

So what is your role in the organisation and in regards to MS2 XFT

So I am the department manager so there are four sections and MS2 team is located in one of the sections within my department.

And what are your key responsibilities, key tasks that you do during your work?

My key task is to make... to manage the leadership team the managers there are responsible for the different sections. To make sure that we develop products according to the need, the backlog we have basically. And to make sure that personal is developing their competences and make sure that they have the environment they need to develop the software and to remove all kinds of obstacles that might arise. I am also responsible for setting the strategy for the future of the department how we evolve and what kind of direction we go into.

And how are your responsibilities different from the Section Managers? Do they overlap or are they completely different?

It is kind of delegated responsibility I am having the role for the whole department including the sections and of course I delegate the responsibility for the sections to the section managers. I don't know if you want to go into the details basically but I mean the role of the manager is to first of all manage their staff and section managers they have their responsibility for their staff. So they are setting salaries, developing competence and all that, approving vacations, taking care of sick leaves and all that stuff. That's the responsibility of the section managers. And then when it comes to all this part about removing impediments and so on whenever there is, we try to distribute the responsibility as low as in the organisation as possible so if it's possible for one section manager to solve any impediment or competence need within that section then that manager does that. And when that's not possible then we have to solve that on a department level or even higher up so that's that kind of relation we have. So it's kind of distributed, overlapping responsibility for sure but we need to deal with problems on different levels basically. And then when it comes to the strategic responsibility: I have not delegated that. It is hard to do on a distributed way, you need to align on strategies so that's something.

And have you worked here before the transformation towards agile?

Yes, long time ago but I joined here, when I joined this organisation it was to start the agile transformation.

So your responsibilities have been the same before the transformation?

Depends on what you mean but I've been working here in Lindholmen in other organisations before and then I've been away from Lindholmen working in other parts of Ericsson and came back and when I came back, this was my role all the time so to say.

Do you see any obstacles with the organisation and how it is structured? Any obstacles that can hinder the transformation towards agile - maybe some parts

are incompatible?

I think we have done some changes since we started. We have done some changes in order to better support the transformation. I see that we are facing obstacles right now that we will or are planning to deal with. If there are... connected to the agile way of working? Let me think about that, that's... So what we are looking at right now is, we are trying to find the balance in the agile transformation. What we have done is pretty much establishing cross-functional teams, getting a broad competence base so that the teams can be efficient or at least effective in developing software across different products basically. So that has been the focus and what we are seeing right now is that we have some what we lost, we assume that the product skills and the deeper competence would always be there because that's what we came from so when we did the transformation we focused on getting this broad and cross view in. And what we are seeing now is that we are losing that depth that product depth and that's what we are seeing that this organisation does not really support.

Why are you losing it?

Because I think the agile way of working... lets see here. The feature focus that we have introduced is so much stronger, we have so many forces in the feature way. So much focus is on getting features out on time and there is not room, not much room for us to deal with the products. The products, if you introduce a lot of features, the code and the architecture gets worse. It is harder and harder to introduce new features and that's not, we've not been that good in creating some kind of balance, some balance in force in that. And that's I think in the way we have organised ourselves and that's something we are actually in the mix of changing right now. Yeah, I think I see some problems. I am not sure if its related to agile or not but it's related on how we implemented this agile transformation.

What are the roles you normally communicate with during your work? If lets say you pick 3-5?

I deal with the section managers, project managers and the OPOs. Those are my main interfaces.

And how are the different in their topics you discuss with them?

Yes, very much. I mean section manager, I don't know if you probably seen in you heat map. I mean it is kind of a... If we take the OPOs and the project managers that communication is very much operative, is very much related to the work that the teams are doing and that goes also for some point for the section managers. So the section managers are coaching the teams, right. But then the section managers also have a second role to manage their personal, their staff and that is a different type of... and that's not so operational then. So there... are two sides for me that I need to manage basically. And I don't really know what you are asking here for. So we have the section manager and that's a lot about planning vacations to remove impediments to add competence training and all that stuff. And then we have to team coaching which is much more direct where we talk about individual teams, how they are performing and what type of stops they have. OPOs then, that's where I talk about how the teams are doing what and when and in what order and when I

talk to the project managers that's more on a release basis for a longer period of time or when it happens in another part of, I mean the project is not the only run using my resources but those are the resources I need to do that type of coordination for with the project managers.

And how would you describe the information and feedback sharing between those roles? From them to you, from you to them? Is it sufficient? How do you decide?

I think it can always be better.

Anything in particular which could be better?

I think we have this triangle, information triangle or I don't know how to, maybe it is not even a triangle. But it's, the OPO talks to project managers and I talk to the project managers and I talk to the OPOs and I also talk to my manager so we have this parallel - it's not a triangle maybe - parallel communication and sometimes information travels faster. Sometimes the same information travels and sometimes into different speeds and sometimes information is only flowing one path. So that's where we sometimes end up in situations sometimes we don't really understand what happens different sides. I don't think no one is to blame more than the others. It's a result of the structure.

Does that mean some part knows and basically another part doesn't?

Exactly.

And later kind of...

Yeah.

So there is no communication directly?

There is but I mean it's a timing thing, right. So if somebody knows and it travels this path but it hasn't started this path. There is always, information always spreads anyway so rumours starts. It can be the result that we have this cycles of meeting we have it can be that information starts on Monday and then we have to do something on Thursday and then there is a time where there is rumours, right? Between Monday and Thursday and then when you meet on Thursday cause it's not so important, it's not the type of information that you call everybody: let's discuss this. But you wait. And then the information might already be there but slightly distorted, right? So that's the situation instead. Of course quite a bit...

Any way to get around it?

That would be, I mean. That would be in that case to have a different organisational structure I would say cause otherwise I think you always have that. I mean it's a cross-functional organisation we are in basically and when you have that you always have that problem I would say.

And what kind of difficulties does it bear for XFTs?

For XFTs. I think what happens a lot is that you have this distorted information and some team has heard something and some team has not. And then when it involves some kind of change then people don't really know what to trust because these guys have heard it but these guys haven't and you know we should do this but instead the way it should be and they don't know if it is distorted or if it is correct information until it has been communicated properly. So I think a lot of times we get this, I mean a lot of times when we get this problem then we get this uncertainty which is not good in the organisation for the XFTs I would say. Is this the way, a lot of times it is about priorities, what should we, I mean we constant, we are constantly in a situation where we have more work than we can actually manage and sometimes priorities are changed and a lot of times when we should turn in another direction or change the priority of something and that's when you get into the situations where people are not sure what is valid really - where should we go.

And know since XFTs have lots of responsibilities and you kind of empower the XFTs. Does it affect your work in any way? How does it affect your work?

My work?

Yeah.

I think my work is to make sure that the teams always have a clear understanding of where we should go. I am a part of that structure and the time when they are unsure is basically waste. So if we have decided to make a change, the longer it takes until the change is actually done. I mean, I don't know how to put it but we want to minimise that line basically but it's a big organisation and, so we always have to work with that.

And you mentioned by pushing a lot of responsibilities down or you try to keep them as low as possible is that always good or is that sometimes also troublesome?

Yeah, yes of course it's... For the XFTs I think, we want to have the responsibility as low as possible but at the same time we have product and an architecture that is in need of coordination - very much coordination. And the work that we do and the features that we do are large and you need many XFTs to actually achieve the wanted result. So it is not always possible to distribute the responsibility very low. And I think that's an expectation, I mean there is an expectation within the team that they should have more delegated responsibilities than we have actually been able to give the teams.

But there are reasons for why they don't get those responsibilities they'd expect?

Yeah, because it is big and complex. I think we would all love to have a smaller world for the teams so they can make the right decisions by themselves and sometimes that is possible but not always. So it is a thing we have to live with - I think.

And how is it different between OPOs and your view towards the product. Is it in conflict in any way because the OPO is responsible for the products as well, right.

I think the OPOs are responsible for distributing the work and not so much the products actually so the OPOs they have a backlog and their job is to analyse the backlog and see what team should do... I mean maybe break down items in the backlog and see what team should do what part actually. And then we have section managers and project guardians that are appointed to actually take responsibility for the product itself then. So the OPOs are in this force that focuses on developing features and that I talked before. And the product responsibility and the balancing has so far been done with product guardians and the section managers then.

And if you take a kind of a step back and look at the organisation as a whole and different departments: do you think communication between them is bad or is it good?

In the whole department?

...or even further between departments.

Yeah I think we have a quite good, I think the information flow or communication is good enough within the department but then we have this sister department which is DF, the other department here at Lindholmen. There we would like to see more and better communication. They are two different programs with two different time horizons and also two different types of work that needs to be done. One is very customer focused here and now and one is future in the benefit of Ericsson. So there we had a need, cause having two different programs means communication is going in a program direction and the line are the ones who are trying to balance that to make sure that we work together. But that's something that we need to improve.

What would be major benefits of working better together is it overlaps?

Yes, I mean we share the same product so to say. So we need to coordinate one team in my organisation can do work that kind of destroys for another team in the other organisation if they don't know what they are trying to achieve and what goes on. Sorry, what was the question?

Just the communication between departments and what the benefits would be as I wanted to know if it's the same product or code even at times.

Yes.

...and there are redundancies maybe.

Yeah, so we need to synchronise this. I mean we will always have to live with as long as these two products we will always have to live with the different needs from the two projects and programs but we still have the same product. We have taken the strategic decision to keep this as one piece of software really. Because we believe it would be too costly to have two different versions of it. That's a price for that as well.

And what do you think about your communication with the XFT? From you to

them and from them back to you. Do you think it is efficient or would you like to see more maybe less?

I think I don't communicate that much at least, as you probably have seen from that heat map and I try to keep it that way actually. Other than informal, I try to be present informally but not, I don't like to shortcut the section managers so that is my view of how it should work but I try to be present in the organisation and sometimes listen in and talk to people you know. Try to see what's going on but the formal communication I don't ever go in there.

Okidok, time is up.