Attractive competences within project management for the coming years

Competence development at Infotiv

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Abstract

This dissertation will look into how the project leader role will change in the future and what kind of qualities and competences that will be looked for. The aim is to present suggestions and recommendations to Infotiv in what direction they should develop their project management competences in order to be competitive in the future. A number of theories both within leadership in general and project leadership in particular have been studied and analysed. As tomorrow's project leaders will face big demands on shorter and shorter deadlines the project team's importance for the outcome of projects will increase. The way in which the project leader is able to make the team members fully committed to the project is therefore crucial. The literature, as well as the interviewees, emphasise the need for project leaders to possess "soft", interpersonal skills as, for instance, managing conflicts, influencing, negotiating, and motivating and communicating with those involved in the project. However, as different projects require different qualities from the project leader finding the right project leader for the project is vital way to ensure success.

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1. Introduction

Problem Definition

A service organisation as Infotiv is selling their consultants competences. As organisations offering consultants with project management competences are increasing the concurrence for these organisations is increasing as well. Infotiv has recently appointed two competence leaders whose task is to be in charge of the competence development for employees working within Project Management and Business Development at the organisation. For Infotiv to keep and strengthen their competitiveness, and for the employees to continue like working at the organisation, it is of vital importance how they manage and strategically develop the competence within Project Management.

Aims

The aim of this dissertation is to investigate what kind of competences that will be the most attractive in the next years within project management in general, and to particularly find eventually competence gaps at Infotiv. What are the customers looking for in the project manager of tomorrow? Further, a greater knowledge and understanding of Project Management as a phenomenon, and how the role of the project manager has changed during times is to be obtained.

Objectives

The main objective is to give support and suggestions to Infotiv how they can keep and strengthen their competitiveness within project management regarding the strategic competence development at the organisation. In what direction should the Project Management competences at Infotiv be developed?

2. Theoretical Framework

Cadle & Yeates (2004) mean that there are two kinds of project managers. They do not categorise them as successes or failures or those who get the job done and those who do not. Instead they say that "there are those for whom people want to work again and those for whom no one want to work again" (Cadle & Yeates, 2004, p. 322). It is leadership that divides project managers into these two categories. Therefore, the foundation of leadership will first be investigated followed by theories within project leadership.

2.1 Leadership

There are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are researchers to propose them. Kezsbom and Edward (2001) propose a definition that they consider useful within a project setting:

"Leadership is a social influence process in which the leader seeks the participation of individuals in an effort to obtain organisational objectives."

(Kezsbom & Edward, 2001, p. 251)

Another project-related definition of leadership is suggested by Cleland (1995):

"Project leadership is defined as a presence and a process carried out within an organizational role that assumes responsibility for the needs and rights of those people who choose to follow the leader in accomplishing project results."

(Cleland, 1995, p. 86)

2.1.1 Leadership vs. Management

The discussion about the difference between leadership and management can be found in much literature on the subject. Rost (1993) asserts that for many years experts made no distinctions between the two, and leadership and management were combined under the rubric of "classical management" (Kliem, 2004). What today is known as the "soft", interpersonal, side of management was emphasises very little and the very qualities of a manager were assumed to be the very same ones for a leader: analytical, logical, organized, methodical, consistent, orderly, and task oriented. However, today experts generally agree that leadership and management share some characteristics but that each also is separate and distinct. Hiebert and Klatt (2001) explain the distinction between management and leadership is a balance, and not either-or. In much of the literature there is said that people can be trained to manage but leaders possess qualities that may not be created in all individuals. A leader can be a manager, but a manager is not necessarily a leader.

A table of the most frequent distinctions between leaders and mangers can be found in table 1.

Leaders	Managers
Motivate and Inspire	Control
Innovate	Administer
Influence Relationship	Authority Relationship
Seeks Challenges	Seek to Remain Status Quo
Doing the Right Things	Doing Things Right
Think Long Term, Big Picture	Think Short-Term
Visions and Values	Goals
Aligning people	Organising and Staffing

Table 1.Leaders vs. managers

One theorist that clearly argues that the differences between leadership and management are distinct is John Kotter (1990). Kotter (1990) distinguish between leadership and management by saying that leaders establish direction by creating a vision and a strategy for achieving the vision. Managers on the other hand, do not develop visions, they develop plans (Kotter, 1990).

One of the key points in differentiating between leadership and management is the idea that employees willingly follow leaders because they want to, not because they have to (Cadle & Yeates, 2004; Cadwell, 2004; Hesselbein *et al*. 1996; Rost, 1993; Rubenowitz, 2004; Shriberg *et al*. 1997). Management is often described as "getting things done through people", in order to achieve business or organisational goals, while leadership is more on interpersonal behaviour, on getting people to want to do things, on getting their enthusiastic support. Rubenowitz (2004) explains that leaders´ power is based on personal qualities and behaviours in contrast to mangers´ whose power position comes from the formal position gained from superior decision-makers. Even though leaders may not possess the formal power to reward and sanction performance, employees give the leader power by complying what he/she requests. Managers, on the other hand, may have to rely on formal authority to get employees to accomplish goals.

Another frequent differentiation between leaders and managers is the standpoint that leaders focus on doing the right things while managers focus on doing things right. Cleland (1995) explains that in this context, the project leader develops the visions for the project, assembles the resources, and provides the inspiration and motivation for working with project stakeholders in doing the right things to accomplish the project's objectives which are completing the project so that its technical performance cost, and schedule objectives are attained and so that the project results have a place in the future of the enterprise. Further Hesselbein *et al*. (1996) point out that most managers and executives operate within existing paradigms or ways of thinking, while leaders have the courage to bring those paradigms to the surface, identify the underlying assumptions and motivations, and challenge them. Cadle and Yeates (2004) have similar thoughts and assert that managers belong to the organisation and see themselves as conservators, bringing certainty into a disordered environment. Leaders, however, get their identity from their beliefs and ideas and are always looking to change things.

2.1.4 Leadership Theories

There have been four main "generations" of theory in the recent literature of leadership over the last 80 years; traits theories, behavioural theories, contingency theories, and transformational theories.

2.1.4.1 Trait Theory

When the field of leadership began to emerge as a separate discipline, after World War II, people often believed that the way to be an effective leader was to study others they perceived as effective. Leadership research focused on trying to identify the traits that differentiated leaders from non-leaders. The trait approach to understanding leadership assumes that certain physical, social, and personal characteristics are inherent in leaders. Sets of traits and characteristics were identified to assist in selecting the right people to become leaders.

This approach often concentrated on historical figures like Napoleon and Caesar and more recent political figures like Nelson Mandela, Margaret Thatcher, and Mao Zedong.

John Gardner studied a large number of North American organisations and leaders and came to the conclusion that there were some qualities or attributes that did not appear to mean that a leader in one situation could lead in another. The qualities included (Gardner, 1989):

- Physical vitality and stamina
- Intelligence and action-oriented judgement
- Eagerness to accept responsibility
- Task competence
- Understanding of followers and their needs
- Skill in dealing with people
- Need for achievement
- Capacity to motivate people
- Courage and resolution
- Trustworthiness
- Decisiveness
- Adaptability/flexibility

Although many others have chosen different traits for effective leaders, the work of Gardner have always been valued.

Findings are leading to conclusion that leaders do not clearly differ from followers and it is unclear whether traits lead to leadership or vice versa. However, factors showing greatest association with effective leadership are; intelligence, self-awareness, desire to influence others, performance motivation, empathy, and social skills (Goldman, 2000; Rubenowitz, 2004). Whether these traits are inherent to individuals or can be developed through training and education is not clear.

More recently people have tried looking at what combinations of traits might be good for a particular situation. The work of Edwin Ghiselli and Ralph Stogdill has nevertheless provided some useful insights. They look at two categories of traits; personality and motivational (Wright, 1996). Personality traits include intelligence, initiative, self-assurance, and others;

motivational traits include needs for financial reward, self-actualization, and power. They attempt to associate these traits with characteristics like supervisory ability, achievement, intelligence, honesty, and self-confidence and determine that leadership ability is associated with judgement and verbal activity. They, too, conclude however that a person could not be associated with a specific set of traits.

2.1.4.2 Behavioral Theories

After early researchers search for traits, they turned to *what* leaders did, how they behaved and especially how they behaved towards followers instead of *how* they are. The focus now moved from leaders to leadership and this became the dominant way of approaching leadership within organisations in the 1950s and early 1960s. Significant research on this perspective was conducted at Ohio State University and the University of Michigan.

The Ohio State studies considered two dimensions of leadership: *consideration* and *initiating structure*. Consideration refers to the leader's awareness of and sensitivity to subordinates´ interests, feelings, and idea (Shriberg *et al.* 1997). Leaders high in consideration are typically friendly, prefer open communications, focus on teamwork, and are concerned with other persons´ welfare. Initiating structure, on the other hand, is a leader behaviour marked by focus on task and goals. Leaders who are high in initiating structure typically present instructions and provide detailed, explicit timelines for task completion. The study found that the two dimensions were distinct but not mutually exclusive, that is, a "high" in one meant a "low" in the other and it resulted in a quadrant that reflected the different relationships between the dimensions: high initiating structure – low consideration (HIS – LC), low initiating structure – high consideration (LIS – HC), high initiating structure – high consideration (HIS – HC), and low initiating structure – low consideration (LIS – LC). The high initiating structure – high consideration style was associated with the best performance and greatest satisfaction. These kinds of leaders both met the needs of their subordinates and were effective in accomplishing their task and/or goals.

The University of Michigan studies: Similarly, in the late 1950s, researchers including Robert Likert looked at the behaviour of effective and ineffective supervisors. The University of Michigan studies concluded that supervisory behaviour could be analysed in terms of *employee-centred* and *job-centred* behaviour. An employee-centred style stressed the human side, a style that emphasises communication, trust, and goal setting, while a job-centred style is more task oriented, with emphasis on meeting production standards and supervising closely (Hersey & Blanchard, 1993).

The Managerial Grid: The dimensions identified at the University of Michigan provided the basis for the development of the managerial grid model by Robert Blake and Jane Mouton. It identifies five various leadership styles that represent different combinations of concern for people and concert for production (Blake & Mouton, 1964). The five leadership styles of the managerial grid include country club, team, middle of the road, impoverished, and authority-compliance. Shriberg *et al.* (1997) point out that despite Blake and Mouton concluded that managers perform best when working under a 9, 9 "team" style, there is little consistent evidence that support this and some even question whether a 9, 9 style is possible, since often a leader is forced to make a decision that either favours people or production.

Theory X and Theory Y: One of the most well-known behavioural theories is Douglas Mc Gregor´s Theory X and Y, influenced by Abraham Maslow´s work. McGregor (1960) proposed a continuum of beliefs held by managers about the motives of employees. At one end of the continuum, *Theory X*, is the belief that people are motivated primarily by basic needs. These types of managers and leaders hold following assumptions:

- People inherently dislike work, and whenever possible will try to avoid it.

- Since people dislike work, they must be coerced, controlled, or threatened with punishment to achieve goals.

- People will avoid responsibilities and seek formal direction whenever possible.

- Most people place security above all others factors associated with work and will display little ambition.

Theory Y, on the other hand, is the view that individual and organisational goals can be integrated, that people are motivated by higher-order needs. These types of managers and leaders hold following assumptions:

- People can view work as an activity as natural as rest or play.

- People will exercise self-direction and self-control if they are committed to the objectives of the task.

- The average person can learn to accept and even seek responsibility.

- The ability to make innovative decisions is widely dispersed throughout the general population and is not necessarily the sole province of those in management positions.

Shriberg *et al*. (1997) state that although no leader is likely to be a "true X" or a "true Y", the assumptions one makes can significantly affect the ability to practice leadership and inspire others. Further they suggest that leaders constantly should evaluate their assumptions about others´ motivation (Shriberg *et al*., 1997).

Another approach to leader behaviour focused on identifying the best leadership styles. Work at the University of Iowa identified *democratic* (participation and delegation), *autocratic* (dictating and centralized), and *laissez-fair* styles (group freedom in decision making).

2.1.4.3 Contingency Theories

Contingency theory looks at the relationship between the leader's style and his/her environment. What might work in one company with one set of issues, employees, and customers might not work in a different company with different issues, employees, and customers. Kezsbom and Edward (2001) discuss the importance for project leaders to adapt their leadership style or behaviours to fit, not only the life-cycle demands of the project, but the requirements and style of the client and the professional and personal needs of the project team.

On of the most common situational theories is Fiedler´s contingency theory. In the 1950s, Fred Fiedler recognized that there is no best way to lead and that different situations call for different approaches. Fiedler looked at three situations that could define the condition of a managerial task (Fielder & Garcia, 1987):

Leader-member relations: Assessed by the degree of cooperation and friendliness or antagonism and difficulty in the leader-collaborator relationship.

Task structure: Depends on the level of specificity about work products, processes, or objective work evaluations.

Position power: Refers to the title, authority, or rank of the leader.

The condition of each of these three variables determines how favourable (or unfavourable) a situation is for the leader. The highest degree of situation favourability occurs when leaders and members enjoy a positive relationship, the task is structured, and the leader has legitimate authority. The situation is least favourable, on the other hand, when the leader and member have a poor relationship, the task is unstructured, and the leader has no position of power. From this two different leadership styles were defined: *task oriented* (production) and *person oriented* (relationship). Fielder used a continuum, or index, known as the Least Preferred Co-worker (LPC) and concluded that when conditions are either extremely unfavourable, a leader can be successful by demonstrating a highly task-oriented leadership style while a more person-oriented leadership style is more effective when there is a combination of conditions. Kezsbom and Edward (2001) point out that in dynamic project environment with frequently changing conditions people who are more relationship-oriented prove to become more successful as leaders.

Situational Theories

Hersey and Blanchard (1993) expanded on Fiedler´s basic contingency approach to leadership and developed what they refer to as situational leadership theory. The basic premise of their model is that the effectiveness of leader's style depends largely on their collaborators´ maturity, job experience, and emotional maturity. Maturity is defined as the ability to perform a job independently, the tendency to assume additional responsibility, and the desire to achieve success.

Four different leadership styles that could be drawn upon to deal with contrasting situations were identified:

Telling (high task/low relationship behaviour): Best for group members with low levels of maturity.

Selling (High task/high relationship behaviour): Effective with members at moderately low maturity levels.

Participating (High relationship/low task behaviour): Effective with moderately high levels of maturity.

Delegating (Low relationship/low task behaviour): Best with those at the very highest maturity levels.

To determine the appropriate leadership style to use in a given situation, the leader must first determine the maturity level of the followers in relation to the specific task that the leader is attempting to accomplish through the effort of the followers. As group members become more mature, leaders should change their behaviours to reflect this increased maturity.

The Situational leadership theory has been proved to be extremely useful and applicable to the dynamic and changing requirements of a project (Kezsbom & Edward, 2001).

Wisén and Lindblom (2004) highlight some questions, concerning the level of maturity of the team, which a project leader should put:

- Do the team members have personal motives for participating in the project team?
- What competences do the team members posses in the point at issues?
- Does the goal of the team correspond to the official goal?
- What degree of trust is there among the team?
- Have the team developed its own culture?
- Are there any concealed or unsolved conflicts within the team?

2.1.4.4 Charismatic Leadership

In the mid-twentieth century we had many charismatic leaders such as John F. Kennedy, Franklin Roosevelt, and Winston Churchill. John Conger defines a charismatic leader as someone who possesses an ability to introduce quantum changes in an organisation (Conger, 1988). The charismatic leader provides a compelling vision that, clearly communicated, ignites the emotions and energy of followers (Ancona *et al.*, 2005). Conger (1988) means that these kinds of leaders progress through four stages:

1. Sensing opportunities and finding vision

2. Articulating the vision

3. Building trust in the vision

4. Achieving the vision

Conger (1988) further discusses that followers develop trust in, respect for, devotion to, loyalty to, unquestioned obedience to, commitment to, and identification with charismatic leaders. Other effects of charismatic behaviours are: confidence in their ability to achieve goals and exceed expectations; and radical changes in followers' beliefs and values. Charismatic leaders form a unique emotional and values-based bond with their followers. They achieve their charismatic effects by engaging and implicating followers´ self-concepts. Through role-modelling and frame alignment, charismatic leaders are able to increase followers´ values and beliefs to be congruent and complementary with the leaders´ ideology, goals, and activities. In particular, charismatic leaders are able to increase followers´ intrinsic valence of effort and goal accomplishment, effort-accomplishment expectancies, and prospects and hopes for a better future-state.

Kloppenborg *et al.* (2003) discuss that there is a dark side of charisma, as Hitler, Saddam Hussein and others have demonstrated. They suggest that in the twentieth century perhaps a fifth element should be added to Conger's definition: choosing a vision that advances humankind in a positive direction.

2.1.4.5 Transformational and Transactional Leadership

James MacGregor Burns extended the debate about what comprises leadership by conceptualizing it as occurring in two forms, transactional and transformational. Burns (1979) wanted to unite the previously unconnected roles of leader and follower. Although Burns is the "founder" of this leadership theory, transformational leadership theory in management and psychology research is primarily based on the work of Bass. In this approach, *transformational leadership* is generally defined in terms of the leader's behaviours and effect on followers. *Transactional leadership*, on the other hand, is defined as an exchange process to motivate follower compliance with a leader's requests and organisational role requirements. According to Bass (1985) different from transactional leadership, transformational leadership involves an underlying influence process that motivates followers by encouraging them to transcend their self-interests for the sake of the organisation and goal accomplishment. Followers through transformational leadership are motivated to do more than originally expected and feel trust, loyalty, respect, and admiration toward the leader. Transformational leaders raise followers´ levels of awareness and consciousness about the value and importance of key outcomes and their accomplishments.

The Transactional leader

- Recognises what it is that we want to get from work and tries to ensure that we get it if our performance merits it.

- Exchanges rewards and promises for out effort.

- Is responsive to our immediate self interest if they can be met by getting the work done

The Transformational leader

- Raises our level of awareness, our level of consciousness about the significance and value of designated outcomes, and ways of reaching them.

- Gets us transcend our own self-interest for the sake of the team, organisation or larger polity.

- Alters our need level (after Maslow) and expands our range of wants and needs.

Bass (1985) makes a distinction between transformational and charismatic leadership. A leader may be charismatic without being transformational in that little or no influence to change followers is exerted. As such, charismatic leadership is only one component of transformational leadership, along with inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration, for most transformational leader researchers. Further Bass

(1985) highlights that while charismatic leadership is a key component of transformational leadership; charisma is a necessary but not sufficient element of transformational leadership.

2.1.6 Power

The ability to make an individual or group to do something and to steer their contributions and commitment towards specific goals is an important aspect of leadership (Rubenowitz, 2004). This ability is usually called power. As Boddy (2002) discusses, to manage projects it is often not sufficient, especially in volatile environment where opposition is strong or where political considerations are high, for the leader to solely posses influencing skills, as the skills of analysis, definition and control, and participative skills. Leaders also need to exercise influence based on using their power. French and Raven (1975) proposed that power arises from five sources. Their model of five sources has been well accepted.

- *Reward Power*: The ability to offer incentives of different kinds for employees who have performed positive achievements. The incentives can be status, promotions, salary increases or interesting assignments, but also feelings of being valued and important.

- *Coercive Power*: The ability to provide penalties for low performing employees or to force someone to comply through threat of physical, psychological, or emotional consequences. As with rewards, the penalties can be of different kinds such as economical sanctions, undesirable job assignments or harassments in the day-to-day contacts.

- *Legitimate Power*: This type of power is inherent in a position or a job title. The real power may however lie elsewhere in the organisation. Sometimes the most powerful person in an organisation is, for instance, the administrative assistant who controls the schedule and access to the titular head. Legitimate power is often used to mark the authority that follows with the position in the hierarchy.

- *Referent Power*: Is based on relationship and personal "drawing power". Leaders who attract others by their style or charisma are demonstrating referent power. The feeling of being valued, approved, personally accepted and important among employees is improving the leader's referent power.

- *Expert Power*: The influence in form of special knowledge or competence exercised over others. The leader gains authority when his/her expert knowledge is seen as a positive asset and support. For instance technical suggestions, share of expertise, and sound pieces of advice.

Rubenowitz (2004) explains that the three first power bases can be considered as formal power bases as they more or less are associated with the formal and administrative aspects of the leader role. The two last ones, on the other hand, can be considered as informal and are considerably dependent on the leader's personal knowledge, skills, and personality (Rubenowitz, 2004).

Researchers have spent much time on compare, and analyse, leaders who have stood out with regard to the way to exert power. The findings indicate that effective leaders rely on the informal power bases, in particular expert and referent power (Yukl, 1995).

Strang (2005) asserts that the rise of human rights movements and ethical principles in most developed countries have reduced the practice of coercion to formalized reprimands. However, according to Shriberg *et al.* (1997), effective leaders use power from several different sources simultaneously.

2.1.7 Action-centred leadership

One of the UK´s most influential leadership gurus and the first to occupy a university chair in leadership in the UK, John Adair, has developed and promoted the concept of Action-centred leadership, also called functional approach to leadership. Over a million managers worldwide have taken part in the programmes he pioneered (www.johnadair.co.uk). According to Adair (2003), in leadership there are always three elements or variables:

- *The leader*: Qualities of personality and character
- *The situation*: Partly constant, partly varying
- *The group*: The followers: their needs and values

The effectiveness of a leader is determined by their ability to meet the needs of these three elements:

- *Task need*: to achieve the common task
- *Team maintenance needs*: to be held together or to maintain themselves as a team
- *Individual needs*: the needs which individuals bring with them into the group

The task, team, and individual needs overlap as shown in figure 1.
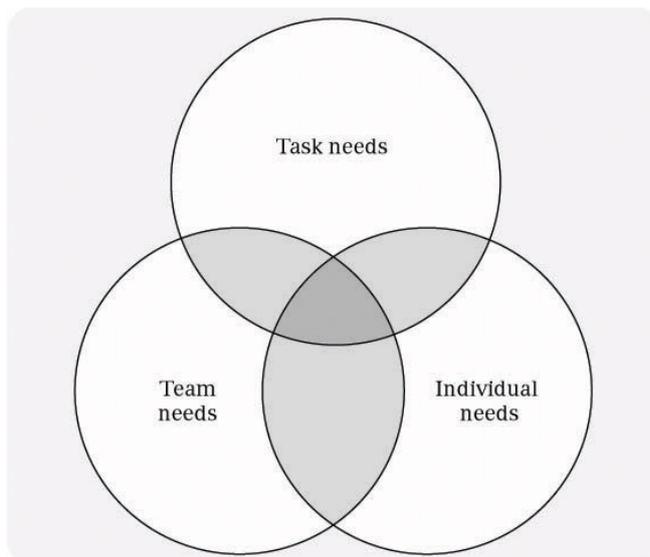
Figure 1. Adair's overlapping circles

The fact that the needs overlap is evident in that:

- Achieving the task builds the team and satisfies the individuals involved.

- If team maintenance fails, i.e. the team lacks cohesiveness, performance on the task is impaired and individual satisfaction is reduced.

- If individual needs are not met the team will lack cohesiveness and performance of the task will be impaired.

To achieve the common task, maintain teamwork and satisfy the individuals, certain functions have to be performed (Adair, 2003). These functions are: defining the task, planning, briefing, controlling, evaluating, motivating, organising, and providing an example.

Cadle & Yeates (2004) means that this model is very useful in a project management context as it connects management and leadership and works best when there is a clear team focus. The model connects leadership and management in a way that the task activities are being traditionally regarded as management, whereas satisfying individual needs and building and maintaining the team are leadership activities.

2.2 Project Leadership

2.2.1 The Role of the Project Leader

Historically, the project leader's role developed out of the need for someone to supervise, coordinate, and engineer work related specifically to projects (Kezsbom & Edward, 2001). In other words, the project leader's job was to plan, control, organise, and direct the work of several individuals or departments so that the project could succeed. Traditional projects often have been described as a triangle (see figure 2) were the key responsibilities for a project leader were; delivering the project on time, within budget and with desired quality (Briner *et al.*, 2001).
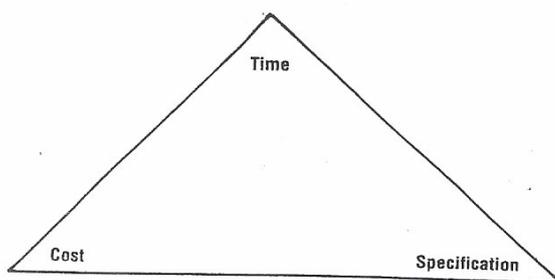
Figure 2. The project triangle (Briner et al., 2001)

Frame (1999) agrees and discusses that for that time's project leaders to accomplish their job they needed to have broad administrative and technical competences. In the 1970s the focus began to be directed towards leadership in projects (Wenell, 2002). Today's project leaders play a far broader role and they rely heavily on the expertise and decisions of others. The strong focus on specialisation in the past has given way to integration and an even greater need to solve problems that span several disciplines and organisations (Frame, 1999). Today the traditional triangle is set in a circle of additional factors (see figure 3). Briner *et al.* (2001) mean that these additional factors always have existed but have become more important as the project approach has spread across the whole spectrum of business and organisational activity.
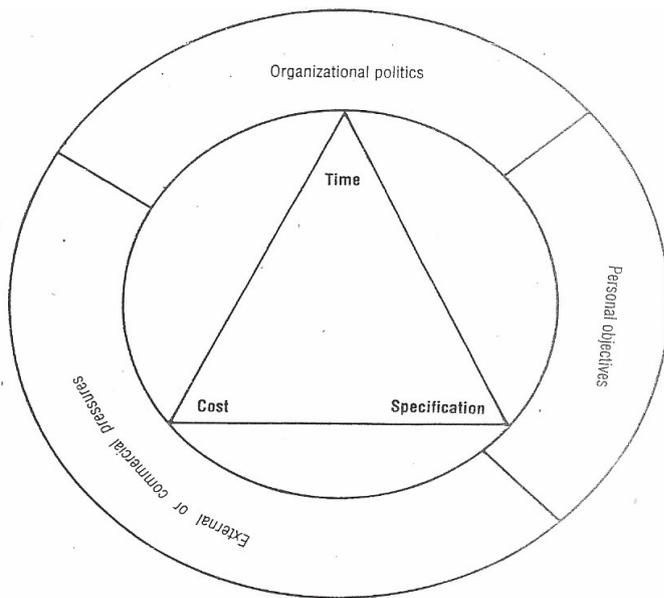
Figure 3. The project triangle in context (Briner et al., 2001)

A project is a temporary endeavour undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result (Project Management Institute, 2004).
Briner *et al*. (2001) present some characteristics with today's project teams:

- The people in the team are spread throughout the organisation, and frequently outside it as well.

- Team members seldom work full-time on the project, and often have other priorities and departmental loyalties which compete for their attention.

- Team members are often not under the direct organisational control of the project leader, and may even be higher in the hierarchy than the project leader.

- Being scattered and lacking visible coherence, the team members may not think of themselves, nor be seen by the organisation, as parts of a project team.

It is not only the project leader role that has changed; organisations have gone through changes as well. The business environment is today facing growing demands of international competition, increasingly sophisticated customers, complexity of new tasks, and uncertainty in the environment (Briner *et al*., 2001). Kezsbom and Edward (2001) explain that organisations that respond to this new business environment are becoming flatter, more flexible and responsive to changing conditions, and set out to link different specialists horizontally across the organisation. The emphasis is now on quality, speed to market, and cost efficiency. As many organisations now are creating more flexible temporary structures, also called matrix structures, and becoming less hierarchical, the role of the managers is becoming less hierarchical as well. Even though the differences between project leaders and line managers, or other kinds of managerial job, are becoming less clear-cut there are some unique features, and special challenges, in the project leader role, not necessarily found in other managerial roles. Some of the most common differences distinguished in the literature are:

- *Limited in authority*: There is a major difference between the degree of formal authority conferred on the traditional line manager and on the leader of a project (Boddy, 2002; Briner *et al.*, 2001; Cleland, 1995; Frame, 1999; Kerzner, 2003; Kezsbom & Edward, 2001; Macheridis, 2001; Pinto & Trailer, 1998; Wenell, 2002). Project leaders possess little "right to command" and operate without documented formal authority over the team members (Cleland, 1995). Boddy, 2002 explains that in contrast to the line manager, whose authority and status are gained once and for all as they are being assigned the position, project leaders constantly have to recapture their authority as they do not have a direct position within organisations. Briner *et al.* (2001) assert that although the direct authority varies, according to the project leader's position, they usually need to negotiate and bargain for resources and support from a wide network of people both inside and outside the organisation. Project leaders must often rely on developing informal modes of authority through a variety of interpersonal skills and influence techniques (Kezsbom & Edward, 2001).

- *Placed diagonally within the organisational structure*: Project leaders must frequently work across units, departments, divisions, and companies to ensure that project objectives are achieved (Boddy, 2002; Briner *et al.*, 2001; Cleland, 1995; Frame, 1999; Kerzner, 2003; Kezsbom & Edward, 2001; Larsson, 1998; Macheridis, 2001; Pinto & Trailer, 1998; Wenell, 2002; Wisén & Lindblom, 2004). The team members are often borrowed resources, both internal and outsourced, which come from functional areas, do their job, and then return to their functional homes. Kezsbom and Edward (2001) explain that working under these conditions require a firm appreciation of the diverse needs of the professionals who are part of the project team. Each project is a temporary organisation with its own characteristic (Wisén & Lindblom, 2004). Whether the organisation is highly hierarchical or not, the projects do not have to be subjected under the restrictions that come from that kind of structure. Briner, Hastings & Geddes (2001) assert that projects may even go beyond a matrix of responsibility and authority. Further Briner, Hastings and Geddes (2001) explain that when cutting across the normal organisational boundaries and customs when working in this cross-functional and cross-organisational environment, project leaders need to be unconventional in approach. However, this can sometimes mean dealing with resistance or opposition.

Other characteristics with the project leader role that can be found in the literature (Boddy, 2002; Briner *et al.*, 2001; Larsson, 1998; Macheridis, 2001; Wenell, 2002) are:

- *Solely responsible for the achievement of project goals:* Specialists in organisations have rarely direct personal responsibility for, for instance, a line activity important for the organisation. Project leaders, on the other hand, carry the ultimate responsibility for the success or failure of the project. Hence, in relation to the project, the role is similar to that of a general manager.
- *Often working in areas that are new or different for the organisation:* Projects often deal with new technology, new markets, or new approaches to old situations. The unknown and unpredictable may be looked with scepticism from people in the organisation.
- *Unable to hide:* It is often clearly apparent who is in charge and project leaders are often closely watched.

As well as there are factors similar for all project leaders, Macheridis (2001) asserts that the demands for project leaders, what kind of qualities and knowledge he/she should possess, differs from project to project. It is not the project leader him/her self that determines what to be included in the project leader role, it is the sponsor of the project and the fellow workers in the project (e.g. team members). Further Macheridis (2001) highlights the importance of understanding that, within the same project, there can exist different demands and expectations on the project leader from the different stakeholders. The different demands can also depend on the phase the project is at.

2.2.2 Responsibility areas of the project leader

Briner *et al.* (2001) suggest the idea that project leaders should look in six directions: upwards, outwards, forwards, backwards, downwards and inwards. The project leader's direction finder, "The Six Lookings", is showed in Figure 4.
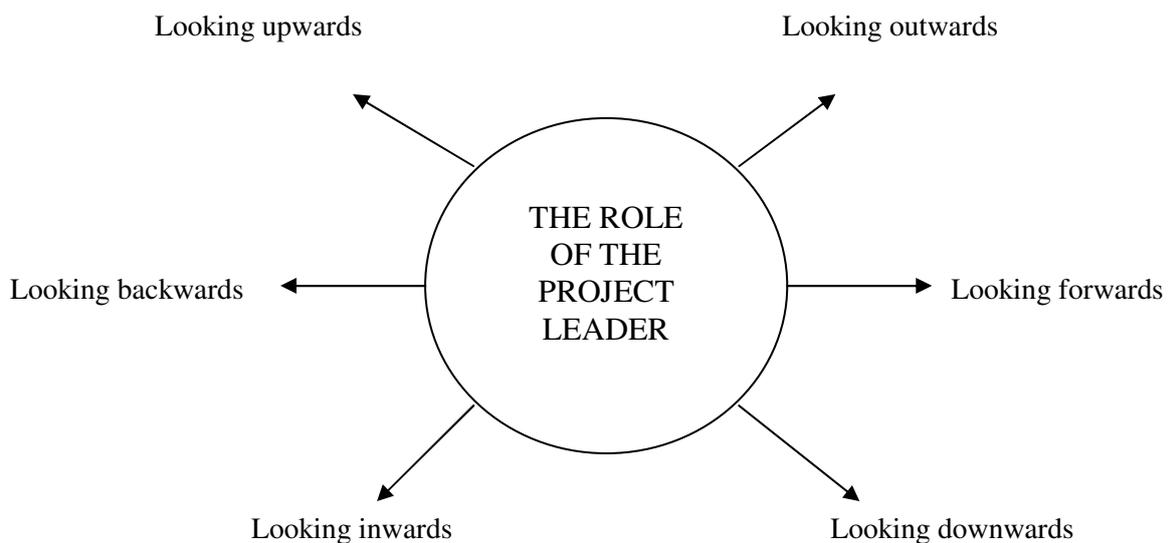
Figure 4. The Six Lookings (Brinet et al., 2001)

- *Looking upwards*: Managing the sponsor, e.g. the person who initiates the project, of the project in order to achieve organisational commitment.

- *Looking outwards*: Managing the rest of those who have expectations of the project; the client, the end user (who might be different from the client) and other external stakeholders (such as suppliers and subcontractors).

- *Looking forward*: Establishing realistic plans, raising the necessary resources, and putting in place the appropriate monitoring and reporting systems

- *Looking backwards*: Monitoring progress with appropriate control systems, to ensure that the project meets its targets and that the team learn from its mistakes.

- *Looking downwards*: Managing the team in order to ensure that they perform well, both individually and collectively. Both the visible and invisible team should be managed, across disciplines, departments, countries and cultures.

- *Looking inwards*: Managing yourself, e.g. reviewing your performance, to ensure that your team leadership is a positive contribution to the project.

According to this model there are three dimensions to a project leader's role; the management of *stakeholders*, the management of the *project life cycle* and the management of *performance*. *Looking upwards* and *outwards* concern managing the stakeholders, *looking forward* and *backwards* are about managing the project lifecycle, and the two last ones, *looking downwards* and *inwards* concern managing performance.

Managing stakeholders:
Boddy (2002) explains that project leaders need to build, use, and maintain a network of contacts. Project leaders need to resolve conflicts and disagreements amongst the key stakeholders and work to maintain their sense of ownership in the project. To avoid problems later on, and to be able to plan and organise the project in a professional and good way, it is important to establish who the stakeholders in the project are and what they really want (Wenell, 2002). Generally this is not a simple task as the different stakeholders all want something different. Briner *et al.* (2001) assert that by gaining a real understanding of what the stakeholders want, and then getting an agreement is an important skill for project leaders to possess.

Briner *et al.* (2001) assert that in creating a positive organisational context for the project, the single most useful resource project leaders, and their team, can have is the positive support of the colleagues throughout the organisation. Project leaders frequently need to influence senior managers in the processes of shaping goals, negotiating for adequate resources, or seeking other forms of commitment and support (Boddy, 2002). However, this commitment and support has to be earned, and argued for. Cadle and Yeates (2004) assert that the project leader, together with his/her team, has to build their credits within the organisation. As discussed above, establishing early on what the senior management really wants and also what leads them to find a project being well managed is crucial in order to succeed with the project. Briner *et al.* (2001) explain that project leaders will earn senior management's confidence and be able to face difficult problems or push for what they need if they know what the senior management think is important and what makes them feel uncomfortable or suspicious about the health of a project.

According to Briner *et al.* (2001) successful project leaders build networks of relationships to help them get things done. An excellent way of spotting hidden talent that might benefit the project is a factor called *networking*. When networking you talk to people informally to trade information and find out what is going on. Project leaders learn in this way from what they hear and see. Briner *et al.* (2001) further explain that highly effective project teams also actively seek outside specialists to help them do things better.

Managing the project life cycle:

According to Kloppenborg *et al*. (2003) project leaders have three types of responsibilities related to the project's life cycle. First, leaders must determine priorities and continue to insist that those priorities are secured. Second, they continually need to be aware of project details and make decisions related to changing conditions. Finally, project leaders need to see and communicate how this project integrates into the grander scheme of things, both within the parent organisation and in the customer's organisation.

A useful and well known way of looking at a project, presented by Briner *et al.* (2001), is the SWOT analysis:

Strengths – What is going in your favour?
Weaknesses – Where are you vulnerable?
Opportunities – What chances exist to take you forward?
Threats – What would knock you over?

Wenell (2002) asserts that it is getting harder and harder to plan and budget projects. Although careful planning at the beginning of the project can reduce problems later on, it is not something that can be done just once. Briner *et al.* (2001) underline the importance of continuous cycles of planning, doing, and reviewing throughout the project. The greater the uncertainty and innovation in the project is the more important is this process. Cadle and Yeates (2004) assert that good project leaders do not wait until formal appraisal to review performance, they are constantly alert for any sign that things are not going as they should and will investigate them quickly. Some of the benefits of monitoring progress in good time are; ensuring that the results expected are being achieved, taking corrective actions when deviations arise, obtaining acceptable performance, assessing attitudes, and monitoring external changes elsewhere in the organisation or in the outside world (Boddy, 2002). Cadle and Yeates (2004) assert that it is not only performance that need to be reviewed it is the team member's work as well. They present three factors that should be checked in the team members´ work:

- The level of skill or competence of the team member
- The commitment of the team member
- The importance of the team member's work to the project

Boddy (2002) additionally explains that monitoring progress can be equally valuable as a source of learning, to improve performance on future projects, as it is to secure success with the present project.

Pinto and Trailer (1998) assert that project leaders must inform the project team about new information and unexpected developments during the project's lifecycle. Briner *et al.* (2001) and Larsson (1998) emphasise the importance of keeping the *whole* team informed. Stakeholders who frequently are forgotten or neglected are the "invisible team". The invisible team is the group of people who contribute indirectly to the work of the visible team, the core project group (Briner *et al.,* 2001). The co-operation and support from the invisible team are vital to the success of the project. Boddy (2002) discusses that the role of the project's sponsor also is critical if the project is to get the sustained backing and support that it needs. Keeping the sponsor up to date will facilitate building a supportive relationship with the sponsor.

Managing performance:

Larsson (1998) explains that as there need to be clear goals for the project, defined in time and costs, each team member should have clear goals to work for, with well defined tasks, time limits, and conditions. Some of the benefits of clarifying individual success criteria are, according to Boddy (2002); higher acceptance and commitment, focused effort, and team members taking more initiative to meet objectives. Briner *et al.* (2001) assert that particularly in projects with high levels of uncertainty team members are given considerable scope in terms of how they reach their objectives and the project leader needs to demonstrate through his/her attitudes and behaviour what is acceptable and what is not. As well as it is important to set individual criteria the project leader have to follow up to ensure that the goals are met. Briner *et al.* (2001) explain that effective project leaders discipline themselves to be though on quality and also encourage the same attitude in others.

Briner *et al.* (2001) present three ways for project leaders to create a sense of purpose amongst the team members; helping the team understand the underlying reason for *why* the project is important to the organisation a whole, finding out how the project could be used to achieve some of the team members´ personal visions and aspirations, and communicating the project leader's own excitement, conviction, and sense of mission about the project. Larsson (1998) highlights the importance of creating sense of the task and explains that one way of doing this is to explain the underlying reasons for why accomplishing the project. Another way to inspire with enthusiasm, according to Larsson (1998), is to show what the team members, as persons, can benefit from the project. Boddy (2002) explains that understanding individual motivation is the basis for understanding team motivation. Team members will be willing to do things for the project leader if they feel they are acting in their best interests, and that they are achieving their personal goals. Hence, project leaders need to establish what the team members´ interests are, and present their proposals in a way that people believe will meet their needs. Wisén and Lindblom (2004) add that the team's motivation also will increase by mutual trust between the project leader and the team members.

The importance for project leaders to understand their own strengths and weaknesses are highlighted by many authors. Trent (2004) defines intrapersonal intelligence as the ability of individuals to understand themselves. The importance of intrapersonal intelligence is emphasised by Frame (1999) who means that by possessing intrapersonal intelligence people can begin to deal with their emotions and motivate themselves. Briner *et al.* (2001) explains that project leaders who are not very enthusiastic about the project can not expect the team members to be motivated. Further Frame (1999) is of the opinion that intrapersonal insights also can prevent to establish unrealistic expectations among customers, team members, and management as a good understanding of one's strengths and weaknesses allows one to develop a realistic sense of what one is capable of achieving.

Project leaders need to build in time to reflect, to survey the whole picture, and to review their own performance. Briner *et al.* (2001) explain that it is sometimes appropriate to do this with a colleague, team members, or consultant, to provide the necessary mixture of challenge and support, monitoring the project leader's own stress levels and discovering what he/she finds difficult and why. Research into effective learning confirms the importance of the natural process of reflection and pulling back from day-to-day concerns to see them in perspective (Briner *et al.*, 2001).

Larsson (1998) means that one of the most important tasks for a project leader is to lead the heterogeneous group. To maintain high performance in the team, Briner *et al.* (2001) assert that the project leader needs to give support in every way possible. Larsson (1998) emphasises the importance for project leaders to show how dependent he/she is on the participation and commitment from the whole team. To create that commitment it is crucial that the project leader lets every team member feel that they are significant for the project. Project leaders should aim to create an atmosphere in which self-criticism, rather than criticism of others, is the rule and in which people are free to say what they feel, and are listened to (Briner *et al.*, 2001). According to Wisén and Lindblom (2004), all groups need unifying forces in the form of a "hidden" standard system, the so-called culture within the group, which regulate how work should be prosecuted and how the relationships within the team are. Further, Wisén and Lindblom (2004) advocate an open discussion within the team concerning the team's culture as this motivates the team members by making them feel influential and important.

Another crucial factor for motivating the team members and enhancing their efforts is to celebrate and reward their collective, and individual, achievements and successes along the way and to make sure they are widely published (Boddy, 2002; B Briner *et al.*, 2001; Larsson, 1998; Trent, 2004). Larsson (1998) additionally explains that a project group should urge themselves. When celebrating attained goals the individuals in the team are strengthened and will consequently contribute keeping up the commitment during the whole project. Different persons respond in different ways and will accordingly need different approaches in different cases. Briner *et al.* (2001) assert that respect for the capabilities and efforts of others in both the visible and the invisible team is a common characteristic of individuals whose teams produce fine results.

2.2.3 Project Management Competences

The word *competence* comes from the Latin *competens*, which is the present participle of the word *competere*. This verb consists of two parts: *com*, which means "together", and *petere*, which means "to strive". Hence, *competere* literally means "to strive together". Frame (1999) points out that the idea of competence is closely associated with the idea of capability. Competent people are capable people, just as competent teams are capable teams, and competent organisations are capable organisations. Further, this association with capability suggests that competence is concerned with getting the job done. However, in the context of today's management terminology, competence is about adding value. Frame (1999) defines competent individuals, teams, and organisations as that "they consistently produce desired results". They deliver the goods on time, within budget, and according to specifications, and they do this in such a way as to maximise customers´ delight.

Crawford (2004) explains that the competences a project manager possesses are of two kinds, *input competences* and *personal competences*. The input competences consist of knowledge (the information a person has in specific content areas) and skills (the ability to perform a certain physical or mental task). Competences of these kinds are the most readily developed and assessed through training and experience while personal competences, such as personality characteristics, motives, traits and self-concept, are considered difficult to assess and develop.

2.2.3.1 Project Management Knowledge Areas

As more and more organisations began to carry out work in form of projects there arose a need for an internationally recognised approach to assessing the project management competencies of project leaders (Frame, 1999). Cleland (1995) describes some of the purposes with an international certification of project leaders; the development of a mutual understanding of an accepted body of knowledge for the profession is facilitated, the effectiveness of communications among the many technologies involved in project management is improved, and the feeling that project management has become a profession, just as, for instance, medicine, law, and engineering are viewed as professions.

There are three widely accepted project management knowledge standards (Pinto *et al.*, 2003):

- *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK ® Guide)* – PMI (Project Management Institute)
- *sIPMA Competence Baseline (ICB)* – IPMA (International Project Management Association)
- *Association for Project Management Body of Knowledge (APM BoK)* – APM (UK)

Of these the PMBOK® Guide is the most widely recognised and accepted certification program to measure the knowledge-based competences of project leaders. In 1999 it was approved as an American National Standard and was subsequently adopted as an IEEE Standard (Project Management Institute, 2004).

The knowledge areas established by the Project Management Institute comprise nine functional units (Project Management Institute, 2004):

Project Integration Management: Describes the processes and activities that integrate the various elements of project management which are identified, defined, combined, unified, and coordinated within the Project Management Process Groups. It consists of Develop Project Charter, Develop Preliminary Project Scope Statement, Develop Project Management Plan, Direct and Manage Project Execution, Monitor, and Control Project Work, Integrated Change Control, and Close Project Management Processes. In the context of managing a project, integration is about making choices about where to concentrate resources and effort on any given day, anticipating potential issues, dealing with these issues before they become critical, and coordinating work for the overall project good.

Project Scope Management: Describes the processes required to ensure that the project includes all the work required, and only the work required, to complete the project successfully. Scope management is primarily concerned with defining and controlling what is and is not included in the project. It consists of Scope Planning, Scope Definition, Create WBS (work breakdown structure), Scope Verification, and Scope control.

Project Time Management: Describes the processes required to accomplish timely completion of the project. It consists of Activity Definition, Activity Sequencing, Activity Resource Estimating, Activity Duration Estimating, Schedule Development, and Schedule Control.

Project Cost Management: Describes the processes involved in planning, estimating, budgeting, and controlling costs so that the project can be completed within the approved budget. It consists of Cost Estimating, Cost Budgeting, and Cost Control.

Project Quality Management: Describes the processes involved in assuring the project will satisfy the objectives for which it was undertaken. It consists of Quality Planning, Perform Quality Assurance, and Perform Quality Control.

Project Human Resource Management: Describes the processes that organise and manage the project team. It consists of Human Resource Planning, Acquire Project Team, Develop Project Team, and Manage Project Team.

Project Communications Management: Describes the processes required to ensure timely and appropriate generation, collection, distribution, storage, retrieval, and ultimate disposition of project information. The processes provide the critical links among people and information that are necessary for successful communications. It consists of Communications Planning, Information Distribution, Performance Reporting, and Manage Stakeholders.

Project Risk Management: Describes the processes concerned with increasing the probability and impact of positive events, and decrease the probability and impact of events adverse to the project. It consists of Risk Management Planning, Risk Identification, Qualitative Risk Analysis, Quantitative Risk Analysis, Risk Response Planning, and Risk Monitoring and Control.

Project Procurement Management: Describes the processes to purchase or acquire the products, services, or results needed from outside the project team to perform the work. It consists of Plan Purchases and Acquisitions, Plan Contracting, Request Seller Responses, Select Sellers, Contract Administration, and Contract Closure.

However, even though there are great advantages with the PMBOK there is a request for more extensive descriptions of the leadership perspective in the theory and practice of project management, as well as in other situations in which alternative team are used in contemporary organisations (Cleland, 1995).

2.2.3 Project Management Skills

Much of the literature distinguishes between two major classes of skills that a project manager needs to possess: *technical ("hard") skills* and *interpersonal ("soft") skills*.

Technical skills: Frame (1999) explains that this is the skills that project leaders are expected to possess in order to carry out their jobs effectively. Technical skills are related to working with processes, tools, or physical objects. They refer to using specialized knowledge and experience related to project management and the specific technology of the project for executing project activities. These skills are necessary to communicate effectively with the project team to assess risks, and to make trade-offs between cost, schedule, and technical issues. The technical skills are knowledge and experience with the systems and technology that are being employed in the project as well as knowledge on how project management

process works. It includes the functional units, and the processes and activities they involve, established by the PMI, for instance scope management and cost management (Loo, 2004).

The technical skills often also include *conceptual skills* and *business-related skills* (e.g. Frame, 1999; Lientz & Rea, 1999; Verma, 1995). *Conceptual skills* refer to the ability to see the "big picture." Project managers with good conceptual skills are well aware of how various functions of the organization complement one another. Verma (1995) explains that they understand relationships between projects, the overall organization and its environment, and how changes in one part of the organization affect the whole. Conceptual skills are necessary to appropriately deal with project politics and to acquire adequate support from top management. *Business-related* skills, on the other hand, are tied to the ability of individuals to make decisions that consistently serve the best business interests of the organisation (Lientz & Rea, 1999). According to Frame (1999), today's competitive environment requires project leaders to operate almost like independent business men and women. Project leaders are expected to watch the bottom line and to be familiar with basic financial concepts. Further, they should know their customers´ business and be able to talk their customers´ language. On larger projects, project leaders may even look very much like the presidents of small businesses, with responsibilities in the areas of finance, marketing, operations, and human resource management.

Interpersonal skills: Loo (2004) asserts that the interpersonal skills deal with problems that can arise from the interaction of people. These skills require understanding people, their attitudes, and human dynamics. They represent the ability of a project manager to work effectively as a project team leader and to build cooperative effort with the project members and all other groups with which the project team interacts. Verma (1995) explains that interpersonal skills are crucial for effective performance in a project environment. They also build trust among project team members and help create satisfying relationships and a good working environment. Interpersonal skills include communication, team building, managing conflict, leadership, coaching, motivating, decision making, delegating, directing, training, persuading/influencing, negotiating, and supporting those involved in the project (Frame, 1999; Loo, 2004; Verma, 1995; Wisén & Lindblom, 2004).

Interpersonal skills are especially important for project leaders working in international projects that consist of people from diverse cultures. Verma (1995) asserts that project leaders must be sensitive to cultural differences when dealing with different people and their perceptions, values, and attitudes.

One of the key traits of people with good interpersonal skills is their ability to emphasise with others (Frame, 1999; Wisén & Lindblom, 2004). Frame (1999) explains that empathy is the capacity to put oneself into someone else's shoes. By being able to put oneself into other people's shoes, the project leader is able to develop an understanding of the impact of his/her actions on others. Project leaders must be sensitive to the perspectives of their customers, their fellow project team members, as well as their management.

2.2.3.1 Hard vs. Soft skills

Discussion about the degree of technical skills project leaders should possess varies. Wenell (2002) explains that there in many projects is a balancing for project leaders between being a generalist, who surveys and have understanding for the project as a whole, and being a specialist with deep professional knowledge and who sometimes even contribute with own

work efforts in the project. A common opinion in the literature is that the more complex a project is, the more subsystems to be integrated, the more tasks to be accomplished, and the more technically challenging the components are, the better suited will a generalist be. Kezsbom and Edward (2001) mean that, except for extremely lean organisations, or extremely small projects, there should be an emphasis on the human side of project performance rather than the technical side. Taylor (1998) agrees with this and states that it is, every now and then, better for project leaders to be generalists, who can relate to the greatest number of team members and attend to the broader requirements of the project, rather than experts. A generalist is often more open to the views and suggestions of the team members than a technically oriented project leader is who, in turn, may lean toward managing each detail of the project and think that his/her own solution is the only alternative (Kezsbom & Edward, 2001; Lientz & Rea, 1999; Taylor, 1998). Kezsbom and Edward (2001) assert that one of the classic reasons for project failure is that there can be a strong temptation, especially for newly appointed project leaders, to practice their technical discipline rather than manage the process of the project.

With today's emphasis in organisations on cross-functional teams, flat organisational structures, increasing diversity in the employee ranks, and empowerment of employees, several authors, and surveys, emphasise the importance of the "soft" side of project management. Taylor (1998) explains that project leaders have to be more than just technical managers; they have to be, for instance, team builders and negotiators as well. Taylor is not alone in stressing the importance of project leaders to possess interpersonal skills. Kezsbom and Edward (2001) assert that how well a project leader accomplishes the project work principally depends on their skills in fostering project integration and managing team performance. It is essential that project leaders possess a desire to get things done with and through other people rather than despite them. Boddy (2002) agrees and states that projects depend on people, not techniques.

However, even though it is, to a large extent, the interpersonal skills that make a difference to the outcomes in today's projects, Lientz and Rea (1999) assert that project leaders need to have the fundamental knowledge, and preferably also at least a limited experience, with the technology and systems that are being employed in the project. Project leaders who possess insufficient amounts of the technical expertise may not able to make important decisions when, for instance, negotiating for necessary resources. Technical skills are also easier to deal with, and also to test, than interpersonal skills. Frame (1999) explains that it is much more difficult to teach people how to mediate conflicts on a project team or to motivate borrowed human resources to work sixty-hour weeks than it is to teach people how to calculate the critical path on a PERT chart.

Loo (2003) asserts that projects will not be successful if the project leader does not have the core technical and interpersonal skills to do the job. Competent project leaders must, according to Frame (1999), be able to balance technical and interpersonal skills.

2.2.4 Effective Project leadership

The literature in the area of project leadership is of one opinion that the knowledge and skills of the project leader are critical to project success. There have been made quite a number of studies and research concerning what characterises effective project leader. Frigenti and Comninos (2002) explain that the capability or ability to manage projects depend on five

attributes; knowledge, skills, personality, attitude, and experience. Hence, being an effective project leader has no simple explanation. However, the literature agrees some practices which are vital and also are pervading for most of a project leader's activities.

The ability to communicate effectively: Having effective communication skills is an asset in many managerial jobs, but is especially critical in project leadership roles. Taylor (1998), among others, means that no other ability is more valuable for project leaders than the ability to communicate effectively with others. This can be related to the fact that project leaders spend 70 to 90 % of their time communicating (Briner, Hastings & Geddes, 2001; Kliem, 2004; Taylor, 1998). Cadle and Yeates (2004) assert that the management of projects require the willingness and the ability to communicate clearly and unambiguously and to do this in a wide range of situations and with a wide range of people. Frame (1999) describes areas where effective communication has a central role:

- Articulating needs and requirements
- Establishing realistic expectations – of customers, team members, and management
- Providing status updates of project progress
- Requesting resources
- Writing documents – memos, proposals, progress reports, technical reports

From a project management perspective, effective communication results when a message is understood as intended and mutually engage both sender and receiver (Kliem, 2004). The success of the project often depends on how well the project leader handles information whether it is technical, legal, administrative, or interpersonal in nature. Boddy (2002) asserts that effective communication also is necessary when intending to influencing others, and influencing others is something project leaders need to do all the time, for instance when, agreeing goals, securing resources and monitoring progress. Verbal communications comprise five processes; speaking, writing, reading, listening, and thinking. Where speaking, writing, and listening skills most clearly affect the project leader's ability to communicate and function in the project management role (Taylor, 1998). The effectiveness with which these three skills of speaking, writing, and listening are used is important to the success of the project and the project leader. Some of the consequences of poor communication can be increase in negative conflict, needless rework, lower morale, and strained relationships with key stakeholders.

The ability to influence others (Building credibility): As discussed before project leaders operate without documented formal authority and must rely on developing informal modes of authority. Wisén and Lindblom (2004) assert that the power a project leader hold depends to a large extent on the ability to influence others. Some "influencing techniques" that have been found to be useful are, according to Kezsbom and Edwards (2001); competence, persuasive ability, negotiation, and reciprocal favours. The project leader's credibility is of vital importance for succeeding when negotiating. Credibility refers to a combination of the project leader's expertise and trustworthiness in the eyes of the project's clients, the project leader's superiors, functional managers, subordinates, external consultants, and contractors (Pinto & Trailer, 1998). If a project leader is not sufficiently credible it will be more difficult to, for instance, exercise effective control, negotiate, and bargain effectively. Briner, Hastings & Geddes (2001) assert that in creating a positive context for the project, the single most useful, and most undervalued, resource the project leader and his/her team can have is the positive support from colleagues throughout the organisation. Hence, according to Pinto & Trailer (1998), a project leader who has a reputation for successfully managing similar projects

would be taken more seriously than one who has not managed or worked on related projects. However, Wenell (2002) means that project leaders not solely can rely upon previous performances, they have to earn and build their credits within the organisation. Responsibility and power need to be adjusted for each specific project and maybe even for each specific project leader. Except from the formal power, which gives the project leader his/her title and standing, the credibility will be taken away from a project leader that do not come up to the expectations (Macheridis, 2001). Additionally Wenell (2002) asserts that if a project is competing for resources and priority the project, and the project leader, will be upgraded in priority if the team members find it most stimulating to work in just that project. This can be of vital importance if the project will be successful or not.

2.2.5   Project Lifecycle and Its Phases

Unlike ongoing operations that continue indefinitely Kloppenborg *et al.* (2003) state that projects are temporary and have lifecycles.

Frigenti and Comninos (2002) assert that project life cycles generally define:

- What technical work should be done in every phase to produce the phase deliverables
- Who should be involved in each phase to produce the deliverables
- The major management responsibilities for each phase
- Key go/no-go points. These points are also described as critical decision points.

A project's lifecycle means the period of time that the project is extended over. It does not only include the time during the concrete project but also the time before the project begins and the time after its completion.

Many industries have unique demands, and project leadership responsibilities, that have a need of more involved lifecycle models. Macheridis (2001) point out that what should be considered in respective phase, the degree of structure regarding different activities, and time planning varies depending on, for instance, the type of project and the view of the project's lifecycle. However, there are some basic stages, and project leadership tasks that must be accomplished during each stage, that apply to most projects in most industries. The phases projects generally are divided into are: *the initiating (definition) phase*, *the planning phase*, *the execution phase*, and *the close-out phase*. The subsequent phases can sometimes begin before approval of the previous phase, a practice called fast tracking (Macheridis, 2001).

The initiating phase: This phase begins with identifying a potential project and it concerns the time before the kick-off and before an approval is granted. The most typical activities during this phase are; establishing the need for the project, understanding the project scope, Align project with parent organisation, approximating the time and cost required, perform risk analysis, select key project participants, determine team operating methods, develop top management support (Larsson, 1998; Lientz, 1999).

The planning phase: This phase begins with the approval and ends with kick-off. As the initiating phase deal with the determination of *what* shall be obtained the planning phase deal with the determination of *how* it shall be obtained. In the initiating phase the emphasis is on internal development and work within the team. In the planning phase, on the other hand, the

focus moves outside to the business unit and other systems areas. The most typical activities during this phase are; understanding and respond to the customer, oversee detailed plan development, integrate project plans, select remainder of project participants, develop communications plan, motivate all participants, and secure key stakeholder approval. Wisén and Lindblom (2004) explain that depending on what kind of project that is to be accomplished there are several different techniques can be used to illustrate the activities in a time table. Most projects are illustrated in the form of a Gantt scheme, which gives a perspicuous picture of the project's most important activities from kick off to close-out.

The execution phase: This phase begins with kick-off and ends when the project customer accepts the project output. In this phase most of the project work is accomplished. The most typical activities during this phase are; authorize work, monitor progress and control changes, coordinate work across multiple projects, supervise work performance, lead teams, maintain morale, and secure customer acceptance.

The close-out phase: This phase begins when there is a total completion of the project. Workers and other resources are reassigned; the project is evaluated and administratively closed. The most typical activities during this phase are; audit project, terminate project, capture and share lessons learned, reassign workers, reward and recognise participants, celebrate project completion, and oversee administrative closure.

Frigenti & Comninos (2002, "The practice of project management: a guide to the business-focused approach) state that after the completion of a project phase a review of both key deliverables and project performance is generally, and desirably made. This in order to;

- Determine if the project should continue into the next phase.

- Detect and correct errors in a cost-effective manner.

- Review performance of the project team.

Many authors (e.g. Briner *et al.*, 2001; Cadle & Yeates, 2004; Frigento & Comninos, 2002; Lientz, 1999; Macheridis, 2001; Wenell, 2002; Wisén & Lindblom, 2004) emphasise the importance on putting much effort and time into the beginning of the project, to prepare the ground for the actual project. A well prepared pre project gives opportunity for early evaluations on different solutions. Wenell (2002) means that this is a prerequisite for being able to create flexibility in the main project and to be able to handle "sliding ambitions" during long projects. Insufficient planning can lead to incorrect decisions, that resources are used in an ineffective way, or, if the worst comes to the worst, that the project is run towards incorrect goals (Wisén and Lindblom, 2004). Too much planning, on the other hand, can result in that the decision-making and the actual project work are run without any real connection to the planning.

Cadle & Yeates (2004) assert that it is always worth the time for the sponsor and the project leader to be completely agreed concerning what to do and the expected quality. Key problems should preferably be identified as early as possible as it will be easier to handle the problems if they emerge later on in the project.

Although a quick and slovenly kick-off almost always means problems later on in the project, Wisén and Lindblom (2002) state that many project managers nowadays feel time pressured

and thinks the solution is to quickly get started with the project's activities. Wenell (2002) highlights the particular importance for project leaders working as consultants to commit deeply in the early phases as the client and the project leader need to get to know each other for the project leader to fully understand the conditions.

How a decision affects the outcome of the project and the ability to influence stakeholders can be seen in Figure 5.
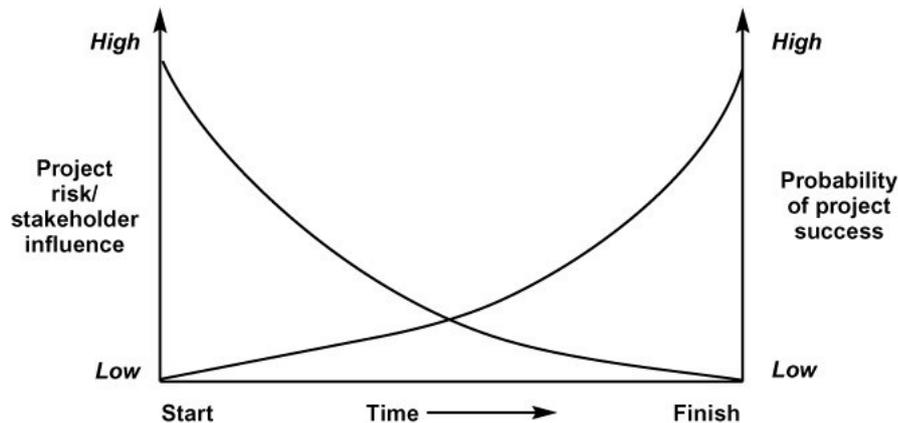

Figure 5. Project risk and success profile (Frigento & Comninos, 2002)

The figure illustrates that the probability of successfully completing a project is lowest, and hence the risk and uncertainty are highest, at the start of the project. The probability of successful completion generally gets progressively higher as the project continues, while the risk diminishes. The figure also illustrates that the ability of stakeholders to influence the final characteristics of the project product and the final cost of the project is highest at the start, and gets progressively lower as the project continues. A major contributor to this is that the cost of changes and error correction generally increases as the project continues.

As deadlines are getting shorter and shorter Wenell (2002) explains that other ways to plan than in the traditional ones need to be found. Further Wenell (2002) emphasises that dynamics and flexibility are today the key words, which can not be compensated by solely tools and techniques when planning and budgeting the project.

3   Research Methodology

According to Dawson (2002) the research methodology is the general principle that will guide your research. It is the overall approach to studying your topic and includes issues you need to think about such as the constraints, dilemmas, and ethical choices within your research. The research literature discusses and distinguishes between two research approaches, quantitative and qualitative research. Which method to use depends on the research problem you are seeking to analyse. However, Silverman (2005) asserts that there are no right or wrong methods. Ghauri and Gronhaug (2005) point out that the main different between qualitative and quantitative research is not of "quality", but of procedure. In quantitative research, findings are not arrived at by statistical methods or by other procedures of quantification. Normally, the basic distinction between qualitative and quantitative research is considered to be that quantitative researchers employ measurement and qualitative researchers do not.

Silverman (2005) asserts that *validity* is another word for truth. Truth, interpreted as the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers. Reliability, on the other hand, refers to the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions.

Quantitative research: Grix (2004) asserts that quantitative research is characterised by three basic phases: finding variables for concepts, operationalising them in the study, and measuring them. This type of research reaches many people, but the contact with those people is much quicker than it is in qualitative research (Dawson, 2002). Quantitative research uses techniques that apply more to numerical data. Researchers develop variables or concepts which can be measured and convert them into specific data-collection techniques. These techniques produce precise numerical information that can be understood as the empirical representation of the concepts. Grix (2004) has listed some of the most common and recurrent criticisms of quantitative research:

- Researchers using a quantitative research strategy may neglect the social and cultural context in which the variable being measure operates.
- This type of research relies heavily on concepts in the pursuit of "measurable" phenomena and it is difficult to match concepts with their referents in the social world (for example trust or delinquency).
- There are some facets of human action, especially behavioural phenomena, which are difficult to capture or measure quantitatively.

Qualitative research: Qualitative research attempts to get an in-depth opinion from participants through, for example, participant observations, interviews or ethnographic studies. Dawson (2002) explains that it explores attitudes, behaviour, and experiences, and as it is these factors that are important, fewer people take part in the research, but the contact with these people tends to last a lot longer than with quantitative. These methods do not rely on, but can involve, numerical measurements (Grix, 2004). As with quantitative research, Grix (2004) has listed criticisms of qualitative research:

- There is a perceived problem of "anecdotalism"; that is, the use of brief or limited examples in relation to explanations. This tends to raise questions about the representativeness and generality of the piece of research.
- The inability to generalise from small samples or few cases leads to a question of the validity of the results based on such research.
- The "immersion" of the researcher in the social context he/she is studying leads to a lack of "Objectivity" and a propensity to use personal opinions instead of evidence to support arguments.

As compared with quantitative, qualitative methods employ a limited number of observations and try to explain different aspects of the problem area.

As described by Silverman (2005) *triangulation* refers to the attempt to get a "true" fix on a situation by combining different ways of looking at the research or different findings. Triangulation refers to the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomena (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2005). The accuracy of judgements, and thereby results, can be improved by collecting data through different methods or even collecting different kinds of data on the subject matter of the study. Hence, to enhance the validity of the research the data can be collected by triangulation. In cases where correctness or precision is important Ghauri

and Gronhaug, (2005) mean that it is quite logical to collect information through different methods and angels.

3.1 Design

As discussed by Ghauri and Gronhaug (2005) the research design represents the overall strategy on gathering the information needed to answerer the research problem under scrutiny.

The most common way to begin a substantial piece of research is by undertaking a literature review, which, according to Grix (2004) enables you to "get a feel of the state of the art" on and around your topic. It also allows you to assess the feasibility of your project and narrow your focus. The selected method for gathering secondary data was therefore a literature review. The literature review includes books, journal articles, and online data sources. Ghauri and Gronhaug (2005) emphasise that you must realize that a secondary data source provides the information that may have been collected for a different purpose. Hence, consideration of the sources should be made. As this research aims to investigate project leadership at present times the year of publication was taken into consideration, especially on the part on "project leadership".

This research aims to create a deeper understanding about how the participants understand and consider the topic. As, according to Ghauri & Gronhaug (2005), a key purpose of qualitative research is to understand and gain in-depth insight into a phenomenon the most appropriate approach for the current situation was qualitative, semi-structured, individual interviews. Laurel (2003) asserts that individual interviews are ideal for learning exactly how each person feels and thinks about a topic, without concern for the influence of others.

However if the intention was to investigate examine how the trends in project leadership look like in general, and not to investigate the particular situation at Infotiv, a quantitative survey with questionnaires as a complement to the interviews would have been a more appropriate selection. And, on the other hand, if the intention was to find out how the participants *behave*, and not the participants´ opinions and *experiences* observational methods would probably been a better choice.

Using questionnaires, instead of interviews, could be an alternative solution if the primary data were going to be statistically analysed and if there is a desire to generalize the results. However, in order to cover all the aspects of the research area the questionnaires would be quite extensive. Moreover, by using questionnaires some interesting and important aspects, especially considering questions about trends in the future, that can come up when using unstructured or semi-structured interviews can be missed.

3.1.1   Critique to the Design

Qualitative methods have higher validity but may not be as reliable and representative than quantitative ones. Hence, caution with finding patterns and generalising the results of the study should be exercised. Due to difficulties finding customers and presumptive customers willing to participate in the interviews the number of participants may be too low in order to generalize the results of this study as well.

Due to the time limitation was the use of triangulation impracticable. However, according to Gill and Johnson (2002) the ideal methodological solution is to use multi-methods, especially if the researcher is going to undertake extended pieces of work.

When performing interviews there is always a risk of bias. Ghauri and Gronhaug (2005) discuss the importance for the researcher to know the respondent, his/her background, values, and expectations. Consequently, the interaction between the researcher and the respondent is one cause of biases. An attempt at decreasing this risk has been to get to know the participants´ position at the organisation and experience within project management before the interview occasion. By undertaking a thorough literature review the knowledge and understanding of the topic was increased and hence also the ability to understand the participants´ answers.

There is also a risk for bias in the way the interviewer act during the interview. Andersson (2001) asserts that it will be difficult creating a trustful atmosphere, which is necessary for a successful interview, if the interviewer give the impression of being uninterested or avoiding to look at the interviewee. The person being interviewed need to feel that was he/she says is comprehended and also is appreciated (Andersson, 2001). This was taken into consideration when conducting the interviews as the researcher frequently looked at the participant and appeared interested in the participant's opinions.

3.2 Participants

Ghauri and Gronhaug (2005) present two factors to consider before conducting interviews; sampling plan and sample size. Sampling size refer to how the participants should be selected while sample size refer to how many participants that should be included.

The participants are divided into two groups; *employees at Infotiv* and *Infotiv´s customers and presumptive customers*. The selection of interviewees was made to gain insight both into what the employees consider being difficult working as project leaders, what can be improved and their outlook upon project leadership, as well as what the customers and presumptive customers search for in project leaders.

All of the interviewed employees work at the Project Management department at Infotiv but have varied positions and experience, from the least experienced project leader to the department manager, as point of views from the whole department is of interest. In order to get a wider perspective of the customer's opinions as Infotiv have customers whose organisations are of different sizes and from different industries the selection of participants from the customer organisations was made from the entire customer segment. Infotiv is an expansive organisation that is aiming to expand their customers as well. Hence, the interviewees also consist of a person working in an organisation that is a possible future customer. Due to difficulties finding customers willing to participate there were no more than one presumptive customer interviewed. The selection of interviewees, both the employees at the company and present customers, was made on the recommendation of the supervisor at Infotiv while the selection of the presumptive customer was made from a list of possible future customers by the researcher herself. The interviewees consisted of three employees at the company, two of theirs customers, and one presumptive customer.

3.3 Instrument

The instrument for collecting the primary data was semi-structured, individual, face-to-face, verbal interviews, in which the interviewer attempted to obtain information and opinions from the interviewee. Semi-structured interviews are primarily used when the researcher wants to know specific information which can be compared and contrasted with information gained in other interviews (Dawson, 2002). Ghauri and Gronhaug (2005) explain that an advantage with using semi-structured interviews instead of structured ones is that a more accurate and clear picture of a respondent's position or behaviour can be gained as the respondents are freer to answer more according to their own thinking. The interview questions contain no constraint answerers by only a few alternatives.

Dawson (2002) asserts that a detailed interview guide helps you to focus your mind on your research topic and enabling you to consider about all the areas which need to be covered. Two different interview guides were constructed; one for the interviews with the employees at Infotiv and one for the interviews with Infotiv´s customers. However, in order to discover differences and similarities between the two groups and to be able to make proper comparisons most of the questions in the two interview guides are the same. To prevent bias on account to the researcher influencing the interviewee the interview guides were merely used as a support for the interviewer and to make sure all the desirable information were obtained. The guides were also flexible enough for letting the participants choose the order of the questions as much as possible.

3.4 Procedure

The participants were first contacted either by phone or e-mail, depending on whether it was an employee at Infotiv or a customer who was going to be interviewed. After settling an interview date the interview guide in question were sent by e-mail to the participant. This was made in order for the participant to be better prepared for the interview as the participant will by this get some time to ponder and reflect upon the questions. Together with the interview questions the interview guide contained name, position, and experience within project management for the participant to fill in and return.

Each interview lasted for approximately one hour and was taperecorded. According to Andersson (2001), by recording the interviews instead of making notes of them the conversation tone becomes more natural and flowing. Making "word for word" notes can also appear disturbing for the interviewee, who is aware of that everything said is written down (Andersson, 2001). Using a tape recorder also increases the focus on the interviewee's answers and eye contact can be maintained during the whole interview (Dawson, 2002). On the other hand, the person interviewed may experience taperecorded interviews with discomfort and hence become more cautious with the answers. However, as the questions asked during these interviews not are especially sensitive the interviewees should not be considerable influenced by the tape recorder.

The interviews lasted for approximately one, one and half an hour. In order for the participants to feel confident and assured the participants themselves were allowed to choose place for the performance of the interviews. For instance, some of the interviews were

performed at the participant's place of work while others were performed at a restaurant during lunch.

A literal copying of the interviews was made as soon as possible after the interview occasion were the interviewer's own commentaries and reflections on the interview were added as well. After analysing the interviews some of the participants were contacted again to explain or deepen some of the answers.

4 Results

This chapter presents an overview of the findings from the data collection. The result is divided into *Employees at Infotiv* and *Customers and presumptive customers*. The participants in the latter group are all named "customers", the presumptive customer as well, in order to make a more coherent text. The results are presented in the same sub-categories as in the interview guides. The sub-categories concerning the questions for the employees at Infotiv are; *The project leader role*, *Competences and qualities*, and *Project leaders and power*, and the sub-categories concerning the questions for the customers and presumptive customers are; *The project leader role*, *Competences and qualities*, *Selection and Recruitment,* and *Trends in the future*.

4.1 Employees at Infotiv

4.1.1   The project leader role

All the participants agreed that working as a project leader is quite unique from other type of leaders and managers, for instance department managers. As well as being the leader and manager of a project the project leader is also a fellow actor in the project team.

The third interviewee explained the uniqueness with being a project leader this way:

"The main difference between department managers and project leaders is that the project leader is a part of the team at the same time as he/she is the one who is going to lead and govern the team."

Participant number two had similar thoughts about the uniqueness with the project leader's role but also added that:

"Although the project leader is part of the project team, he/she will just accomplish the result of the project, not lead the development of the employees as a department manager does."

Additionally, the first interviewee expressed that the lack of formal power also is a characteristic of being a project leader.

The general conception between the employees at Infotiv concerning the main role of the project leader is that it is different in each specific case. According to the first participant it depends much on what type of company you work in, the culture, and the type and size of the project, what the primary tasks for a project leader are. The second participant stated that especially project leaders working as consultants will experience different demands.

"The customers can desire everything from a very analytical person to someone whose principal task is to inspire with enthusiasm."

Interviewee number three added that in some organisations the project leader is part of the development while in other projects you are "solely" a leader with the only task to lead. The third interviewee also emphasised that, as it varies what is included in the role as a project leader, it is important to be clear of what exactly is demanded of you as a project leader before starting to work with the project.

Even though all the participants agreed that what to be included in the role as a project leader differs from project to project and from organisation to organisation, the first participant stated that the primary role, for every project leader irrespective of organisation, is to reach specified project goals.

"The most important task for a project leader is to clearly define the project and its objectives; what is to be done, how to do it, and why. "

Interviewee number two compared project leaders with chameleons:

"The general project leader is a chameleon who will fit in with all surroundings and make everybody feel comfortable."

The project leader's primary role is according to the third interviewee to push and keep the project team in good order, and also to find everyone's specialist knowledge and competence.

"A project requires someone who is overarching, someone who check that every member in the team is doing what they should, not someone who him/herself is part of the development. The project leader should be the one holding the umbrella and coordinate everyone."

4.1.2   Competences and qualities

An opinion all the participants agreed on is that the demands upon project leaders to finish their projects quick are becoming bigger and bigger in time with the fact that deadlines are becoming tighter and tighter. With a given budget project leaders shall reach the desirable quality in as short time as possible. According to the first interviewee the demands are sometimes preposterously big. The third participant said that:

"The task itself, to solve it, that is the biggest challenge."

Interviewee number two considered that the biggest challenge for project leaders is to:

"Deliver in time, as fast as possible."

The first participant had also experience from tight deadlines and added that:

"If you as a project leader not is able to deliver a project in time, the assignment will be handed over to another project leader who can carry out the assignment quicker, with the same quality and costs."

According to the first and second participant it is of great importance that project leaders are determined and that they communicate clearly with the project's client; what is feasible and what is not within the scope of time and budget. You should as a project leaders be in good control over the project and aware of the difficulties and what you are able to deliver with the given resources. Participant two continued with emphasising that project leaders should not be afraid of laying claim for more resources if a project does not seem feasible.

The combination of being a team leader who motivates and communicates to the project team, and a manager who makes the overall decisions, is something that the third interviewee considered being difficult with working as a project leader.

"At the same time as you should create unity and inspire with enthusiasm in the project team you need to be determined and indicate what is acceptable and what is not."

As it is crucial, in order to be able to reach the goals within budget and time, that everybody in the project team follow the directions, participant two and three stressed that assuring that the team members really are present and committed to the task is a big challenge for project leaders. Participant three stated:

"With all defence to the goals, but if the people who are going to carry out the work not are motivated and committed it won't work."

Moreover, the third interviewee asserted that project leaders need to be targeted and the driving force in the team, making the goals feel attainable for the co-workers. However, the joy at succeeding in making the team committed and willing to work with the task is a motive power, according to the interviewee. The participant explained that:

"You need to be willing to give that little extra to reach your goals, not being afraid to go at it. If you fall as a project leader, the whole team will fall too."

Additionally, interviewee two stated that:

"One of the most important things is to create a go-ahead spirit within the team."

Participant number two expressed that when you work as a consultant, and is not part of the selection of the project team members yourself, it is hard to be clear about the competences and each and every team member's ability to reach the goals. However, in order to be able to meet the deadline, the interviewee emphasised that project leaders have to trust the co-workers, that they have got the information necessary and that they understand what is to be done. The participant expressed that it is important that you as a project leader get to know as soon as possible if a person is not able/do not have the time to do a specific task. Moreover, the second participant meant that to be able to trust your co-workers you continuously need to

communicate and make sure everyone is on the right track. Another thing interviewee two considered being one of the most important for project leaders is to:

"…delegate as much as possible."

The first interviewee considered that what characterises a good project leader is his/her ability to deliver a project, with desirable quality, within budget and deadline. However, to be able to do this, there are a number of aspects that a project leader needs to control and manage in a correct way, for instance planning the project, managing the stakeholders, and motivate the team.

Communication is a word prevailing for all the interviewees when discussing factors important when working as a project leader. Participant number two and three stressed clear communication. However, according to participant two, there can be a danger with too much communication and you should not as a project leader shower information upon team members as this can bring about confusion and information overload. The participant stated that everyone is differently developed and have different needs. Hence, a good project leader has the ability to communicate with everyone, after their specific needs. Inexperienced team members need more support while the most experienced just might need instructions on what to do.

Moreover, interviewee number two and three stressed the importance of assuring that everyone knows what to do, what their specific role within the team is, and why they should do it. According to participant number three it is also of importance to have good and appropriate information channels which keep people up to date with changes and the progress of the project. However, the second participant explained:

"It is not enough to send out a mail containing instructions what to do. Everyone interpret the information in different ways, the perception differs from individual to individual."

How to get people started and interested in the task is a quality interviewee two and three emphasise as being important for project leaders to possess. The third participant considers that project leaders should have a good knowledge of human nature and also, preferably, some knowledge about psychology, as how to motivate people.

Additionally, interviewee number two expressed that:

"A project leader must be able to see what everyone needs and know how to get the different individuals in the team started - and this is a very difficult challenge!"

The third interviewee stressed the importance of celebrating success or praising specific members in the team for extraordinary performances as this makes people feel well and motivated to carry on with the task. Further, the participant explained that you as project leader becomes motivated yourself when you feel that your team is positive. The interviewee expressed:

"Of course you should let your team member know if something needs to be improved, but it is as important to praise them for success. However, it is often project leaders forget to do this."

Participant number one and three emphasised the importance for project leaders to be flexible and able to cope with stress. The third interviewee expressed that project leaders must be willing to modify the planning if, or when, unexpected events occur during the project's lifecycle. This is something the participant has experience of:

"Sometimes things emerge that needs to be taken charge of immediately, and then you need to leave everything else you are working with off…and this is something you must accept and cope with"

Moreover, the interviewee explained that project leaders often are interrupted by team members who are asking for advice or submitting proposals. It is important that the project leader then spare some minutes for that person and listen to what he/she is saying, the interviewee stressed. According to participant three, even though not always, but as a role project leaders have to be accessible and not a person who want the days to be very structured. However, to create freedom of action, interviewee number one asserted that project leaders have to estimate unexpected events and build in time for these in the planning of the project. Further, to be in better control over the project, the interviewee emphasised the importance of continuously keeping a journal over the project. Other ways for project leaders to create freedom of action is, according to the first participant, to create a network, maintain the pace, keep within budget, and not to initiate more people than necessary.

Further, when discussing characteristics for good project leaders, participant two described the perfect project leader as a mixture of four different personalities; the team worker, the result oriented, the enthusiastic, and the analyst. According to the interviewee, the *team worker* is communicative and holds the team together, the *result oriented* mainly focuses on fulfilling the task and achieving the goals, the *enthusiastic* instigates and gets the team members to do what he/she desires, even though this means being on the wrong track, and, finally, the *analyst* considers different alternatives; "can you do this", "have you thought about that". The participant asserted that project leaders should not be able to handle solely one personality but be able to "become" all the four different personalities when it requires.

Concerning general causes of unsuccessful projects where too much money and time is spent, all the interviewees were agreed on that it every now and then depends on the communication. Participant number three stated that both the internal communication within the project team and to the other stakeholders, for instance, the client is of importance. One of the most common mistakes, according to the first interviewee, is that the project is poorly described by the client. Further the participant stressed the importance for project leaders to spend time on creating a thorough description of the project themselves. The first and the second participant asserted that the first task for project leaders is to, together with the client, agree on the desirable quality level. As well as coming to an agreement with the project's client on the expectations on the project, interviewee two and three also emphasised the importance of assuring that all the team members agree on what the client wants and what level of quality the client have paid for. Participant three stated:

"Some project leaders trust in systems too much and think they have done their part of the work. However, it is important that project leaders go the whole hog and really see that everyone understands what is to be done."

The second interviewee asserted that project leaders must determine how much time to spend on a project and also keep to that. For instance, the participant explained, a team member who

is working 100 hours a week instead of the appointed 40 hours a week can not be paid for those additional hours. Participant number two expresses:

"A project leader can not solely be nice and socialise, he/she has to be determined on what is allowed doing."

All the interviewees were totally agreed on that the most important, for the outcome of the project, part of a project is the beginning. Participant number one asserted that by far the most important is that project leaders spend time on defining the project, what is to be attained, why, and how to do it. The third interviewee stressed the "80 – 20 % rule", which means that 80 % of the focus should be on planning, in the beginning of a project. The second participant stated that during the early phases of a project expectations are created from the client, but expectations are also created from the project leader to the participants in the team. The project leader should make him/her clear on the conditions and after that communicate the conditions to the project team. However, the participant explained, the conditions can change during the project's lifecycle and if they do it is important to clearly communicate what the changes imply, what is to be done from now on. Moreover, the third interviewee stated that it is important to have procedures how to handle the changes, and how to secure and get rid of materials that is not applicable any more. The clearer project leaders explain what to do when conditions changes and the more they do it similarly every time the better it is, according to the participant. As when discussed common made mistakes, participant three again stressed the importance of assuring that everyone understands the task.

"Before you let everyone run at different directions you really have to firmly establish the task so that everyone knows what to do."

All the interviewees expressed that it, in most cases, is the "soft" side of project management that project leaders wish to improve in. However, according to the third interviewee:

"It is difficult to be "trained" in people but that is something you learn more and more as you work in different projects. No project is similar the other"

Further, the third participant emphasised that every project leader should take time to reflect and learn from completed projects, not only the mistakes but also the good parts and what you have learned from the project. The interviewee emphasised that project leaders should reflect and analyse the completed project not only with oneself but together with the team members. However, the third interviewee asserted that project leaders learn from every project they take part in and that you as a project leader can not become fully-trained. The second interviewee stated that, within the "soft" side, it is primarily different aspects of communication where project leaders wish to improve in. Participant two and three asserted that a working communication is of vital importance and it is in fact "what it is all about". However, the first interviewee explained that:

"In larger projects there is more emphasising on the "soft" parts of project management, as the unity of the team, while there in larger projects is a direction towards the "hard", technical part."

How to distribute the communication to everyone that is in need of it and how to follow it up are two examples where more training often is inquired for, the third participant expressed.

Other areas within communication where more knowledge often is desired are, according to the second interviewee, rhetoric and presentation techniques.

4.1.3 Project leaders and power

As with what to be included in the project leader role all the interviewees asserted that it varies from project to project and organisation to organisation how much authority and power project leaders have. According to the second participant it depends much on the company you work in, what the culture is. At some companies the management is very powerful, sometimes rather too powerful, the interviewee expressed, while at other companies project leaders are having a free hand and are in control of the budget. However, participant number one stated that:

*"Generally speaking, project leaders are given little credit and if a project fails it is because of the project leader, while if a project becomes successful it is due to the **project team**, not the **project leader**."*

The third interviewee explained that even though project leaders do not have much power upwards, within the project team, downwards, project leaders have the authority to make decisions. According to the second and the third interviewee there is always a struggle for obtaining the resources that are required for carrying out the project. The second participant emphasised that the clearer you are on with the scope, goals, and what necessary resources that are required for attaining the goals and are able to argue for why you need them, the more likely it is that you get the resources you are in need of. However, this is not always an easy task, the interviewee explained:

"If you are in charge of more than one project at the same time you easily mix up the different ways to communicate and, consequently, are not sufficiently clear on what resources you need."

Finally, the third participant stressed the importance of keeping everyone updated on what is going on in the project so that it will not come as a surprise in the end to the managers involved in the project. All the decisions that are made during the project are to be established firmly, the interviewee explained.

4.2 Customers and presumptive customers

4.2.1 The project leader role

The first and the third interviewee emphasised that *flexibility* is what differs project leaders from other types of leaders and managers. Interviewee number one explained it in this way:

"The unique with project leadership is that, at bottom, it is a free job. Of course project leaders have rules and regulations too, but within that there are big opportunities and freedom of action."

The participant continued by stating that at most companies there exists a special process that indicates *what* is to be done at different point of time in the project but that it often tells very little about *how* it is to be done. The interviewee expressed that:

"This is one of the incentives, and the fun with project leadership, that the job becomes what you make of it."

Interviewee number two asserted that what mainly is unique with project leadership is that the task is defined and the time is fixed. Another factor that the second participant considered being unique is that there are high demands for project leaders to early get legitimacy. Moreover, the first interviewee explained that the relationship with the employees is different for project leaders compared to department managers, who are control over the salaries and also responsible over the staff. Even though project leaders do not have any employees directly placed under him/her, the participant stated that project leaders do have a responsibility to make sure that the employees develop and grow, together and in time with, the project. Further, the first interviewee expressed that generally, project leaders have an exceptional large amount with personal contacts as they often get in touch with the whole company and sometimes also cooperate with other companies. The interviewee has experience from this:

"In global projects, which are going to serve several companies, the meaning is not to choose side. In fact we have the advantage to work with a great number of people."

The main role for project leaders is defined by the third participant:

"…to run a work with a plain goal, regarding time, money, and quality, which is organised in form of a project."

Participant number one agreed that project leaders have the total responsibility for the project and should make sure that the delivery is on time, at right cost, both project and product cost, and to the expected quality. Additionally, the interviewee asserted, that even though project leaders have the total responsibility for the success of the project the main task, as deadlines are becoming tighter and tighter, is to delegate as much as possible. However, both the first and the second participant stressed that project leader's principal role depends on the character of the project. According to the second interviewee, the tasks that are to be included in the project leader role are also dependent on the type of project that is going to be performed. The interviewee explained that, generally, projects project leaders have more technical responsibility in smaller projects than in larger, global ones.

4.2.2 Competences and qualities

The biggest challenge for project leaders is, according to the second interviewee, to be able to get into the customer's need:

"To find the best solution on the customer's "problem" and with one's competence and way of working become trustworthy is the hardest thing with project leadership."

The first and the third interviewee stressed group dynamics, politics, and culture within the organisation as areas where difficulties often arise. Participant number one asserted that, as many organisations and projects are global, finding a unanimous way of working for the different cultures is today the most difficult part of project leadership.

"It brings in so much complexity in the (global) way of running a project. It is a completely different thing to run a project here in Sweden than it is in, for instance, France."

Another difficulty with global projects is, according to the first interviewee, the distance. The daily project work is done by telephone conferences, net meetings etc. The interviewee has experienced the complexity with not having much eye-to-eye contact and meant that it is not the same thing listening to what someone is saying over the phone than it is talking to a person you can look in the eyes.

"Personally, I find it difficult; I want to look the person in the eyes. It is much harder to understand the actual meaning of what someone is saying in poor English in relation to talking to someone that is in front of you. It is difficult!"

The above average project leader is, according to the third interviewee, someone who has the ability to handle different types of persons and to bring out the best from everyone. Interviewee number two stressed the importance of having integrity when working as a project leader. Additionally, the first participant explained that it facilitates if project leaders have a will of ones own and not take, for instance, criticism too personal. The first interviewee however asserted that it is hard not taking things personal as you often become "one" with the project you lead. According to the second interviewee the efficient project leader should be a good communicator and planner. Good judge of character, the ability to bear stress, and carefulness are further qualities participant number three considered being particularly desirable for project leaders to possess. Moreover, participant number one stressed the importance of knowing how the company works and understanding what is said between the lines. As project leadership is not completely unique, even though there are local variants, the interviewee explained that if you have been at different companies it will not be any major problems. On the other hand, the interviewee added, consultants who do not have any, or very little, experience of working as project leader will probably face difficulties. The interviewee hence stated that experience is of vital importance for project leaders working as consultants.

Both the first and the second interviewee considered that no leadership style is better than the other when working as a project leader. The first participant expressed:

"In reality I believe in that you should be who you really are and to be aware of what you need to improve about yourself. This is what I stand for and this is what I want to do! I think that in the end it will show if you are not honest."

Further the interviewee asserted that there exist a lot of different leadership styles and which you prefer differs from person to person. Some act like a car salesman, some like a dictator, while others are more reserved, delegate much and let others carry out the work and just correct things here and there when needed. However, the third interviewee emphasised that a flexible leadership style which can be adapted to the particular situation often are appropriate for project leaders.

All the interviewees are altogether of one opinion that the reason for problems occurring later on in projects is, every now and then, mistakes made in the beginning of the project. The first participant stated that in most cases it depends on an unrealistic time schedule while participant number two stressed that, most likely, the conditions have not been discussed thorough enough before starting the project. Another common mistake is, according to the third interviewee, misjudgement of the project's complexity. When discussing the time schedule the first participant explained that project leaders must be very exact about identifying possible risks and the consequences with changing the planning, for instance that shortening of the planning can have a negative effect on cost and quality. Further, the interviewee stressed the importance of making oneself clear and letting everyone know about the consequences. The interviewee asserted that:

"At bottom, you have to believe in the project plan yourself, that there is a possibility to accomplish it, and to very clearly express what resources that will be necessary for accomplishing the project."

Even though all the interviewees were agreed on that it is fairly often in the beginning of project's that vital mistakes are made, the second interviewee stated that mistakes can be made later on as well, and that the cause of that, in most cases, is that the employees who are involved in the project are allowed to influence the time or budget.

As can be understood by previous answers, all the interviewees considered that project leaders, undoubtedly, are most important in the beginning of projects. The first interviewee explained:

"That is when you lay the basis of a time schedule, which you believe in yourself, and you lay the basis of obtaining necessary resources and money. You also make sure that the project's conditions, the order, are correct. If the order is wrong in the beginning it will be miserable in the end."

When discussing the interviewees' experiences with present and former consultants the first interviewee stated that it is, generally speaking, rather difficult for project leaders working as consultants to enter a new company. In pace with the world is becoming more and more complex organisations are also becoming more complex. However, the participant asserted, it totally depends on the task that the project leader is to accomplish.

"I think it would be a wrong choice to place a consultant on a big, global project and assume it will work. It will probably be more trouble than it is worth because of the complexity."

Interviewee number two explained that consultants who have been very exact about getting clear decisions regarding the task and who also keep to them are the most successful project leaders. Moreover the participant stressed the importance of listening to the client's needs and to deliver what the client want, not what the consultant want for himself/herself. Further, according to the first interviewee the personality plays an important part if you are to succeed in working as a consultant. The interviewee stated that:

"I think it is more about being the right person on the right job. If you have the will and ambitions, I mean that everything is possible if you are the right person."

The second and the third interviewee asserted that both soft and hard knowledge is important for project leaders to posses. However, the participant explained, it is not often you find a person who is equally efficient in both sides of project management. At times it can be a good idea to initiate two consultants with different qualities who can complement each other, the interviewee discussed. Both the first and second interviewee stated that the nature of the task is of vital importance for the type of qualities the project leader should possess. The second interviewee explained:

"Generally, technicians have to obtain more of the "soft" knowledge while those who are more like social scientists require more of the "hard" knowledge."

According to the third interviewee, the hard, technical, parts are easier to learn than the "soft", interpersonal, parts. However, the first participant asserted that even though most of the computer systems not are particular advanced the acceleration lane, before being fully initiated in the system and acting effectively, is often rather long. It ranges from person to person but generally it takes about six months to a year before it works as it should work, the interviewee explained. The interviewee has experience of appointing consultants.

"For some appointments it is quite unsuitable to have consultants at all. From my angle of approach it is then better to appoint a person, to get some continuity in the work."

4.2.3 Selection and recruitment

The most important factor when choosing a project leader is, according to the third interviewee, go-ahead spirit and flexibility. The first interviewee considered integrity to be an important quality for project leaders to possess. The first and the second interviewee emphasised that it depends on the function, in what field that are of current interest, which competences and qualities that are looked for in project leaders. Further the first participant stated that, generally, experience and the type of personality are the most important factors. The interviewee explained that if you have experience within the area you know how to handle the customer and also once again stressed that "you can if you want to".

Interviewee number one emphasised the importance for project leader to get high priority on their projects. If the project has high priority it will usually not be any problems the participant explained. However, the first participant stated, in most cases the people that are working in a project are not solely working with just that project but have different responsibilities and are working with the project of a certain percentage. Hence, getting high priority on a project is a hard task, according to the interviewee. How to get credibility and informal power and, accordingly, also high priority on the project, the third interviewee asserted that project leaders should be consistent, accurate, and just. When resources are obtained and the project team is put together the first interviewee explained that there are different methods for getting the team members started. According to the participant are "team building" activities popular today, as it is of importance that the members get committed to *your* project even though they have different areas of responsibilities.

"One of the most important things is in the beginning, getting to know the individuals, what they look like, what their names and functions are. It is vitally important to create sense of a team!"

Further, the first interviewee stated that projects with dignity often extend over a period of two or three years and projects leaders often have meetings every week or, at least, every two weeks. The participant explained:

"Communication is the alpha and omega of project leadership! There are not supposed to be any obstacles for the team members, or project leader, to pick up the telephone or go and talk to the person in question."

All the interviewees agreed on that education in project management will simplify for the project leader in his/her professional life but that it is not of vital importance. The second participant expressed:

"Training is certainly good, but it is no necessity. WHAT you achieve is the determining factor, no matter how the competence has been obtained."

The first and the third interviewee asserted that project leadership not solely can be learned by reading books. Interviewee number one once again asserted that it is more important that the right person is on the right position. However, the first participant explained, the more professional experience you have the less you have to concentrate on the real work, running the project.

All the interviewees considered it being important with further development for project leaders. Interviewee number two discussed certification and authorisation and the first participant stated that; "as always you want as much as possible to the lowest price". Even though further development within project management is considered important the first interviewee asserted that the personal qualities and the chemistry between people, that you have pretty much the same idea about things, carry great weight as well. Many factors come into play for the teamwork to become efficient, the participant stated.

The second and the third interviewee had no general understanding of multicultural projects, as it was not of current interest for them or their companies. On the other hand, interviewee number one asserted that there is a trend towards more and more international projects. However, the participant explained:

"We need to be better at managing these multicultural projects in the right way."

According to the interviewee, we need to understand that people not are exactly alike on one hand, and on the other it is also a great deal of technique with international projects. However, the participant asserted, the technical helps of assistance that exist are often very expensive and difficult to prove they really are worth while. The knowledge about how people manage and make decisions in different countries is very valuable for project leaders to have. The interviewee has experience from multicultural projects:

"When you sit together with people from different cultures, all the prejudices you have actually turn up. But, in a way that is what makes this to a very interesting profession."

Furthermore, the participant stated that, as it is impossible to travel between the involved countries all the time, it is important to develop the way we have meetings.

All the participants asserted that the way the consultant has done the work is of vital important if he/she will be employed again. The first participant explained that it becomes more and more important for project leaders to be able to handle the situation, feeling the tide and to have intuition. Another important, and popular, factor today which the interviewee emphasised is "managing your stakeholders". Demands are made from all directions, for instance from the client and decision makers in steering groups, and according to the interviewee project leaders must be able to handle and manage them all.

"It is whole this game a project leader have to influence, and it will be more such a thing, greater, and wider."

Moreover the first interviewee stressed the importance of knowledge of people. The participant considered that working the company over, with all departments, is a factor which makes the project leader profession interesting. According to the interviewee, it is a great deal up to the project leader himself/herself what the job becomes and if you know where to go, what you are aiming at, and how to reach the goals will simplify a lot. Plainness is also of vital importance, the interviewee stated.

"Plainness in where you are going and how to get there, no matter what language you speak, will facilitate the communication."

4.2.4 Trends in the future

Interviewee number three stated that the project leader role becomes more and more common as more work is carried out in form of projects and that the project leader role probably will become more distinct as a profession. According to the first interviewee, the trend is that project leaders are going to act more and more like leaders, holding an overarching hand over the project, than being involved in the detail work. Further the first participant asserted that there will be more pressure on shorter and shorter deadlines and more focus on deliveries. The participant explained that the "let-go" mentality will be exchanged for a mentality which emphasises results. The second participant explained that project time will be shortened by running the activities parallel where feedback is given at once, and not as before in loops where the feedback is saved for the end when everything is finished. Desired competences for the future are according to the first interviewee knowledge of languages and technology knowledge while the second interviewee emphasised certification and "emotional intelligence" (EI).

5 Discussion

This chapter includes reflections about the results from the interviews and the theoretical findings in the literature review. Comparisons are made both between the two interview groups, employees at Infotiv and the customers and presumptive customers, and between the interviews and the literature review.

Companies who wish to stay competitive in today's flexible and fast changing business environment are facing higher demands than ever. This affects project leaders as well, as the factor that the employees at Infotiv emphasised most strongly when discussing challenges

with working as a project leader was the pressure on shorter and shorter deadlines. In order for project leaders to be able to accomplish projects in time, one of the customers argued that delegation is one of the main tasks, or maybe even the most important task, for project leaders today. However, to be able to feel confident in delegating it is crucial that the project leader has confidence in the team members. The literature emphasise that it is crucial that project leaders assure that their team understand what the project is all about. Both the customers and the employees stressed the importance of getting to know as soon as possible if someone is uncertain about what is expected or not able to do it. Assuring that everyone involved in the project understand what the client wants and what each team member's task in the project is, is even a main criterion for avoiding problems in projects discussed by the interviewees.

The interviewees, both the employees and the customers, agree on that most unsuccessful projects are due to mistakes that are made in the beginning of the project. One of the employees considered that project leaders should focus 80 % on the beginning, to plan the project, and 20 % on the rest. The interviewees hence verify what is emphasised in the literature; the importance of spending time and effort in the beginning of a project. Identifying key problems as early as possible will make it easier to handle the problems if they emerge later on in the project. Wenell (2002) asserted that it is especially important for consultants to focus on the beginning of a project as the project leader and the client need to get to know each other in order for the project leader to fully understand the conditions. Understanding the client's conditions and expectations is also another main criterion, discerned from the interviews, for being able to avoid problems in projects. However, one of the employees put stress on that it can be profitable for project leaders not to solely depend on the client's description but to make a description of the project themselves. Further the interviewees, especially the customers, emphasised the importance for project leaders to early identify possible risks and lay claim for necessary resources, and also make it clear to the client the consequences with reducing the resources or shortening the deadline. Another crucial factor for succeeding with projects accentuated in the literature, but not discussed by the interviewees, is to establish, not merely what the client wants, but what the client considers being a well managed project.

Even though careful planning and risk identification is of vital importance for reducing problems later on and succeeding with the project new information and unexpected problems can arise. Both the employees and the customers agreed that the most common reason for trouble in the course of the project is that team members are allowed to influence the planning or budget. Hence, project leaders should be very determined and exact with how much time and money that can be spent.

The importance of monitoring progress and letting everyone involved in the project know what is happening in the project is emphasised in the literature as well as by all the interviewees. Boddy (2002) present some benefits with monitoring progress; ensuring that the results expected are being achieved, taking corrective actions when deviations arise, obtaining acceptable performance, assessing attitudes, and monitoring external changes elsewhere in the organisation or in the outside world. One of the employees considered it especially important to have procedures on how to handle the changes and how to secure and get rid of unusable information due to the opinion that the more the project team act in the same way when changes occur, the better it is. However, there were some indications of that project leaders should be careful with whom to initiate into the project. Further interesting aspects brought up during the interviews was the danger with information overload; that too much information can bring about confusion, instead of clarity, among the team members. Hence, project

leaders should strive for distributing clear, and merely necessary, information to their team members.

As well as continuously monitoring the progress of the project the literature emphasise the importance of reviewing the team's performance. And, as well as reviewing and evaluating the team's performance project leaders should also reflect upon their own performance. Briner, Hastings and Geddes (2001) talk about six directions that project leaders should look in. One of the directions, "looking inwards", imply that the project leader should review his/her own performance and ensure that one's own acting is a positive contribution to the project and the project team. The ability to understand one's own strengths and weaknesses is called intrapersonal intelligence and will, according to Frame (1999) make people start deal with their emotions and finding out what motivates themselves. The importance for project leaders to possess intrapersonal intelligence is accentuated by many authors but just mentioned briefly by the interviewees.

It indicates from the interviews that many of the problems that arise in projects depend somehow on shortcomings in the communication. Communication is emphasised, both by the literature and the interviewees, as one of the most important factors of project leadership. It is discussed in the literature that no other ability is more valuable for project leaders possess than the ability to communicate effectively with others and the fact that project leaders spend 70 to 90% of their time communicating (e.g. Briner, Hastings & Geddes, 2001; Kliem, 2004; Taylor, 1998). Communication is also the factor that the employees primarily wished to be improved upon; particularly rhetoric, presentation technique, and how to distribute the communication in a good way.

One of the employees said; *"with all defence to the goals, but if the people who are going to carry out the work not are motivated and committed it won't work"*. As it is of vital importance for the success of projects that the team members are committed, finding ways how to motivate the team is a crucial task for project leaders. Boddy (2002) explains that the team members will be willing to do things for the project leader if they feel they are acting in their best interests, and that they are achieving their personal goals. In accordance with the literature, both the employees and the customers considered that first of all project leaders should get to know the individuals in the team in order to be able to find out what motivates everyone and how to get each started. Creating a sense of a team within the project group and making the team members feel influential and important in the project are factors emphasised both by the interviewees and in the literature. Another significant way to increase the well-being, and accordingly also the motivation, within the project team is to celebrate, both within the team and individually, successes and achievements along the way. One of the employees said that *"project leaders are apt to forget about it, but that it is as important to celebrate successes as it is to inform about things that need to be improved"*.

In accordance with the literature (Frame, 1999; Kezsbom and Edward, 2001; Taylor 1998; Wisén & Lindblom, 2004 etc.) both the employees and the customers considered that the demands for project leaders, what kind of qualities and knowledge the project leader should possess, differ from project to project and is completely dependent on the nature of the task. Much of the literature distinguishes between two groups of skills project leaders should possess; technical, hard, skills and interpersonal, soft, skills.

On the hole, there are two factors that is emphasised both by the interviewees and in the literature. First, soft skills are much more difficult to teach and learn compared to the hard

skills. An interesting view from the literature, however not brought up by the interviewees, is that soft skills also are more difficult to test. The other factor in common for the literature and the interviewees is the opinion that hard knowledge is more important in bigger, more complex projects than it is in smaller ones. Even though it is strongly asserted that project leaders have to possess both hard and soft knowledge and that the desired qualities leaders varies from project to project the trend appears to be that it is becoming more and more important for project leaders to possess soft, interpersonal skills. Several of the interviewees even considered that good knowledge of the human nature is what separates good project leaders from less efficient ones.

There has been a lot of research concerning hard and soft skills and most of them have come to the conclusion that project leaders who possess great technical knowledge tend to focus more on practising their technical knowledge and be part of the actual work instead of being the leader and manage the process. Technical experts also tend to be narrower to their team member's views and suggestion. Hence, project leaders should consider and be careful of how to apply their technical knowledge.

It indicates that, in time with more and more companies are becoming international, global, multicultural projects, are becoming more and more common in the future. However, being the project leader for a global project implies a good deal of challenges. The literature asserts that it is especially important for project leaders working in international projects that consist of people from diverse cultures to possess interpersonal skills. Verma (1995) asserts that project leaders must be sensitive to cultural differences when dealing with different people and their perceptions, values, and attitudes. The interviewees agree and considered different ways of working in different countries to be a big reason for that problems arise, especially the way people lead and manage and the way decisions are made. Another reason, discussed by the interviewees, for that problem more often arises in global projects than in projects carried out in Sweden, and is made up of solely Swedes, is the distance. One of the customers considered that the lack of eye-to-eye contact that international projects imply makes it more difficult to understand the actual meaning of what someone is saying. The reason for this is the language itself, but also, and probably even more important, the lack of facial and body expressions from which the implicit meaning of what is said can be discerned.

Concerning leadership styles the interviewees emphasised a flexible style that is adaptable for the specific situation to be the most appropriate when leading projects. Connections to this can be found in the literature as leadership styles directed towards situations and influencing techniques is considered being especially useful. One of the employees expressed that the amount of support project leaders should give to the team members depends on the team members' level of experience. Important to consider when managing projects is that the team members maturity level, defined by Hersey and Blanchard (1993) as "*the ability to perform a job independently and the desire to achieve success*", differs from person to person and that some persons mature, concerning the task, faster than others. Paying attention to, and acting accordingly, how the team members mature and develop during the project is especially important in projects that extend over a long period. Charismatic leadership is aimed at that charismatic leaders achieve their visions by influencing others and influencing others is an ability considered in the literature as very useful for project leaders to possess. As project leaders must be able to influence a number of people in order to be successful, taking into consideration how to influence and motivate each and every person involved in the best way possible is vital factor for the outcome.

However, the interviewees considered that which leadership role you prefer differs from person to person and that the main thing is that project leaders do not play a role, that they are who they really are.

As project leadership implies a great deal of uncertainty both the employees and the customers considered flexibility to be an important quality for project leaders to possess. Other vital qualities the interviewees emphasised are; go-ahead spirit, integrity, ability to handle the situation, intuition, ability to feeling the tide, targeted, ability to inspire with enthusiasm, and analytical.

Boddy (2002), Briner et al. (2001), Kerzner (2003), Wenell (2002), to mention some, all consider that there are some differences between project leaders and other types of managers. The limitation of direct authority and the importance of early getting legitimacy are some of the factors characteristic of the project leader role. These are factors the interviewees discussed as well as several of them stressed the lack of informal power and the struggle for legitimacy as challenges. However, the literature asserts that project leaders carry the ultimate responsibility for the project and even compare project leaders with general managers. Briner, Hastings & Geddes (2001) argue that *"project leaders carry the ultimate responsibility for the success or failure of the project"*.

Briner et al. (2001) emphasised the importance of senior management's support and confidence for project leaders to be able to negotiate and bargain effectively. One of the customers even said that *"if the project has high priority it will usually not be any problems"*. As it has been stated earlier, being clear with what resources that are necessary and also being able to argue for them, will simplify obtaining them. Important to pay attention to when being in charge of several projects at the same time, according to one of the interviewees, is not to mix up the ways to communicate with the different clients. By, as early as possible, getting to know the client and understand what he/she desires from the project and to continuously document the project can be ways to prevent this. For easier being able to obtain credibility the customers recommended project leaders to be accurate, just, and consistent. Wenell (2002) asserted that a project, which is competing for resources and priority, will be upgraded in priority if the team members find it most stimulating to work in that particular project.

When discussing the choice of project leader and satisfied client the customers explained that, on the whole, for being an interesting candidate it is of vital importance with some form of education and experience. As the demand on shorter deadlines is increasing it may seem that if a company can choose between an experienced and a less experienced project leader the most experienced, who will require more guidance and support, will probably be the one appointed. However, the result from the interviews indicates that this do not always have to be the fact, personal qualities also play a very important role when selecting project leaders. One of the interviewees emphasised the importance of chemistry between people and that the client and the project leader accord and share the same values and ideas about some fundamental things. Hence, being trained within project management is not always the same thing as being a good project leader. One of the customers asserted that project leadership can not solely be learned by training and the most important thing is *what* the project leader accomplishes, irrespective of he/she is trained or not. The most important factor for making a satisfied client is, according to the customers, to deliver what the client actually asked for. Even though implies a great deal of flexibility and freedom in the way of leading the project, keeping to the client's wish and not "inventing" own solutions seems to be crucial.

6 Conclusions

This final chapter presents the conclusions drawn from the interview results, together with some recommendations and suggestions for Infotiv regarding the strategic competence development at the organisation.

Project leadership implies a great deal of flexibility and few "rules" how to perform the job. The desired qualities and competences also vary and depend to a large extent on the nature of the assignment, for instance the duration and the size of the project team. Even though small projects require wider technical knowledge, and sometimes even involvement in the technical development, the findings indicate that the project leader of the future will be someone who is overarching and holds the reins in the project. Project leaders will in the future be more like psychologists, who are able to communicate with everyone after each specific need, have intuition, emotional intelligence, and are able to feel the tide.

The fact that it is becoming more and more important for project leaders to possess interpersonal skills is primarily due to two factors; the demands on shorter and shorter deadlines is increasing and hence also the importance the actual project team has for the success, and there is trend towards more complex, global, and multicultural projects in the future.

Project leaders are becoming more and more dependent on the work effort of the team members and delegation will in the future be a necessity in order to succeed. The importance of motivated and committed team members for succeeding with projects is one of the most essential conclusions from this research. Ways for increasing the team member's motivation are; creating a sense of a team within the project group, making the team members feel important and influential, and celebrate successes and achievements collectively and individually. A recommendation is also to keep up-to-date with team building activities as this strengthens the unity and culture within the project team.

As the number of global, multicultural projects is increasing knowledge of languages and cognizance of cultural differences are competences that will be desired from tomorrow's project leaders. A project leader of a multicultural project who can speak the team members' languages and who understand why people act like they do in different situations will, in all probability, succeed better than a project leader who do not have the knowledge or are not interested in understanding. Further, knowing how to speak an unusual language can be very profitable.

Another conclusion is that, as more projects are becoming global and more complex, the need for project coordinators, as a complement to the actual project leader, will probably proceed in the future.

The strain on project leaders to deliver projects as fast as possible makes it more important than ever to be accurate with making a thorough planning and risk assessment for preventing problems to arise later on. Laying claim for necessary resources as early as possible increases the chances of getting them. It can be concluded that tomorrow's project leaders do not have time *not* putting time and energy into the early phases of projects.

Another conclusion from this research is that the client is most satisfied when the accomplished project coincides with the client's desire. Project leaders should therefore as early as possible find out what the client's expectations on the assignment are. To continuously during the project's life cycle reflect and evaluate the progress *together* with the client is recommended. This will hence increase the chances of client satisfaction, and accordingly also, the possibility of being appointed for future needs.

As stated before different projects require different qualities from the project leader. Accordingly, finding the right person for the current project seems to be the main thing when recruiting project leaders. One way to make it easier for companies finding a consultant who is suitable can be to focus more on promoting the individual project leader, for instance presenting previous projects the project leaders have been involved in and what special knowledge and competences the project leader possesses. Further, if there is a wish to attract broad customers it can be recommended to have project leaders employed who are directed towards different areas and have different specialist knowledge. It is also important to notice that all consultants from a company not automatically are comprised of the same opinion even though they work at the same place.

As the competition is increasing in consequence of more and more companies providing project management services it will become more important for project leaders to show documented education and to be certificated, and to carry on further development of the company's project leaders. However, one of the most essential conclusions from this research is that the personality is more important than anything else and is the determining factor when choosing a project leader.

Next to the personal qualities is experience the factor that determines the choice of project leader. An important part of developing from one's experiences is to reflect upon and learn from prior projects. It is significant to find out what the customer appreciated and considered could have been done better or in a different way. A way for inexperienced project leaders to "acquire" experience is to learn from other project leaders. It is therefore recommended to find ways for exchanging and sharing experience and knowledge, for instance through workshops.

Communication can indeed be seen as a cornerstone in project leadership and is the strongest cause of both successful and unsuccessful projects. More or less all of the tasks a project leader must accomplish in order to be successful are connected with communication. It is also the foremost factor where training is required among the employees and to constantly seeking to find new and better ways to communicate in projects is a recommendation.

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Intervjuguide

Namn: **Datum:**

Projektledarerfarenhet: **Position:**

Projektledarrollen

1. Vad anser du vara det unika med projektledare, jämfört med andra typer av chefer och ledare?

2. Vilken anser du vara projektledarens huvudsakliga roll?

3. Har du märkt någon förändring vad gäller projektledarrollen och dess arbetsuppgifter på senare år?

Egenskaper och kompetenser

4. Vilken anser du vara den största utmaningen med att jobba som projektledare?

5. Vad utmärker en duktig, "över genomsnittet", projektledare? Några egenskaper en projektledare bör ha? Någon speciell ledarstil som är önskvärd hos projektledare?

6. *Chef*: Är det huvudsakligen de "hårda"(planering, budgetering, teknisk kunskap etc.) eller "mjuka"(kommunikation, konflikthandtering, motivera gruppen etc.) delarna inom projektledning ni önskar förbättring inom hos projektledarna? Vad specifikt är det som bör förbättras?

7. Känner du att det finns områden/delar av din yrkesroll där du skulle vilja ha mer kunskap eller träning?
Är det framför allt inom de "mjuka" delarna (kommunikation, konflikthantering etc) eller de "hårda" delarna (planering, budgetering etc)?

8. När under projekt anser du att projektledaren är som mest betydelsefull, för utgången av projektet?

9. Finns det något generellt misstag projektledare gör vid projekt som drar över deadline/överskrider budget? När i projekten begås oftast misstag?

Projektledare och makt

10. Har du märkt att det är svårt att som projektledare att säkra nödvändiga resurser och få de befogenheter som behövs för att utföra ett bra arbete?

11. *(Chef:* Vad får dig att uppmärksamma och prioritera ett speciellt projekt och projektledare?)

12. Hur ska en projektledare agera för att skaffa sig trovärdighet och informell makt, både gentemot chefer/kravställare respektive medarbetare i sitt team?

13. Har du märkt någon förändring under de år du varit verksam som projektledare vad gäller statusen på projektledaryrket?

14. Övriga synpunkter på projektlederi och hur framtiden kan komma att se ut?

Intervjuguide

Namn: **Datum:**

Projektledarerfarenhet: **Position:**

Projektledarrollen

15. Vad anser du vara det unika med projektledare, jämfört med andra typer av chefer och ledare?

16. Vilken anser du vara projektledarens huvudsakliga roll? Vad tycker du ska ingå/inte ingå i en projektledares arbetsuppgifter?

Egenskaper och kompetenser

17. Vilken anser du vara den största utmaningen för projektledare?

18. Vad utmärker en duktig, "över genomsnittet", projektledare? Några egenskaper en projektledare bör ha? Någon speciell ledarstil som är önskvärd hos projektledare?

19. Finns det något generellt misstag projektledare gör vid projekt som drar över deadline/överskrider budget? När i projekten begås oftast misstag?

20. När under projekt anser du att projektledaren är mest betydelsefull (för utgången av projektet)?

21. Vad fungerar bra/dåligt med de konsulter som jobbar/har jobbat som projektledare hos er?

22. Är det huvudsakligen de "hårda"(planering, budgetering, teknisk kunskap etc.) eller "mjuka"(kommunikation, konflikthandtering, motivera gruppen etc.) delarna inom projektledning ni önskar förbättring inom hos projektledarna? Vad specifikt är det som bör förbättras?

Val och rekrytering av projektledare

23. Vilken är den viktigaste faktorn vid valet av projektledare? Vad är det som söks hos projektledare?

24. Vad får dig att uppmärksamma och prioritera ett speciellt projekt och projektledare? Hur ska en projektledare agera för att skaffa sig trovärdighet och informell makt, både gentemot chefer/kravställare respektive medarbetare i sitt team?

25. Är det av betydande vikt om projektledaren är dokumenterat utbildad inom projektledning?

26. Är det av betydande vikt om företaget ni anställer konsulten genom bedriver kontinuerlig vidareutveckling av dess projektledare?

27. Hur bedömer du projektledare som har förmåga att kommunicaera med, och förstå andra kulturer (såsom Indien, Östra Asien, Östeuropa mm)? Vilka är de största fallgroparna för er där idag? Om det är missförstånd i kommunikationen, ge gärna exempel.

28. Vad avgör om ni ska anställa samma konsult igen?

Framtidens projektledare

29. Har du märkt någon förändring vad gäller projektledarrollen och dess arbetsuppgifter på senare år?

30. Vad tror du om framtiden, vad kommer önskas av projektledarna, vilka kompetenser kommer vara önskvärda? Kan du se om projektledarnas roll kommer att förändras på något sätt?

31. Övriga synpunkter på projektlederi och hur framtiden kan komma att se ut?