



What if our basic beliefs that
managing = managers,
organization = hierarchy,
motivation = incentives
are not correct?

What if a **non-hierarchical form of organizing** would prove superior for both performance and employee well-being?

Starting point: Observation that an increasing number of successful companies have abandoned the traditional hierarchical model of organizing, and embraced a new, non-hierarchical form – and others want to follow.

Research streams

Being non-hierarchical

Ethnographic fieldwork and interviews in pioneer companies already embracing the new ways of working to understand

- How do successful non-hierarchical companies engage people and networks?
- How to provide the conditions for successful work and performance of personnel?
- What are the systemic effects that sustain foresight and resilience?

3 companies to be observed

- Reaktor (IT-industry)
- Company B (services)
- *To be added*

Becoming non-hierarchical

High-participation action research, interviews and observation with companies wanting to transform to understand

- How can the new ways of working be applied or transformed into traditional business environments?
- How does the implementation journey look and feel like?
- What concretely changes in frontline work, performance and employee well-being?

4 companies to work with

- Company C (IT-industry)
- Company D (media industry)
- Company E (home nursing)
- Organization F (public sector)

Expected outcome: Academic and practical knowledge on the essential elements of a non-hierarchical organization and the ways to reach the state.

- KONE & Stora Enso as first industrial partners to test learnings with

Who are we

Collaboration¹ of three Finnish University research teams



- Markku Wilenius
- Sofi Kurki
- Marko Ahvenainen



Aalto-yliopisto

- Lauri Pietinalho
- Olli Salo



- Minna Pura
- + external advisors

Timing of the research

Phase 1 (Spring 2015)

- Identification of participating companies
- Interviews, observation at Reaktor & other non-hierarchical companies
- Action research with first companies becoming non-hierarchical begins
- Kick-off collaboration forums

Phase 2: (Fall 2015)

- Preliminary findings published
- Workshops and collaboration forums

Phase 3: (Spring 2016)

- Publication of results & tools

Current thinking

- What we want to **achieve**
 - Kick-start a change towards using non-hierarchical forms of organizing across industries in Finland
 - E.g., Help Finnish home nursing companies adopt Buurtzorg model
 - Create scientific, tested and practical knowledge on how to make the transition from hierarchical to non-hierarchical forms of organizing to enable this change at scale
- What is **essential** in non-hierarchical organizations
 - Fundamentally different view on human nature: humans are inherently good and intelligent (vs. lazy and to be controlled)
 - Absence of hierarchy does not mean anarchy and chaos if done right: specific practices around self-organizing, collaborative direction setting, intrinsic motivation and culture control are needed

Contact the team



You can reach the team through

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¹ Finland Futures Research Centre and Hanken are organized together in a TEKES project Human Being and Value in the Sixth Wave (HUVA) 2015-2016