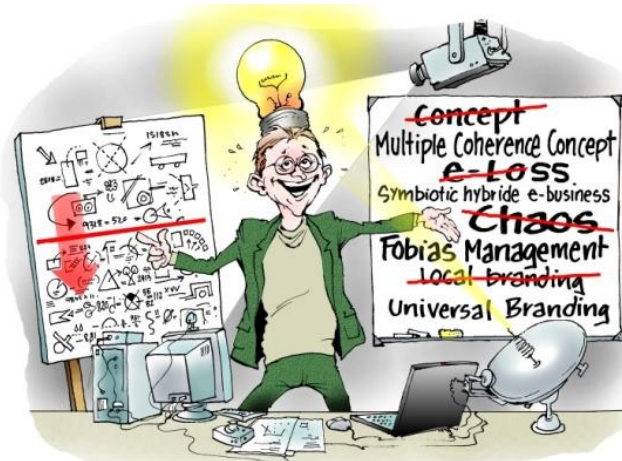


The Integrator's method to return to happiness

which is no longer happy, they should perhaps look in the gray corner. The Baser's corner requires more discipline, punctuality and order, and having to show authority by taking command and control. However, it's hard when tolerance and mutual understanding has always been the way to happiness. It doesn't lie in their nature

The Developer's return to happiness

Finally, the Developer is prevented from realizing themselves through their creativity and innovative power and therefore they lose their footing in their Developer's happiness corner. Maybe they should have been in the blue corner to listen more to the needs of others' and the market, with the intention of aligning their ambitions for change and new concepts with reality.



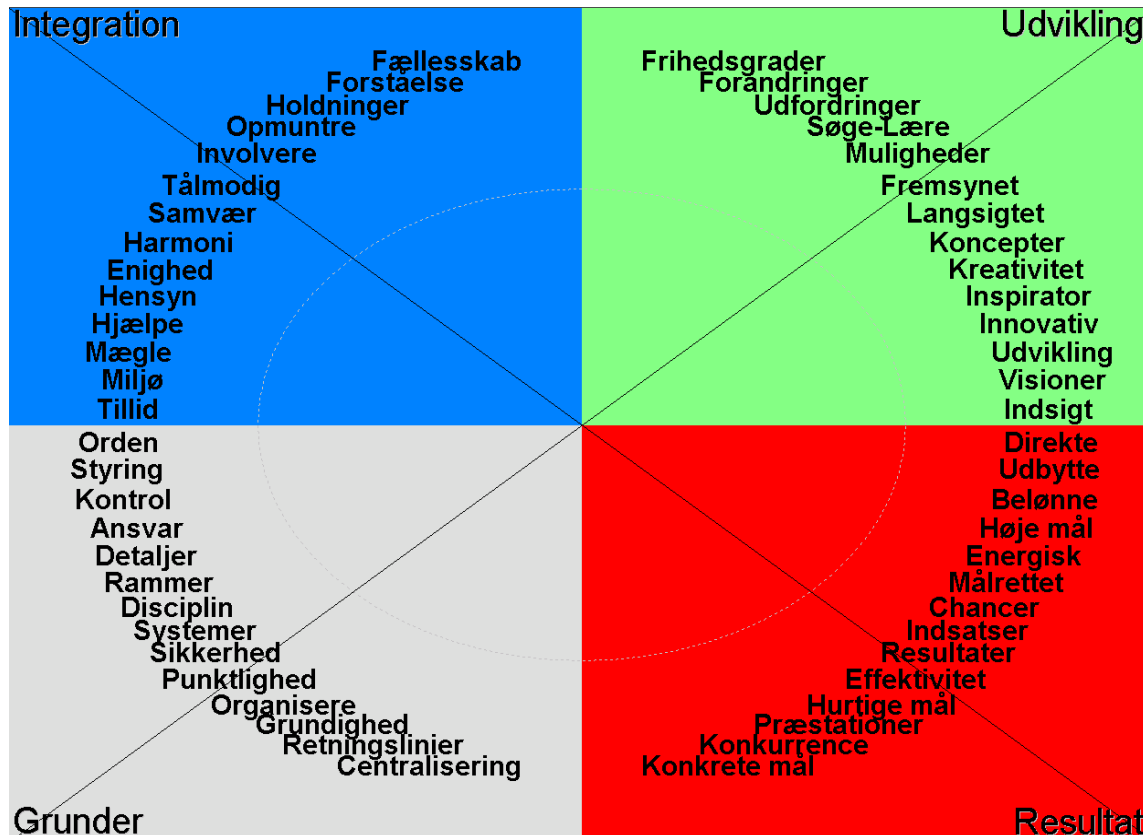
The Developer's method to return to happiness

This is what often happens - with all of us!

They say everyone creates their own happiness. Does this then mean that we also create our own unhappiness?

The Focus Model

The Focus Model can clarify and illustrate these arguments. When we are under pressure and when we are stressed, it is difficult to see and implement alternative solutions. Meeting others where they are!



The 4 corners represent different personalities, different temperaments and different values. In each corner there are different attitudes, ambitions and ways to achieve ambitions.

The 4 corners also represent different cultures. To find oneself in one corner, rather than another, is more pronounced in some cultures than in others. For example, a comparison of Focus Profiles filled out Swedes and Danes who were actively employed, the Swedes scored higher in the blue and gray corners than the Danes, while the Danes scored higher in the red and green corners. For people with experience from working in both cultures, this comes as no surprise. Our prejudice is not prejudice, but an experience of reality - a real difference. People are more disciplined, consensus-seeking and find it easier to accept given authoritative rules in Swedish companies than in Danish companies. A Danish leader in Sweden can meet employees where they are and a Swedish leader in Denmark can meet Danish employees where they are.

We must learn to put ourselves in the middle of the model, neutralize our inner happiness barometer and meet other people where they are, in their happiness corner, regardless of cultural and generational differences.

That was the challenge yesterday; it still is today and will be in the future - no matter what culture and what happiness corner we find ourselves in.