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IKEA

COMPLETION WEEK TO GET THE JOB DONE FAST

– **“During this week, we shall complete eleven important issues in order to be able to implement one global concept for Home Delivery. We’ve got a long way to go, and a short time to get there”.**

The sound-track from Smokey and the Bandit would have been the appropriate theme music as Helene Söderström and Fredrik Grönlund described the assignment to 25 selected experts from IKEA in Europe and North America. The cooperation between IKEA and MiL Institute has been named “Completion Week”.

In organizations, much work today is done in parallel projects, in complex matrices and competence networks. Important tasks and necessary changes live their lives in a roll-out plan in Excel, their ultimate goals to be reached three years later. People are torn between different priorities and projects, day-to-day business and everything else they need to deal with. This is often the reason behind their inability to participate in booked meetings, gather sufficient facts, or why they lack time for analysis. It may often be tempting to take “short cuts”, leading to poor quality of the final result. It creates a feeling of not having enough time and never really getting the job done.

Not so seldom, we grow tired of our own visions, losing touch with the pervading idea. As we “start up” our projects over and over again, we build obstacles that need to be overcome. Concentrating competence, commitment, and attention into one focal point and, for one week, not doing anything else but getting the job done, has the potential of creating enormous savings in time, with high commercial values. Moreover, witnessing such quick and substantial results also creates huge satisfaction.



Helene Söderström and Fredrik Grönlund took inspiration from the way Samsung pursues product development as they developed “Completion Week” together with MiL.

– *“As managers of Supply chains, we watched the Week with great interest and were very curious about how the concept would work. Particularly, since we had been working with several of these issues for a rather long time”, says Mats Rignell at IKEA, and continues:*

– *“Our agendas are constantly being torn to pieces, which sometimes makes us lose the feeling that we actually deliver! This is one of the best solutions I have seen so far at IKEA dealing with complex issues that need to be taken care of in a short time. As soon as we implement it, we’ll have the final proof.”*

To break patterns takes courage and inspiration, fresh ideas, and drive. Helene and Fredrik took a risk when they developed and tested a new work method to “get the job done”.

– *“To me, this is what makes IKEA what it is. To do it differently, to have the courage to take an inspired risk” says Jonas Janebrant, from MiL Institute, responsible for implementing Completion Week.*



Goal Focus Gives Results

In order to solve eleven complex issues, you need clear goals. MiL's assignment was to help concretize the goals and design the process to make it possible to work with the issues in an efficient way. One success factor, according to MiL's coach Per Hugander, was the fact that there was a clear purpose, that every issue had a clear owner and a clearly defined goal.

– “Each day and night, we worked with three issues simultaneously. Three issue owners had unrestricted access to all the people in the room for 24 hours. This made the framework and the tasks crystal clear, as well as what the central idea was. Our task was to create the right conditions for those present to concentrate on getting the job done.”

Earning while learning

All eleven issues that were dealt with during the Week were solved.

According to Fredrik, the Week will save IKEA up to 20 million Euros, and also increase its customer service.

– “I am proud and impressed, but not really surprised that we reached the high goals we had set.”

Helene points out that the main purpose of the Week was to assure the capacity for continued growth.



Maurizio (Italy) och Eileen (United States) “move” their issue into goal on the “Progress Map”.

– “To achieve our goal of 100% growth every five years, a transportation and logistics system adapted to such an expansion becomes crucial. We may otherwise become an obstacle to growth ourselves.”

Simplicity as a virtue

The creation of clarity and simplicity was central to the success of Completion Week. Not a lot of fuss, the challenge was to simplify, not to complicate. Several classical and well-tested methods, such as Open Space, reflecting teams, and café discussions were combined with spontaneous exercises wholly adapted to the process. Guided reflection and feedback gave many of the group members a greater insight into leadership and group processes, as well as how they themselves function

in group situations. This contributed to the efficient solution of the issues but, as several of the participants indicated, it also created an additional value on the individual level. Not only did they get the job done, but they were also given tools and methods to increase efficiency within their own groups at home.

For more information about Completion Week, please contact Jonas Janebrant at MiL Institute jonas.janebrant@milinstitute.se

