

Interview PAF12 on 19 June 2018 at Company A.

## **Q1: Supervisor**

Lead interviewer

first of all are you a supervisor

PAF12

what do you mean by supervisor

Lead interviewer

do you regularly give feedback to someone or do you regularly receive feedback

PAF12

I do both but it is more regular to give feedback nowadays but I'm not a manager I don't have personnel responsibility, I'm not in charge of personnel I'm more in charge of technology and disciplines

Lead interviewer

so you're more used to giving feedback and receiving feedback

PAF12

Yes

## **Q2: Effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

so thinking of the time that you gave effective feedback can you describe a situation like that for us

PAF12

[effective – receiver]

I can give you an example of when I received effective feedback because I just remembered one. I switched from a more technical position to a more.. to this position very much. there was a situation in where a team was trying to make a decision they were fire fighting but not only that they were also having disagreements with another company and pretty much the technical team were having a situation that they needed to manage and I used to work with that team so when they reached out I helped them. and then we had a meeting with the people at the level I am working with to figure out what to do and I mean the meeting went well but

after that one of these persons he called me first he asked me if I was upset with him because he overruled one of my ideas and I said I was not I mean I understood why he was doing it. but his point which is why it was most effective feedback I ever got in this transition was that what I did was good given what I had been doing before for that team but in the new role I cannot just sit down and work with them I had to let them fail if that's what it takes I have to just give them the high-level feedback and ask the hard questions and pretty much teach them how to work but not sit down with them and I am pretty good at doing that as well but in this case it was I realised that it was also a little bit about my feelings I realise they were really getting into a failure if I did not jump in but it was not really my role anymore so I had to learn that and that was probably very effective the way he said it. because first of all I respect him which is partly why I think it was effective and second of all he pointed out what I did right and what I did wrong and why it matters in this case.

Lead interviewer

so he gave you concrete examples of how you should behave or act in the specific situation

PAF12

not concrete examples it's more like or pretty much reminding me that in my new position I have to think of the big picture and do not get too involved in small details with this people.

Lead interviewer

so he gave you very specific advice

PAF12

yes in this case he was yes I would say

Lead interviewer

how long ago was this approximately

PAF12

it was probably 6 months ago perhaps

Lead interviewer

and this was in your previous job was it

PAF12

it was in a transition period

Lead interviewer

So were you adhering to this team at the time, did you belong to this team at that time or did you just come back for this one instance.

PAF12

no the point is that I am pretty much representing the person who is in charge of the discipline of geophysics so pretty much anything that has to do with geophysics is my problem which is a lot. this was a particular situation that actually it was quite difficult to navigate and it took us a few weeks to figure out. it was a particular situation with a team that I used to work with before, that is why I said that that feelings had something to do with it because I knew it was not their choice to be in that situation they have been doing a very good job but they were in this situation or they were put in a bad situation and it was a conflict between different persons and different companies and it was not really their fault and I felt for them and that is the reason I came in and said ok and I have a tendency when I see that nobody in that room will be able to solve something fast I will just do it. but the transition was exactly that that yes I can do it but I cannot keep doing that and still focus on the whole discipline so I have to let them do it and maybe even let them fail sometimes. so it didn't feel that good (laughing) because it hard because I don't want them to fail they are good people so (laughing)

Note taker

so you came in with a fix

PAF12

Yes

Note taker

If you had taken a hands off approach do you actually feel now that they would have actually got there in the end or do you feel that they would have actually failed and have to try again.

PAF12

not in that time because they only had when they came to me it was two days before we had to sign and I mean the situation is that I am one of the persons who had been working on that technology for a long time there is a certain technology there were seven technologies included in this situation but everything was being handled by the group and there has been negotiations and discussions like two or three months before that time and I overheard what was going on but then an external company came and added this technology where very few people have experience and I have been handling that technology for 2-3 years both in research and in operations, let's call it that way, so when they came in with that I was one that could steer it to a way that it mattered to us and if I was to teach them or figure out who was to take over this in the team there was none of them that had the experience in this so that's why my first impulse was ok we have two days to take this decision all these people had been working for months and now this comes as an extra last minute and I just felt that I had to be

a help. the solution in the end was a combination between me helping and the more high level decision so it was not exactly black and white but yes that's exactly what it was. it's very complex it was maybe not the best example (laughing).

Lead interviewer

no I think it was a good example, the feedback you got not steering them the entire way or letting them fail was that something you got after the situation had occurred or was it in the middle of it.

PAF12

we had two days to solve a problem so it was at the end of the first day pretty much

Lead interviewer

so you could take that feedback on board and use it the next day

PAF12

yes pretty much. so at the end of the day we had to make some compromises but the final solution was in a sense the combination of the two decisions by going in to try to figure out how to change things from the inside and from this other high level position. we needed to finish this somehow and we had to agree to something. at the end of the day as I said, we had to because it was such a big complex thing that even if we were supposed to sign in 2 days we ended up signing in two weeks. at the end it got solved somehow but in a sense it gave me and I told that to this person that when I came in I knew we had very little time and I couldn't just ask them to do it because it was about asking people to learn something new but I also understood where he was coming from so I took it and I actually called him later to say that it really, for me, it was very important because as I said I had had several different roles but usually it's my own kingdom it's like I used to be project manager or having my own technology and I can use people from all kinds of different departments as long as I have my own people and I'm used to having or setting the rules. I am the person in charge and I am the person in the end of the day who will be blamed or not and my team are also in charge of their own part but at the end of the day I will protect them. and in this case I was in charge of a discipline it was not of a project so it was very important for me that he said that because it makes me think after that when I'm facing a situation what kind of role I really should have but also I still don't forget my skills so if I see that there is no skills then I tried to prevent it and ok sit down with someone and go through all the materials and then deal with extra work of letting someone else do the things that I could have done. it will take longer time and I am very impatient but that is not my job anymore so I have to just let it go and as I said his words were very important and I actually called him to say that.

Lead interviewer

so you have been able to use that advise later on

PAF12

yes exactly yes

#### **Q4: Ineffective Feedback**

Lead interviewer

so now we'd like you to think of a time that you gave or received ineffective feedback and give an example of that

PAF12

does it have to be ineffective all the way

Lead interviewer

not necessarily

PAF12

[ineffective – receiver]

ok, I can remember when I was on an internship a long time ago when I was doing my PhD, it was the first time I had to work... the internships are a two-way internship interview so you go for a couple of months, 2 to 4 months, to a company and that was in research so they give you a project or a program and you're supposed to solve it within that time. But it is really a two-way interview right, you're trying to show your best face so that they will send you an offer, and they are trying to show their best face so you will say something nice about their company. I did five internships and this was the second one, it was a person I really admired actually, in geophysics they are heroes in research, I used to be a physicist and my heroes were dead. I didn't know, at that time I had only done research and work in academia so even if it was my second internship it was the first time I was encountering something that was really completely new the second time actually and I think I didn't know myself very well. so the first month I was very slow and not understanding anything and he got a bit frustrated I remember which for me meant a lot because I really admired him and he said to me "maybe this is not something you can do" and in that moment I felt horrible. but at the end of the internship he said it was probably the best way of challenging me because it made me really demonstrate to him that I could do it. in hindsight he could have said it much better because it really threw me down but the good thing for me is after that I went to another country with the same company but a different mentor and this is a completely different type of mentoring. he was not expecting me to understand everything he was actually just letting me work but later I understood that what happens is when I am working on something new it takes me more or less a month to learn it and I am very stupid in that month extremely. then after a month I know everything because I read everything so I was confused and everything it was not nice I remember I did feel very bad for some time, but usually I take that energy and go the other way. on the other hand, it really let me learn how I work. I mean after and that with other internships I would warn my mentors I would say the first month I will not do anything but after that then I will do it so it helped in one way but it was not a nice experience.

Lead interviewer

can you describe in a little bit more detail of what he said to you, he said "you can't do it"

PAF12

yes he said perhaps you can not do this. this is a 4 month internship and this is the first month exactly

Lead interviewer

how did he say this to you exactly was it in a condescending tone or was it oh I'm so sorry.

PAF12

no he was worried, my advisor who used to be his supervisor as well, because I mentioned this to my advisor, we have a good relationship. he told me that maybe it was symptoms not only about me, or not that much about me not being able to deliver, because obviously it's the first month and you're supposed to learn a completely new theory and do something new and top of that and you really have to work really hard in those internships. my advisor what he thought it was, was maybe a reflection of him being worried about himself because if I failed then he would fail, it was a little bit of a special situation I was there because usually you only do the internships in the summer but he wanted me and he really wanted me to do an internship with him so he arranged for an internship in the fall and my advisor allowed that so pretty much that I didn't study for 6 months and he fixed it in a way that I would spend one month in Houston two months in London and then one months in Houston at the end. that was pretty rare pretty much no one has it as an intern and it was with two experts in this field the person in London and himself. so he was expecting a lot for me he's sold it to his company he sold the spending 2 months and the company flying me there and paying me everything for 2 months and working with this two persons. so he was expecting something from me and he was probably very concerned or something and maybe also his way of learning is different. he was not, he's only like 10 years older than me so he was still young at that time, now I see it, now we laugh a lot about it but I also think it was an experience for him that he might have had other type of students, or maybe had never really challenged because usually you do the internships in what you're doing in your PhD but he explicitly said that he wanted to give me a different experience so he actually had these projects that were completely new ideas. I mean honestly everything, well it was not a good moment but the experience was great in the end.

Lead interviewer

you said you laugh about it so you've spoken to him afterwards

PAF12

yes we are good friends. there is a lot of people I consider my mentors because you never really do anything by yourself and all of them are good friends nowadays. still in different situations but I consider them my friends

Lead interviewer

how long ago was this

PAF12

this was ages ago, this was exactly in 2006.

Lead interviewer

and when he gave you that negative statements did you challenge him back or...

PAF12

of course not. we stayed pretty late that day trying to go through theory and all that and when we were leaving or preparing to leave he said that and he was definitely disappointed and I was disappointed with myself because I wanted to be smart and show that I could do it. so I just went home and yeah (laughing)

Lead interviewer

Was this not necessarily formal, but was it a scheduled feedback session or was it just mentioned while you were working or what was the kind of context around the situation

PAF12

Well the idea was that I was going to spend this month in Houston and two months in London and it was just before I was going to London. I had been for that month pretty much reading everything, I coded it a little bit and I tried it to demonstrate - I could code it but some of these ideas you know in my world is where we question we have to understand where is the world coming from, is it going from, is it going up, or is it downward I'm given all these little details and to really understand something sometimes you have to picture it. so I was still missing that real feeling of how these really play in the real world I couldn't understand it. the equations were no problem, the codes were no problem. It was more really how it matters and how do these really behave in the real world and how can I extrapolate this idea and utilise it somewhere else. I was not really making those links and I think he had a way of understanding it's because he had been working with this for a while and I didn't and he was trying to make me explain it to him with words and I couldn't and I just felt very frustrated and he as well and the next day I was flying to London. I understand he was stressed about this but it was so good for me to have that flight. so of course I did not feel so good but it was good for me not to have to face him because if I had to face him the next day it would have been horrible and the next time I faced him it was already a success so it was not a problem when I came back. I mean also it showed me how different mentors work because when I went to London I was working with another person who actually is the person who invented this technology and this idea and he had a different a way of explaining it first and second he has not experienced me that first month so he has high expectations but he didn't challenge me so he just assumed that I understood and little by little I got it. Yeh, I am really happy I didn't have to face him right away that would have been very hard.

Lead interviewer

so you had this, let's just call it "less intelligent month" where you're learning all this stuff and taking it all in and understanding it, so you had this feeling during this period with this first guy that you knew you were not sort of performing up to his expectations so was that sort of a shock to you

PAF12

no I knew I was not performing up to my own expectations but as I said for me and that experience was great because after that I did another three internships and I knew exactly how I worked and even nowadays when I change jobs when I have moved from companies I used to move from research department at to another department that is when I was with Company A again I know exactly how I work. when I came last time to start all I work in a completely different technologies which are not originally in my field it is completely in physics but I told them the first month I am super slow and will not say anything but now I have the confidence because I know after a month of studying something I have a good understanding and I can keep going from there I get a good level very fast and when I change project I have volunteered sometimes for projects which has nothing to do with my expertise and I know exactly how it's going to happen. so for me as I said, in hindsight it was a very good experience it was just a hard way of learning it and I think he could have said things in a different way. he could have said the same thing like you know you really need to understand these or maybe read this and read that or something.

Lead interviewer

wrapped it up more prettily

PAF12

exactly but it helped you or it helped me when I work with people I also try and understand how they work because I don't want to have the experience of doing something like that to someone else

Lead interviewer

so something that he has done which you have experiences as uncomfortable you now feel that you do not want to do that, I want to be better than that

PAF12

yes I try to understand people who I'm working with especially researchers you have to understand the motivation how they take on a new idea whether they're interested in going into another field or not they are prima donnas. in research honestly we are, some researches will never go out of their comfort zone so then you have to work with that comfort zone, and some others are far more interested in learning something else and then you have to guide those depending on their seniority you might guide them take them by the hand and give them material to read and take some time and others you may have to let them do it by



themselves and take the time that they need to take but you need to understand the different people or at least that's the way that I work

Lead interviewer

so this experience you had as a junior researcher is something that you remember right now when you have junior researchers yourself you're cautious of how you treat them

PAF12

yes

Note taker

when you mentioned that you laugh about it today, do you know has he changed his way with junior researchers now

PAF12

I don't know but I remember when I gave my last presentation, he actually well I think he's trying to apologise but he ended up saying that if he had learned something that if you wanted me to really succeed he has to challenge me but then he also kind of laughed and everything and then kind of apologized for not believing and I told him you don't have to I said I understand where you're coming from because I was as worried as you were. I mean at that moment I was concerned about pulling this off, right. so I understood his feelings and he understood that it was not the best way of doing it either. so I assume he has had probably still every second year that's the standard in research so I'm sure he has taken it on somehow, I hope so but I really don't know because that is never really been a topic of conversation after that. or I would say, I presume, I have no clue

Note taker

when you say you felt that it helped you do you mean that it helped you because you understood how you worked but you didn't necessarily feel that it was the kick that you needed, that was not necessarily the trigger - it was just that "yes I take that time to digest things and then I go forward". so it didn't really necessarily help you in that actual project but it just made you aware of yourself

PAF12

in that moment it did not help me at all it actually just put me down and made me very concerned when I was flying to London when I was flying business to London I was thinking like they are going to spend all this money on me I will come back and it will be a disaster because he could not see it that's why I calling my advisor was the best thing I could do because my advisor knows him and when I told him this, my advisor, gave me the perspective you know what he has this concerns and my advisor has all the confidence in me so even if he didn't have it he expressed it which what I really needed so in a sense it could have been a disaster if I did not have someone to say yes you can do it and it's not about you it's about himself and what he is reflecting in those words and the fact that I had not this

mindset he just assumed that I was able to do the work and he just made me do the work and gave me data information presenting to people and I thought ok I have to do it but I knew I could do it, I mean I knew I would try to do it and I could deliver, I just didn't know myself enough to understand that I get that confused the first time I am with something so new to me. it has helped me a lot but honestly at that moment it could have been a disaster.

## **Q9: Demographics of participant**

Lead interviewer

I would like to ask you some personal questions just personal details really. what is your nationality

PAF12

Mexican

Lead interviewer

your line of education you have a PhD in geophysics

PAF12

No in physics regular physics, but I work in geophysics so it's ok

Lead interviewer

you have already given us a lot of details about these situations that you have been in but we would just like to probe little bit further, so what age are you right now

PAF12

39

Lead interviewer

so 6 months ago 38 and a half. this is effective situation you talked about was that 10 years ago

PAF12

that was like 12 now probably it was 2006, so I was 27

Lead interviewer

and at that time you were currently completing your PhD

PAF12

no I was doing my PhD I was a PhD candLead interviewerte so I have completed my masters

Lead interviewer

this was an internship was it the first time you were in that company

PAF12

it was the first time I was in that company but it was the second time of internship in the industry so it was another company I was with before

Lead interviewer

for the effective feedback situation how long have you been with the company at that time

PAF12

for the student thing? Ah company I have been in this company for 5 years

Lead interviewer

and you switch position is quite frequently

PAF12

yes I do switch positions in companies quite frequently for every 3 years more or less get restless

### **Q10: Demographics of effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

how long have you been working this person who gave you the effective feedback

PAF12

working with him - never

Lead interviewer

so he was a complete new person to you

PAF12

no no it was a very different situation I knew him quite well we were both in different companies I was in a service company and he was an oil company. we met through a

common colleague or a common person a colleague or friend in a conference and we kind of just knew each other. and when I came here he wrote me when I came to start here even if I was in a research centre, he talked to me to say he was happy I was just here and we kind of just initiated a relationship but then because of his position he was in charge of one of the areas where I was delivering or my team was delivering some projects so every now and then we would have technical discussions and after I moved here I was working on one line and he was pretty much vice president of another line but he often asked me to help him with his projects or challengers or situations. usually a person will ask when there's something to be solved and I end up working pretty much unofficially equal times with his team, my team and research. so we have probably never necessarily work together but I have more like advise him on his projects or sometimes when there is some specific technology we discussed that technology or the research behind it so we trust each other. But I do feel he has been in between a friend and a mentor in different situations especially the last 3 years.

Lead interviewer

it's good that you're sort of going into describing this person because that's our next topic. these people that you've been talking about so let's start with the effective feedback person, who's a male is he Norwegian

PAF12

no he is American

Lead interviewer

what ethnic group is he

PAF12

ooh I would say white, I have no clue

Lead interviewer

and does he have a PhD

PAF12

yes he has a PhD in geophysics I think I'm not sure

Lead interviewer

and he had been with Company A for a long time

PAF12

no he was probably 8-9 years

## **Q11: Demographics of ineffective feedback**

Lead interviewer

and now I would like to ask you the same questions for the person giving the ineffective feedback

PAF12

he was a male maybe around 10 years older than me, he was Canadian, white (laughing), PhD in geophysics

Lead interviewer

you might not know how long you've been with that company

PAF12

in that company yeah at that time he has around 7 years

Lead interviewer

the level of seniority in that company not just over you

PAF12

7 years in research, in research in this world when you come in a technical position and you can still become a senior principle or a senior principal but that is really just a title you just really do your research so you had a certain degree of seniority because he is very recognised in the industry and he could get an intern every summer so that's already giving you certain status he was probably a senior at that time I guess.

## **Q12: Subjective perception of similarity of effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

And thinking about these two people we would like you to think of a scale between 1 and 10 where one is totally dissimilar and 10 is very similar and if you could rate the person that gave you the effective feedback on how similar or dissimilar you are on a scale from 1 to 10

PAF12

I would say something around 7

### **Q13: Subjective perception of similarity of ineffective feedback**

Lead interviewer

and for the ineffective one

PAF12

it's hard to tell, 6 I would say

### **Q14: Basis on subjective rating**

Lead interviewer

and when I ask you this question what sort of factors did you consider did you think about the personality, gender, nationality

PAF12

oh no I don't think about those things well personality yes, not gender not nationality not ethnicity, that doesn't have anything to do with it. it's a little bit about like with the first person it's about ambition reality check, that you stop several times in your life and wonder whether you're really capable of what you want to do, the kind of mentoring part because he in a sense he became and I told him that these last three years he became some sort of a mentor at the same time that we have this friendship and we sometimes work together, and that you did voluntarily which is something that I do when I see some potential in someone I will voluntarily kind of try to help them out in their career. so it's about the skills it's about how he's very well recognised in industry, he has made good technical contributions presentation skills things like that. it's a little bit about that kind of things

Lead interviewer

how you see the world and how you relate to people

PAF12

yes we have worked in difference places different countries and different companies and all these things and that kind of background and also you can laugh at yourself. You can sometimes just relax and don't worry about what's going to happen, even though you do worry but you can take some time and just timeout. I think he cares he cares about himself as much as he cares about others and that's something I like and appreciate. the other person I would say about 6 because I think the personality is a little bit more different. he has this less approachable personality I mean he will allow you to become friends and he can be very nice and very normal but he has more of an introvert type of personality and I can understand both because the other one is very extrovert. because in situations like if you put me in a party and I only know one person in the party then I am the introvert person in the corner and didn't speak to anyone until someone talks to me I cannot do it but if you put me in the same party and I know 50% of the persons I'm probably the most extroverted person in the world. so I can kind of understand both types. but the other one is very..., very thorough if he knows

something he knows something and he will really go into the details and that is something also that I tend to do and it has served me but it also it is part of your personality because you don't go into all the details unless you really want to understand them because a lot of times it will not really pay back.

Note taker

which one was the detail orientated the one that was ineffective

PAF12

yes but he was also, I mean, the thing is he was also caring as I said I mean he did that kind of thing he said those things but also I think it was the day before that or one of those days, he used to, when we were in the that first month, he used to call me sometimes just saying let's go for a walk and we will go for a walk and he would teach me a little bit about what he was doing for example he wanted to move to London and he was telling me that it's very up to your manager even though I wanted to so he was telling me how he was playing the strategy and discussing things and bringing this idea because he wanted to have this rotation and he did also something very critical that is that he told me one day if I was serious about my career in this industry I needed to understand history and he recommended me a book with 800 pages and I read it. it really helps you to understand the big picture so he cares and he usually goes to my talks to this day because he enjoys sitting there but I do the same I go to his talks and we have this kind of caring relationship. so it was a bad situation but he is a person who really wants to, he wants to transcend himself somehow not just be good at what you're doing and get there but also help other people go to that to reach their own dreams.

Lead interviewer

so it was not meant in a bad way when he told you what he did

PAF12

no as I said I think it was really something..., I believe more the story of my advisor that it was a situation where he felt stressed and may be worried for himself and expressed it in the wrong way. so I have no hard feelings for that.

## **Q15: General comments on feedback**

Note taker

when you're speaking about they are your mentors, it sounds like in your world mentorship goes both ways you become his mentor in some ways because they call upon you for advice occasionally so it's not a one way street at all

PAF12

yes I think especially the first one was my mentor because that's the way it is called usually when you're doing internship in research because the person you work with is not your manager there's another person who's your manager and the idea is there supposed to be

mentors. they are supposed to give you this kind of advice like read this book or something extra like when you write an email you need to be careful because everyone will read it - it is written. these little details that give you this business making more understand that it's not only especially in physics or research it is not only the equations that you code it's also the way that you present yourself how you present these to your manager versus your colleagues because it's a complete different story because writing an equation to your manager has no meaning when writing to your colleagues it has a meaning right so you are supposed to do that and I was quite fortunate because in these 5 internships pretty much I had I would say I had for mentors because one of them was really this is your project and be happy with it but all the others really got involved so in that time of my life they were definitely having that role. and as time has passed by it is more like we are colleagues we are at the same level we are friends and pretty much with all of them I developed a friendship kind of industry friendship so we see each other at conferences we write an email when we need something we know the other person is there and you can trust that person and you can also ask for advice either way. so yeah but in that moment he was definitely a mentor situation.

Note taker

and the one that was not a mentor has he also become a friend

PAF12

yes we are very good friends

Note taker

and also now you use each other to get advise

PAF12

yes but he is definitely much more senior than I am not only about age in this case it is also about experience and position so he definitely has more to teach me in terms of... I helped him a lot or I teach him the technical part so when he needs something because he has been in this big position for a long time and sometimes there is there's something new that is coming that keeps coming his way and he doesn't understand it so sometimes he asks me can you explain it to me so I have to read the whole thing (laughing) and sit down and explain it to him so I play that role not exactly mentoring but I play that role and when he comes about more of the work situation he usually has more experience then I have so in that situation it's a little bit of both but each one contributes with a different part of the equation in a sense.

Lead interviewer

you work with a lot of people from different countries and different places do you notice a between the feedback culture in all for example from Houston to London to Norway from Canadians to Americans



PAF12

yes definitely. there is no real culture in mentoring in Norway and that's something that actually someone told me someone from the US actually said they are only worry about me taking this new role with that I may not get the proper mentoring to really get further in my career in Norway. and that is true. it is not very common to it's not a culture mentoring, it is not a culture of... it's very different culture.

Lead interviewer

if you try to seek out feedback from your official mentor will you get it

PAF12

there are no Mentors. well for example when I was an intern I did two internship at Company A and they were quite good and I developed a friendship with the person who was my mentor in that time but if you compare, I went for example with Shell first and I came to Shell and people would stop in my office just asked me how I was doing what I was doing I was a new face, what are you working on "oh you need to talk to this person" and they take you by the hand they overwhelm you with help and information and teach you and they want you to see that you are there that you were there and maybe that is just in Shell that's a Shell culture but also they really want you to succeed and it's random people besides your mentor when I came to Company A right after that the person I was going to work with give me a project and he told me I'm leaving tomorrow I'm going to be on holLead interviewery for 15 days, that's mentoring in Norway. and I was like ok, not because I needed much help, but it was a new project I knew how I work by then but still it was an open project and my way of working is also reading a little bit what the other person expect you might not understand a problem in the first description and he had some ideas of how he wanted to solve it and I chose not to solve it with any of those ideas because that was not my strengths I say we were different paths and I was worried when he came back because I did not follow any of his ideas it went pretty well. but it was not never at the level of mentoring that I got another countries.

Note taker

you mentioned that in Shell there was random people that came up that didn't happen in Company A.

PAF12

no of course not they didn't even talk to me first month even at lunch they would not talk to me they were talking to each and even if I tried to talk to them. I would ask them and they were to put example I would say you're talking about University because I heard "universitet" or something and they would say yes and then they would continue to talk in Norwegian. so I started to skipping lunch, so it's a completely different culture the only reason I came back that time was because it was very effective because you didn't talk to anyone so who do a lot of work and it made me quite famous one of the research works that I did, the research project I was worried about made me quite famous because it was a hit topic at that time and I got a different solution and a different understanding than the others in the industry so I thought yes it's convenient I can go back they asked me to come back and I came back one

year later expecting to sit down in my office and not talk to anyone and just be super effective I just read the newspaper for the first couple of hours because I had too much time. it's a company delivering culture. but you do get every now and then someone a little more interested but not at the level never at the level of other companies. I mean it's more you have to just do it yourself.

Lead interviewer

the Shell company that you mentioned just out of curiosity was that in US

PAF12

that's in Houston yes

Note taker

and you also mentioned you worked in London how was that

PAF12

it was great I work twice in London I worked in the internship for 2 months there yes people.. I don't know if every single mentor because I was fortunate and my boss was very famous and we used to help in research with 23 sponsors oil companies in service companies etc and every summer we had to give presentations to them and they would send their best researchers so we got access to really good researchers and when they got interested in you and they offer an internship you would get a very good researcher to work with you. so I was very fortunate in that sense and even the person I got in Company A is a great person we are very good friends. it is one person who's contributed and everything pretty much I also met him a lot in his work, it's just that he has not the training for mentoring not like other companies. London that internship was very good when I came the second time to London it was with a different company and I was more experienced so it was not the same situation but in that company you could ask for a mentor if you wanted to. I didn't because I didn't stay more than one year in that company. the other company I worked before London after my PhD that was Schlumberger they have a formal way of getting a mentor and you can use that and I select it because you select your mentor you have to approach them and all that and you select your mentor thinking about your career what you want to achieve and they take the time to call you in, my mentor was in London and Cambridge and he took the time to call me and see how I was doing and I visited him in Cambridge and he would visit sometimes. we didn't work in the same topic but he effectively has to show some interest.

Note taker

When you mentor in Norway now do you keep the same method as you learned

PAF12

Yes

Note taker

and have you ever mentored and a Norwegian

PAF12

yes and no. the thing is for me I receive so much from these people that I want to in a sense replicate what they did for me I don't think it's fair that you just receive and you never give back and also my PhD advisor was excellent. he might never really help you in anything in terms of research because he expected you to be good and that was it but he would teach us a lot about business in the industry and that's probably the most invaluable help he ever gave us. so I have for example usually I would mentor younger persons when I was in research in Trondheim I had one very young girl, recently graduated from her PhD in math from Beijing. she needed to understand geophysics and seismic and all these things and make a contribution so I worked with her a lot pushed her a lot and that office has been closed so I helped her get a post doc, now she is having her post doc interview she wanted to go to Norway and that was the plan actually so we brought her here twice once in Trondheim in research and when I moved here I organised her to come to processing because she needed those skills so I was trying to develop her and there was a plan and management knew about the plan and her wishes and I knew that she was really really good. so yes to this day she calls me when she is planning something new and applying to new jobs and I still mentor her. so I have certain people like that I have a couple of Russians now in the US and they were my students. Norwegian I have a student these last six months but it was a different situation because he was sitting in Trondheim and I was sitting here so we would meet in video conferences and all these things and he had another person in Sirdal working with him as well but I could not be as hands-on as I've wanted to do because of the distance it's not so easy. that's my only Norwegian that I have mentored. they have been all kinds of nationalities but not Norwegian.

Note taker

it's interesting because mentoring is becoming quite a buzzword in Norway now

PAF12

really

Note taker

and it may be more of buzz word then what is actually put into practice

PAF12

yes it is not, it is very seldom that someone takes the time to sit with you and say "hey I mean you're doing these now maybe you need to think about this" or that you need to crash into people and make them help you in a sense and it is very different with Internationals especially who have trained or worked in other places because they will volunteer it when they see that you're doing something good they will volunteer the feedback or they will usually tell you "you know what maybe you need to think about these" so it is very different unfortunately.

Note taker

I think we have a lot to work on here which is very good and positive thank you.

Lead interviewer

that's great thank you very much

PAF12

you're welcome anytime

Interview PCM4 on 1 May 2018 at Company C

Medarbeidersamtale has been translated to performance appraisal in all instances.

[... Information dump...]

### **Q1: Supervisor**

Lead interviewer

The first question is, are you a supervisor?

PCM4

I am, yes.

### **Q2: Effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

And then, thinking of a time when you gave effective feedback, can you describe this situation in as much detail as possible?

PCM4

Effective feedback... Yes, I can give a situation, it's not that long ago, so it's in the current workplace, it was during... Not generally for a specific incident, but was a part of the performance appraisal, it was a yearly feedback session. So I was doing it for a number of people, but the one I did it for which I think was the most effective was for one person in the group who would... That I felt needed a bit of assistance with an issue. So the feedback I gave was that the person wasn't being respected by the people reporting directly to her functionally, and needed to address it. And needed to, in a way that wasn't micromanaging them but moving away from that and allow people more trust, empower them more, and not be sitting over them, which was the feedback I was getting from the people working for her. So we got along to talk about that, and we agreed that we would change the way she followed up on people, how she did it on a weekly basis and she would move away from the detail lists and allow them to be more empowered in their functions. And it was causing a lot of stress in the group, it caused a divide such that they were both set for coming to me individually, not together, we've now brought that together again. So I'd say that was an effective session of feedback that I had with her.

### **Q3: Why effective**

Lead interviewer

Why would you say it was effective? What did you do or tell her?

PCM4

We went through her situation, and touching into some quite sensitive issues, she was going through some stressful periods... I felt at home, and at the workplace, she was... I could see she was spending far too much time outside of office sending meaningless emails, constantly late in the evening, writing things that were not necessary... So really, when we had the chat, we said that we need to... Lower the shoulders a bit, go home and don't write these emails, you don't need to be writing them. You don't need to write them in office either, because we said... She's an officer, so come in and talk, she always had a tendency to just be recording and writing and documenting everything and everything... So she took that onboard, and we said we would cut out all that stuff, and decided how we changed the structure of her follow-up of her group.

Lead interviewer

Alright. This was the yearly performance appraisal?

PCM4

This was taken up through the yearly one. And it's been followed up since then. I'd say the company doesn't, or didn't have until quite recently, a very good feedback culture. There wasn't any routine processes, and... There was a general employee survey done in the company, and one of the things that came back was the lack of feedback for people. And I think that's a fair comment as well, we weren't good as a company, and we weren't good individually to give the feedback, so it's not now been left to go for twelve months until we see each other again, it's been a little bit more routinely followed up.

Lead interviewer

Okay so when you say follow-up, do you have more sort of formal meetings, or is it just informal meetings?

PCM4

They are not formal meetings, they are just taken really as we feel the time, I have regular meetings with this person and a couple of others who are in this next tier of team leaders. We tend not to go into individual feedback during those ones, but as required we can have a chat for this – it's fairly informal, it's not like once a month we have to see where things are going.

Lead interviewer

Alright. Following on that – so this was a few months ago and has been followed up since?

PCM4

Mhm.

#### **Q4: Ineffective Feedback**

Lead interviewer

Right. So now we would like you to think of a time when you gave ineffective feedback. And can you describe a situation like that for us?

PCM4

Yes, I probably could, when I think about ineffective feedback, it's very vague type statements. I could have been far more effective towards a colleague when I was giving the feedback, where I knew there were issues I should address, there were things that needed to be taken up, which we talked about quite generally, and I felt that we came away from that without me feeling like I'd ever gotten my point across, the feedback I was trying to give didn't really – as a consequence, result in anything, not very much of it changed, to put it that way. What I was trying to do was to get this person to be – to act a little bit differently towards work, towards people, and I gave very sort of... When I look back at it, very general inconcrete instances, so I felt, afterwards, that I didn't really address anything with him, didn't give him anything that he could walk away with, and you know write a timeline or set of goals to change anything. So I think I was – and that was only a couple of years ago, in the same company.

#### **Q5: Why ineffective**

Lead interviewer

Was there any specific reason why the feedback to this person was very vague, compared to this more recent person, which was very specific for her situation?

PCM4

Yes, I think it was probably because of her.... You know, the person, very pleasant guy, get along well with him, when I meet I find it difficult to step aside, and although the guy reports to me, we tend to be very much... peers. In the company, in our age, in our experiences, and I think that made it a little

bit difficult. I felt that I didn't establish myself as the leader in that situation as I probably should have done. So I think that was an example of ineffective.

Lead interviewer

Okay, that's a very good example, thank you. Do you have anything you want elaboration on?

## **Q6: Comparison of the effective/ineffective**

Note taker

Did you feel that it was taken differently from the two instances you gave, the actual receiver's part of it?

PCM4

Yeah, I think so. In the first case, the receiver had clearer information, there was concrete things to work on. The other one, I don't think would have taken much away from it in that there was actually something that needed to be done. There was a lot of talking that didn't really result in anything, so yeah, I think it would have been taken very differently.

Lead interviewer

But the effective feedback, was it received welcomingly, as opposed to the other one where it was not received welcomingly, or...? Is there a comparison there?

PCM4

The effective one was received welcomingly, because I felt that the person then felt that she had something to hang it on, there was... A number of things going on at the time, but the other one, ineffective, I don't think it was not well received, it was just not understood maybe, I think that was more like it, it was just very unclear messages.

Lead interviewer

Do you think both of them walked away with a still positive impression of you? They didn't walk away feeling dissatisfied?

PCM4

No, I don't think they've changed – I think, fortunately, they both have respect within the company and within the department, where I'm the supervisor, and I still have respect, I just don't think it was very clear in that one where we talked about ineffectiveness, my position as the leader of that group wasn't established very well.

## **Q8: Goal of ineffective feedback**

Lead interviewer

Can I just also ask about the ineffective, when you say "your goal", what was your goal? Was it to change how he dealt with other people, so they were actually quite similar in terms of goals, to the first one?

PCM4

The goal – yes, in a way, yes, I think that's probably one of the reasons why it was ineffective, I didn't really have any clear goals before starting, what was I actually going to achieve here. As I said, we were peers in every way, but organizationally I was one step above him, and I didn't – and I know where his ambitions are, and there's frustrations because he's being limited to where he can go, and so... It was difficult for me to offer any type of concrete in the type of company we're in, seeing that your goals, your long-term goals within this company... I didn't really have much there to lay out for him, because the next step would be where I am, and I didn't really feel that he would have gotten away from that with a clear path here that I'm now going to be able to... look for, or go after.

Lead interviewer

I misunderstood then, I thought they were both about how they treated their subordinates, but that's not the case here, the second one was more –

PCM4

No the second one was in terms of how they handle their people because it was... The way he was working was causing confusion within the group as of to actually what the role was, it was too much overlapping with my role. He's team leader for a group of people, and I have personnel responsibilities [personalansvar], so the roles were confusing. So that's what I mean is... Had to do with the way he's handling people, it's part of it, but the ultimate thing is you know the... He was looking for ways to, where do I go, how do I develop?

Lead interviewer

Was this also a performance appraisal, or was it spurred by something, or him, or - ?

PCM4

This was outside the performance appraisal, this was spurred by – he was quite open and honest and came to me and was saying that he was in a situation where he was a bit confused, and I could see things that were causing confusion in the way that he was doing things, so we sat down and I gave him this feedback, and I just don't think I did it in a way that he would actually walked away and got much from it.

Lead interviewer

So he was the one who initiated it? He approached you and asked for advice?

PCM4

Yes, I think he was. I've been getting some comments from other people in the company and in the group, and I.. Maybe gone to see him and said there's confusion here, and he said the same, so we agreed to have a sit-down on this.

Lead interviewer

I think we can now move on to some personal information about you and the people you have described. And some of these questions might seem obvious, but we just have to ask them for the sake of research. What is your nationality?

PCM4

British.

Lead interviewer

And what is your line of education?

PCM4

My education finished at further education at college, but incompleting professional degree.

Lead interviewer

Was that... Equivalent to a bachelor's, would it?

PCM4

It would have been equivalent to a bachelor's, what I started, it was a professional.... [??] degree, so it... If I had completed, it would have been equivalent to a bachelor's degree.

Lead interviewer

Okay. And now I would like to go into some details about you at the time of these specific incidents. So at the time when you gave the effective feedback, how old were you, approximately?



PCM4

54.

Lead interviewer

And I presume you were still a man at the time. And how long had you worked at the company?

PCM4

At the time of giving the feedback, I'd been with the company for nine years.

Lead interviewer

And how long had you held the position you currently had?

PCM4

All the time. That's been my position – so when I joined the company nine years ago, I was employed as the only one – it's a small company, I was employee number 40, and the only one in that group. The group's since grown and developed and I've built up a team, so I've maintained the same position.

Lead interviewer

And when you gave this effective feedback to the girl, how long had you worked with her?

PCM4

This was 2017, and she started in 2013, so... Four years.

## **Q10: Demographics of effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

And then we're going to ask some questions about her. What age was she at, approximately, at the time?

PCM4

She would have been 46, I think? 45 or 46.

Lead interviewer

And what was her nationality?

PCM4

Norwegian.

Lead interviewer

Norwegian. And do you know what her highest completed form of education was?

PCM4

She has a bachelor... I can't remember at the top of my head if it's in civil economy or engineering background or something. But she has a bachelor.

Lead interviewer

And it's either economics or engineering, her background?

PCM4

It's economics, I think, it's more... She doesn't have an engineering background so it's probably economics.

Lead interviewer

And do you know how long she had been with the company?

PCM4

When I had the conversation with her, she'd been with the company for about four years.

Lead interviewer

How long had she been working under you?

PCM4

All the time.

## **Q11: Demographics of ineffective feedback**

Lead interviewer

Okay. And then we're going to ask the same questions for the guy who received the ineffective feedback. What age was he?

PCM4

Fifty?

Lead interviewer

Fifty. And where was he from?

PCM4

Norway.

Lead interviewer

From Norway too. What was his highest form of completed education?

PCM4

He has a bachelor's... He's an engineering background, in electrical engineering bachelor's, I think. Or mechanical engineering. I was wondering if he has, he might have a master's, but I need to check and I can't remember.

Lead interviewer

But some kind of engineering, university degree level..?

PCM4

Yeah.

Lead interviewer

And how long had he been with the company?

PCM4

He'd been there since 2012, so would've been five years.

Lead interviewer

And had he been working under you the entire time as well?

PCM4

Uh, yes, organizationally he was. I want to say that because we have a fairly typical matrix-type organization, so although he sits under my group functionally, he was out working directly for the project manager.

Lead interviewer

Alright, so he's not really in your office place the entire time?

PCM4

He's not in the office the entire time. Now he's back in and we're working more closely, but for a time the project team was located outside another office, so for a few years he was outside.

Lead interviewer

You said you were peers in a lot of ways, so you still knew him personally, you still sort of had a tone between you?

PCM4

Oh yeah we'd always get, you know, although he was always out, he was only at Fornebu, and I work at Lysaker, so we went out every week. So yeah, no, we saw each other regularly. So uhm... Yeah, it wasn't that he was employed, and was then sent off to other parts of Norway.

### **Q12: Subjective perception of similarity of effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

Final question is, on a scale from one to ten, where one is very dissimilar and ten is very similar, how would you rate yourself and the girl that received the effective feedback?

PCM4

Based on personality, or...?

Lead interviewer

Just intuitively, when I say similar...

PCM4

Intuitively, I'd say we are... On a scale from one to ten... Five?

### **Q13: Subjective perception of similarity of ineffective feedback**

Lead interviewer

And the guy?

PCM4

The guy I would say about eight. We're quite similar.

Lead interviewer

Okay. Do you have anything you want to follow up on?

### **Q14: Basis on subjective rating**

Note taker

What did you put emphasis on – you asked the question yourself, “do you mean personality?”, what did you then, since you got the feedback to do it intuitively, what did you think about?

PCM4

How we are like in personalities, what our personalities are like.

Lead interviewer

So how you work, your professional personalities?

PCM4

No.

Lead interviewer

No?

PCM4

No.

Lead interviewer

Just personal characteristics...?

PCM4

Just personal – yeah.

Lead interviewer

I think we can just go forward with that one. What personal characteristics were more similar with the guy than they were with the girl, for example?

PCM4

I think with the guy, our personalities are quite aligned in terms of our sense of humour, our background... He spent a lot of time overseas, he's spent a lot of time in the UK, he's got a lot of common interests in terms of sports, so I think there's a lot of things, you know, when we are together, we can sit and have lunch together and it's very easy to talk, so I think that's where the similarities are.

Lead interviewer

So the social aspect –

PCM4

yeah.

Lead interviewer

... Rather than the professional, uhm....

PCM4

We have... Professionally, we have comparisons and similarities because we both work through contracts in the oil and gas industry, so there's a lot of common knowledge and experiences. So a lot of similarities there.

Lead interviewer

So when you said that you and this woman, you said five, does that mean “we're not similar and we're not dissimilar”, was it just like... To put it in a middleground?

PCM4

It's really... Yeah, I don't see any great similarities, and thinking in the same way, in terms of personalities, there's not a great deal there, we're not totally dissimilar, she's not a lot younger than me, have same number of kids, live in the same area... So there are connections and similarities there, but really, they're not very many. Our background, and socially... I wouldn't say there's an awful lot of similar things there.

Lead interviewer

Do you – when, you mention that you have lunch with this gentleman quite often and you talk about a lot of things together, would you also do lunch with the lady?

PCM4

Yeah, yeah.

Lead interviewer

So it's not because of lack of interaction?

PCM4

No. We certainly have lunch equally, so there's nothing there.

Lead interviewer

So the guy that you, uhm, you refer to him as peer, would you say the same about the woman?

PCM4

No. I wouldn't say we're peers, and I think she's... She has no other feeling that she is, she is a number of years younger, and yeah... So no, we don't look at ourselves as peers in the same way.

Lead interviewer

Even though she's been around in the company for the same amount of time as the other guy, roughly –

PCM4

Roughly, yeah, I think he was 2012 and she's 2014, so there's not much of a difference, couple of years behind. But I think their background and experiences, when he was brought in, he was brought in at a level that was going to run this project, which was senior level, higher than she was taken on for. She was actually, reported to him in the project, for a while.

Lead interviewer

Alright, so there are like three levels here.

PCM4

Yeah, there are... The way the project was organized, the way the functional unit is organized, they're sort of peers, those two are peers reporting to me, but when they first started the project, he looked after the commercial team and she was taken in reporting up to him.

Lead interviewer

Since there is that dynamic, did you discuss anything with him? Regarding her, to give feedback or how handle the situation with the lady?

PCM4

Uhm... Give him feedback...?

Lead interviewer

No, since she actually reported to him when it came to the project, and you had this experience where she was micromanaging her people, did you discuss anything with him regarding how to address the situation?

PCM4

No. She wasn't really... I don't think it was really relevant at that time, because she didn't really have a team she was looking after. It was a different setting. She didn't really have a team that she was following up.

Lead interviewer

We did have, or you had a question at the beginning –

## **Q15: General comments on feedback**

Note taker

Yeah, you mentioned earlier that... Should you be a supervisor or a subordinate, but that was also something we'd like to finish off with, since you've experienced both, do you have any general comments when it comes to feedback, having experienced being given feedback, and when it comes to effective and ineffective, any general comments...?

PCM4

General comments I have, recent ones, as I've said as a company over ten years, we've been very poor at these kind of things. So generally I'd say the company hasn't been great at it, and thinking back ten years, and I had feedback from my previous employer... And I had feedback that I actually disagreed with, and I said to him, I knew the guy quite well, and I felt that it was feedback that was very vague, and you know, "doing a great job", and uhm...

Lead interviewer

Feedback just for the sake of giving feedback?

PCM4

Yeah that was it. That was definitely what I felt and I said that, you know, it's nice to hear that, that I'm doing well, but I honestly don't think I've been achieving – for many reasons, and I gave the reasons why I didn't think so, and he said no no no, I understand it's challenging times... But I felt that this feedback at that time was very ineffective.

Lead interviewer

So when you think about what you yourself perceive as effective versus ineffective feedback, what sort of things are you looking at? Are you looking at things that say, "okay, you're doing this well, but you could do this better, you could improve like this", or are you looking at feedback that is more, sort of, "you are doing a good job, keep doing this, keep doing that"...?

PCM4

No, I'd rather have more specific feedback, actual things you can point at that you can identify with. You can get things like, I remember a couple of years ago, and there was – I work for a supply chain, so left a profile for a supply chain, that was the feedback, and I was like... That's pretty fluffy. And really, it was just a repeat about what he said to me, you know in goals and ambitions, like oh what do you want to do, and I said I want to see the people in our supply chain organization, their profile being lifted, and there is more focus on them from the different units that we support. So the feedback I then got in the typeform was "left a profile on the supply chain". Okay, so that's... Really just a repetition of what I said myself. So yeah, anyway, as an organization, and I don't know if this is a part of an industry thing as well, we haven't been good at feedback, haven't been good at these things. That's my impression anyway.

Lead interviewer

Yeah, that might be.... It's one of the reasons why we're doing these companies as well, so that we... We may have slight suspicion that this is an industry thing. A lot of businesses or organizations in these industries, they are... Not necessarily structured in terms of the feedback, and even if they are structured it's sort of... Again, feedback for the sake of feedback, without carrying that sort of depth that you're describing that you want. When did you start formalizing your feedback at Company C?

PCM4

A year ago.

Lead interviewer

And that's when they introduced the performance appraisals...?

PCM4

Yeah, as I said, they had this people survey, all employees had – an external company came in, and they developed this questionnaire. Many – I can't remember how many questions, but marked on a scale from 1-10, what they felt in terms of feedback, and working environment, a lot of things, and they could plot it all, and the main thing that came out was the lack of feedback across, generally, across the whole company, was something that needed to be addressed from the managing director

and down. So then that's when, really there was leadership training, the company came in and did the survey, did the leadership training for the leaders and then focusing on feedback sessions and how you do that, and how you do conflict situations, and so on. So that's really in the last year.

Lead interviewer

So they did actually give you some form of training in actually giving feedback?

PCM4

There's been a leadership training now, that was done for... They did it in batches, and I did mine, it was three modules that were done over three days, and that was just about a year ago now. May, June last year.

Lead interviewer

What sort of things did they teach you at this course? In terms of feedback.

PCM4

In terms of feedback they were... Specifically, conflict situations, how to give feedback, what sort of feedback should be given, shouldn't be judgemental, shouldn't be... never, always, those kind of things. They drummed into us, they call it the SBI, which is situational behaviour impact, a way of addressing situations. So they taught us things like that.

Lead interviewer

And did you feel that this helped?

PCM4

Yeah, I felt a little bit that it did. I've used that one, the SBI, in a real case. A real situation. Not long after that, just with someone I worked with. And it was quite an effective way of doing it.

Lead interviewer

Would you now say that your boss does that to you?

PCM4

No.

Lead interviewer

So it's not throughout the whole company, not been embraced?

PCM4

I don't – no, it's not been.

Lead interviewer

But he received the same training as you did?

PCM4

Well, he sits – I report in to the COO, and he – I know there was leadership training of the top management, by the same company, assuming they've done the same modules, I don't know, didn't hear much about that, so I'd say probably. We didn't see any evidence, because when we did our one, we did a sort of 360 discussion within the company. That didn't seem to happen when he was doing his training, so that's why I'm a little unsure if he received the same kind of training with the top management.

Lead interviewer

I think we have a lot to take from this now, actually.

Interview PBM14 on 20 June 2018 at COMPANY B.

### **Q1: Supervisor**

Lead interviewer

the first question is, are you a supervisor

PBM14

it depends and what do you mean, I am project manager

Lead interviewer

do you regularly give feedback to someone else or do you primarily receive feedback

PBM14

I primarily receive feedback

### **Q4: Ineffective Feedback**

Lead interviewer

can you think of a time or situation or example when you received ineffective feedback

PBM14

yes

Lead interviewer

Can you describe that situation for us

PBM14

[ineffective – receiver]

depends on what you mean by ineffective. Ineffective means for me that I get some feedback that I find valid but is not followed up. that I regard as negative for me.

Lead interviewer

does this happen regularly or is this a one time occurrence that you can think about



PBM14

no in fact it happens very regularly. It's kind of well you get some kind of feedback on what's supposed to happen and they do not happened or what supposed to be done and not be done and some of it then I agree with but I know that nothing will happen always. Surveys for example, they are really a waste of time, for me. that is usually otherwise someone in a closer relationships so to speak where you don't get that much feedback. that probably is me.

Lead interviewer

so you don't seek out feedback

PBM14

no

Lead interviewer

is it because you don't feel the need to or is it just like that it's something you're not concerned about

PBM14

Not really feel the need to get that much feedback

Lead interviewer

do you have any specific situation where you can describe where this happened because we'd like to get some information on the context and sort of what happens in that specific incident

PBM14

where I am not...

Lead interviewer

yes where you get a feedback session which is not followed up afterwards

PBM14

I think usually it is more a general in a way get General feedback on situation on what it supposed to happen so that is kind of you get all these surveys that is executed I don't remember the name of them, even. that is where I get the feedback on stuff and that's not really personal that is kind of more organisation. I cannot remember a situation where I got feedback and they didn't kind of, it was negative for me, I cannot really remember that. No I can't I don't really remember.

Note taker

so these surveys are these the general people surveys to improve the workplace and that kind of thing

PBM14

yes in fact I cannot remember a situation when I got feedback which I find that not valid, that hurt me in anyway I really can't remember that

Lead interviewer

it didn't make enough of an impact

PBM14

that I do. I had some kind of but that is not at least not from management I got some feedback from people I have cooperated with as project manager but I don't think that it didn't mean anything for me really, because I was right (laughing)

## **Q2: Effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

do you have an example of a positive feedback experience

PBM14

[effective – receiver]

in fact I have. because I'm not the type that people give, I don't know if they feel kind of intimidated by me, but I have got some positive feedback and of course that's good. that I took the challenge and executed as expected and more in fact took risk. so that I got feedback but a couple of years after the incident really.

Lead interviewer

you got the feedback about a situation a few years after, what was that situation about

PBM14

it was not really a situation it was making a new portal for the merged company. I took a lot of risk when we were making this new portal, kind of not from any of the two merged companies, completely new. so ok I got general feedback it was good nice and so forth, lot of critics of course because every time you change something. but afterwards in fact a couple of years afterwards I got some feedback on the reason that I didn't get fired on the first round was my job with the portal. really which I mean really... feedback as I kind of identified as feedback, real feedback so to speak.

Note taker

and was that from your line leader

PBM14

yes that was from my line leader, but the feedback wasn't from her but it was from her line leader.

Lead interviewer

so she conveyed this information to you during your annual performance appraisal

PBM14

no no at the coffee machine

Lead interviewer

just sort of by the way, this thing that you did you did a really good job

PBM14

yes

Lead interviewer

this was a few years after did you ever seek out any feedback about your performance during that time to the other people that were involved in the project or did you get the impression that you actually did a good job during that time.

PBM14

yes I got the impression that I did a good job yes

Lead interviewer

you got instant sort of feedback during it

PBM14

yes I did that so yes

Lead interviewer

talking about the performance appraisals at DnV-Company Z how often do you have one of those

PBM14

yearly no no this PA it's actually twice a year in fact

Lead interviewer

and do you feel that they are valuable use of your time

PBM14

not really, not if you follow what these appraisals should be the last one has been.. the last one was more constructive I think because when we are in a way that has been a meeting with my manager and I exchange information and not a formal PA. so for me that has been better and then of course we do the paperwork but we don't really put too much effort in.

Lead interviewer

your line manager doesn't work directly with you

PBM14

no no no she is in Hamburg

Lead interviewer

so how do you communicate is that via email primarily or Skype or do you fly down to Hamburg

PBM14

we had some Skype meetings and sometimes she is here

Lead interviewer

and when you communicate is that primarily about her function as your leader, so she is communicating things about your performance or whatever decisions you're taking on projects and so on. What is your communication mainly about

PBM14

I think it is more general social stuff. Of course we talk what we discussed really sometimes, work-related, is more or less what do you want to achieve. so, yes that is really what we discuss - my work, what I do we don't really discuss. Except I tell her what I learned as a lot of new stuff, but not really and she follows up the number of hours, that I work that she does.

Lead interviewer

her primary source of information about the job you're doing is you

PBM14

yes as far as I know (laughing)

Lead interviewer

so you're not aware of any communications between her and your project manager or anything like that

PBM14

sorry I didn't catch it

Lead interviewer

so you're not aware of any communication between her and whoever you're working with at the time

PBM14

no

Lead interviewer

when you go into this performance appraisal, the PA meeting, what kind of expectations do you have

PBM14

I don't really have any expectations. I see it more as a meeting place where we in a way we have this talk as to what we want what she wants from me and what I want from her so to speak. and what I want from, my... what do you call it, I cannot call it career exactly, but what I would like to work with

Note taker

so developmental

PBM14

yes, so that is the kind of, that is the expectation I have it's kind of meeting place in a way where we have focus on that only, yeh, but I don't have any expectations really because I know that she can't do anything anyway.

## Q6: Comparison of the effective/ineffective

Lead interviewer

so you're a project manager and you have people working underneath you do you give them feedback regularly or is that left to the line managers

PBM14

no I give them feedback

Lead interviewer

informal or regular scheduled

PBM14

no I'm not that type it's informal and sometimes in writing when I want that to be shown outside the project.

Lead interviewer

do you have any sort of strategy when you give feedback, anything like oh I want to give them 5 compliments and 1 thing I can work on

PBM14

no no I do not have a strategy for that. I just, if they have done a good work and I want them to know that I tell them I do not have a strategy for that.

Lead interviewer

If you had an employee who is not performed according to expectations how would you approach that situation

PBM14

I think, at first of course I will have aligned expectations, and after that I think I maybe give the person different tasks or other tasks maybe. hopefully that works, that usually that works. and if they are completely new in the project I moved the person outside the project and use it as a reference, I have done that a couple of times, so that they are in a way involved but not a part of the project and the rest I just leave out and they are fired from the project. formally and informally meaning that they are not included any longer

Note taker

and if there was to be a positive feedback would you do that in a group or do you tend to do that also one on one

PBM14

no no no I have no tendency to do that I've just give it when I feel it's justified and I think it's important for the person also of course and for the person and seen from upwards for the person's own experience and also to expose that upside to the organisation to follow it outside the project when I feel it necessary to do that

Note taker

and would that mean taking contact with their line manager

PBM14

no no no I don't do it formally I do it in meetings and presentations when I present the results of the project

### **Q9: Demographics of participant**

Lead interviewer

and now I would like to ask some personal details for the sake of research, and if you would prefer not to answer just tell us and we will skip it what is your nationality

PBM14

Norwegian

Lead interviewer

Age

PBM14

62 I can say that, yeh

Lead interviewer

what is the highest form of completed education

PBM14

bachelor business administration

Lead interviewer

how long have you been working at this company

PBM14

7 years, 6 7 years

Lead interviewer

and have you been in a project manager for the entire time

PBM14

yes

Lead interviewer

for the line manager that you currently have, has she been your boss or your line manager for the entire time

PBM14

no no she, I don't remember I think she is one and a half year

### **Q10: Demographics of effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

we would also like to ask some questions about her and if you don't know the answer just an approximation is fine. Is she Norwegian

PBM14

no German, I think

Lead interviewer

and ethnicity

PBM14

German, European, North European, white

Lead interviewer

What is her highest form of completed education

PBM14

I know I don't know, probably a master's I don't know



Lead interviewer

what's that in business or technical

PBM14

I really don't know I didn't ask her

Lead interviewer

and what is her approximate age

PBM14

I guess she has small kids so around 40ish probably younger, she's maybe mid thirties I really don't care

Lead interviewer

is she from Company Z or has she been a DnV person

PBM14

Company Z I think

## **Q12: Subjective perception of similarity of effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

On a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 is totally dissimilar and 10 is very similar how similar would you rate yourself and your line manager

PBM14

I think we are, As I would see it close to 8, 9, 10 in that area business wise of course I would say 8.

## **Q14: Basis on subjective rating**

Lead interviewer

when you say business wise is that what you consider your working Style

PBM14

yes in the workplace I don't know we could be completely different in social stuff, so we are 8 or 9, 8 probably

Lead interviewer

you mentioned that you mostly talk on Skype and stuff do you see each other often do you go down to Hamburg or does she come up to Oslo do you go out for dinner or lunch or anything like that

PBM14

no

Lead interviewer

so your relationship is purely professional

PBM14

Yes

### **Q6: Comparison of the effective/ineffective**

Lead interviewer

you're spoken a little bit about this but feedback as an effective feedback or ineffective feedback what does that entail to you

PBM14

what do you mean by entail

Lead interviewer

if I say ineffective feedback vs effective feedback what do you think makes the distinction

PBM14

I think the distinction, if I find it, kind of related to the work I do then it is effective. If it's kind of personal then I don't find it. and I also find it not effective if it's kind of hidden agendas behind it. if I get the impression that there are hidden agendas then I just regard it as ineffective.

Lead interviewer

do you think that personal relationships have a role in this feedback exchange communication

PBM14

personal relationships?

Lead interviewer

yes or personal chemistry, do you think it matters how much you like a person how close you are do you think that makes a difference in how you communicate feedback

PBM14

I try not to, but you never manage that. But I try not to get my impression personally my personal experience a relationship difference there, I try to.

Lead interviewer

the reason I'm asking is because we've had a lot of people saying that it's easier or harder to give negative feedback to someone if they're close to them if they feel like peers or friends.

PBM14

if they are close I just tried to give it in a way that's kind of preserves the relationship that is really what I tried to do. it's very seldom I...

Lead interviewer

and your feedback is often how they perform the outcome of their work

PBM14

yes yes I'm never personal

Note taker

do you consider behaviour also personal

PBM14

if they are business context yes. so if you are on the way say stuff you shouldn't say in a meeting then I mean on a professional basis I haven't experienced that here. but previous jobs where you say stuff you shouldn't say then it has to be addressed.

#### **Q4: Ineffective Feedback**

[ineffective – giver]

Note taker

when you think of the last time when someone didn't perform in the project when you actually had to either assign new tasks or an actual fact ask them to leave the project because you felt they weren't contributing can you describe that to us?

PBM14

mmmm

Note taker

because the way I understand it is you've given feedback and they haven't managed to address it themselves so your Only Way Out is to say you're going to have to move to another project, so therefore in a way that sounds to me that it hasn't been effective to the person because they haven't changed or haven't managed to perform in the way that you expected

PBM14

yep yep in a way people are as they are, you cannot change the behaviour. you have a long discussion and explain why I wanted... that really I didn't want that in the project that he was supposed to deliver and he used too much time, never completed a job really in fact but he also what I said was that he also had some strengths which I wanted to use. So when we have a discussion within the project group or something I will very often have a meeting with him alone, and then went through the same discussions and sometimes I got good answers which he also got the credit for that publicly. But he was not in the project more anymore but I used in that way. I used a lot of time, instead of my project team using a lot of time, I did that with meeting him.

Note taker

and do you feel the time you used was valuable in his future, do you know how long enough to know that's an actual fact helped

PBM14

I don't know how he is as he is I really don't think so

Note taker

so do you feel that it was waste of time really

PBM14

not for me, well yes you could say, that but at the same time he came up with some good ideas or verified some ideas and made some good thoughts. because that was his problem he didn't distinguish what was a good idea, which I thought was a good idea, he didn't catch the business in a way. This has business values and this does not, he was unable to distinguish everything was kind of the same. so we had long discussions I could pick up "ah this was a good idea" but he didn't even notice it

Note taker

when highlighted was he able to understand or did you continue to have difficulty in distinguishing

PBM14

no he's still has I guess I haven't worked with them for a long time

Note taker

how long ago was this incident

PBM14

when we merged I don't remember when that was 3 or 4 years ago

### **Q11: Demographics of ineffective feedback**

Note taker

and the same details nationality age gender education on him

PBM14

he was Norwegian, I guess maybe 40, I don't know his education

Lead interviewer

do you know if he was a technical person or a business person

PBM14

not really, no I don't really know probably a technical guy, most of them are

Lead interviewer

do you choose your own team members when you do these kind of projects or are they assigned to you

PBM14

they are assigned to me

Lead interviewer

so you didn't choose this guy specifically it was just someone who is assigned to you

PBM14

I think they really didn't know how to use them so they put him into my project

Note taker

would you have the call next time if that came up and the assignment was there could you turn around and say, no actually I would rather have another

PBM14

yes but at that time I didn't know him but I would say maybe as a reference group or something but not have a daily impact on the project in scope and everything

### **Q13: Subjective perception of similarity of ineffective feedback**

Lead interviewer

if I asked you on the scale of 1 to 10 10 is very similar and one is very dissimilar with this guy how would you rate yourself

PBM14

business wise I don't think we have a lot in common a 3 maybe, seen from my side he is he is on another planet. he is not he is very very good he knows a lot and has a lot of good ideas but if you want to survive in business it's kind of not useful

Lead interviewer

do you experience that this is primarily you as his leader has with him or is it a problem shared by the team

PBM14

I think it was a shared problem of the team

Lead interviewer

did anyone ever come to you and say anything about this guy

PBM14

no

Lead interviewer

so it was only something that you saw and addressed

PBM14

yes

Note taker

again would you address this with his line leader

PBM14

I was in the meeting with him before a PA. not before my PA but this guys PA.

Note taker

did you reach out to the line leader of the line leading reach out to you

PBM14

no he reached out to me

Note taker

and from your experience is that generally how it works here that the line leader will reach out to the project manager and ask for input for all the team or was that just this one particular person

PBM14

it has been a couple of situations yes I think that's what they usually do, I don't know really. I have three or four situations like that where ahead of the PA I have been asked by the line manager to give some feedback

Note taker

and how many do you have in your team normally

PBM14

three or four guys

Note taker

so generally each one will reach out and ask how they have been performing

PBM14

no not everybody no. It has been more... because most of my team have been the same department. The ones that are not in the same department that's when they reach out to me for those few situations when it's outside of the department or section I think it's called I don't remember

Note taker

and how many projects per year

PBM14

one or two

Note taker

so it's doable

PBM14

Yes

### **Q15: General comments on feedback**

Lead interviewer

how is the spatial working situation for you is your entire team sitting in a clustered together

PBM14

yes we said together well mostly we said together sometimes it happens these last years we have sat more or less together we have a couple of guys developers in Hamburg.

Lead interviewer

do you feel that help sort of create a team spirit or does it not affect your daily life at all

PBM14

having people in Hamburg

Lead interviewer

no having people close

PBM14

no I want to have people close to me that is important I think

Lead interviewer

can you elaborate on that



PBM14

no just because communication is easier I think you use less time resolving issues misunderstanding is avoided you can explain you can draw picture on the board solve issues as they can not wait and write an email which the recipient doesn't really understand and answer something completely different. so I think it's more efficient you save a lot of time

Note taker

how much input do you have in deciding how your project team will look like is it purely and utterly I need these disciplines and then someone will assign them to you

PBM14

no usually I just get the people assigned

Note taker

but you need to say which disciplines you require

PBM14

yes but mainly it's for Development so it's kind of... yeah

Note taker

so you just say I just need X number of people

PBM14

yes and then I get them, usually I don't say that, usually I get a number of people and this is what you have

Note taker

and then you work with it and if you're under resources you ask for more

PBM14

maybe or adjust the scope and get on with it. I usually solve the stuff anyway I don't make it complicated we have these resources and then I try to see how we make it happened

Note taker

and your client is usually internal

PBM14

yes yes

Note taker

regarding the surveys is that surveys given by the HR department

PBM14

mostly I think I don't know Pcall or whatever they call themselves

Note taker

and when you complete them the reason you think it's a waste of time is because you don't see any follow-up

PBM14

yes I don't see anything really anyway I've stopped filling them out, it's just a waste of time it doesn't give me anything I just regard them as a cost for the company

Note taker

and have you ever given that feedback to your line manager for example

PBM14

I am not ready to commit suicide (laughing). I won't considerate it to say that. I had a scale of 8 on an alignment with my manager I want to keep it there (laughing)

Lead interviewer

are these all anonymous surveys on about how satisfied are you with your job very general working climate and things like that

PBM14

yes and how you work with your line manager and colleagues etc

Note taker

do you also have input into your colleagues

PBM14

I think that is a part of it but since I haven't answered them I'm not sure but that was a part of it before

Note taker

and then nothing ever came of it as far as you saw

PBM14

yes I don't think any has seen anything come of it, probably some article on the intranet

Lead interviewer

yes I think there's some KPI's in annual report

PBM14

yes there is some KPI's

Note taker

do you know it has there been a fall in the response does that also get logged

PBM14

I think last time it was lower than expected I think but I seem to remember I think I remember that on the intranet an article

Note taker

so that gives you a good indication that you're not alone with your thoughts

PBM14

I know I'm not alone (laughing)

Lead interviewer

thank you I think that we have got a lot of information here

Note taker

thank you very much for taking the time really appreciate it

PBM14

that's ok it's just time off really (laughing)

[PBM14 prepares to leave interview room]

Lead interviewer

you have given us a lot to think about how feedback works in Company B, Not ideal, perhaps

PBM14

I think it's kind of the culture, we never really give negative or corrective feedback

Lead interviewer

here in Norway or in Company B

PBM14

no I think in Norway that I never do that and that creates situations like with this guy nobody dares to say anything here.

Note taker

so they end up just floating

PBM14

yes if they float around in the organisation

Note taker

have you noticed any difference in the German culture have you had enough interaction to see that

PBM14

in a way no and in another way yes. because the differences that they were a top down and you do as your manager say but that doesn't really mean... but I discovered now really, it means that you do exactly that what your manager says, right or wrong, and the result is what the manager expected. but the amount of work and quality behind the scenes is no more effective. in fact, that is kind of a bit disappointment I thought they were better on that. but they have also a completely... yes this hierarchy is restrictive.

Lead interviewer

thank you very much indeed

Interview PBM3 on 23 April 2018 at COMPANY B.

## **Q1: Supervisor**

Lead interviewer

are you supervisor, as in do you have people reporting to you?

PBM3

no not at the moment I had before but not now

## **Q2: Effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

can you think of a time when you experienced effective feedback and then describe that time to us in as much detail as possible?

PBM3

effective feedback as in when I received some kind of feedback from someone

Lead interviewer

some kind of feedback that you felt was effective

PBM3

[effective – receiver]

oh my god that's a really good question, I had a really good boss at my first job he was really thorough and even though he didn't have the overview as it turned out in the end, but he really had his head in the right place. in the beginning I was quite naive and of course new workplace and people and I was trying to give a 100% I was trying to make everything perfect and he had a meeting with me and told me that I don't have to. That sometimes we have to be okay with 85% and that is okay. he made me accept this by explaining that everybody else has this kind of problem, and that I was not to feel like I was not doing a good enough if I didn't do on 100%. which made me feel better about myself first of all, and also help me to concentrate on the things that need to be taken care of. that is something I can't recall.

Lead interviewer

how long ago was this

PBM3

approximately, it was a long time ago, approximately 11 years

Lead interviewer

and do you feel that that is effective still today?

PBM3

Yes definitely and I've also built around it when I do my job I prioritize I also use this I sometimes have to say that's all I can do and it's good enough

#### **Q4: Ineffective Feedback**

Lead interviewer

can you think of a time when you received an effective feedback and describe that

PBM3

[ineffective – receiver]

That is more difficult, I don't really know how to ... because if someone tells me something that doesn't really change anything, I just don't register I just think ok that happened and then I let it go. but for some reason I had a really bad boss and he really didn't understand people for some reason I don't know why I whenever we had some kind of meeting with him and he would tell us to do something in a certain way because he thought that was the right way, it was really difficult to reason with him that no we shouldn't do this. so if I got a feedback that wasn't really good I would tell him why why I think it's not a good idea of why we shouldn't do that way. but I can't recall a certain scenario specifically.

Lead interviewer

when you see it was ineffective is that because you had to do it the way it was suggested anyway

PBM3

the reason it was ineffective was I kind of tried to see the bigger picture and I saw that it didn't fit in the bigger picture. so I explained to that person at the time why I would not be following his advice.

Lead interviewer

in the end of the deal where are you permitted to go ahead with your ideas

PBM3

that's an interesting thing because that was actually quite close to the time I said ok I'm going to leave the company and because both me and my colleagues were struggling with him. in that particular scenario we had a meeting and I got to the point where I told him my views and why I was not going to be doing a certain thing I said when because he chose to follow the management blindly. I never was the kind of person that would just do things because people told me, I would always find the reasons or what the people would need in these cases, so he actually told me at that point that maybe I'm not the right guy for the job. then of course I finally laid my cards out there and told him everything. so in that particular scenario the way it turned out was he actually got sent away, that's

what I like to think. we got an email at some point saying that he was going to leave the company but I believe that he got sent away because we were not the only ones who had difficulty with him and then the management saw my intentions of what I wanted to do and they let me go ahead. but I don't know how isolated of an incident this is I don't think it is possible everywhere but I was lucky enough to be in an environment where it was so I could do good for the people instead of doing bad.

Lead interviewer

So the way it was ineffective was that he was not listening to your side he was not open to your suggestions.

PBM3

Exactly

Lead interviewer

what was his immediate response when you confronted him and said I don't want to do it this way I want to do it that way, what tended to be his immediate response, did he just tell you no and walk away or did he try to come accommodate you what did he do specifically?

PBM3

there were several scenarios I can't remember clearly but for example one time we were talking about using paper as in sending paper around for some kind of process and I told him no we are not going to go back to the 20th century and his response was just that it worked before so he had his own reasons for why he was thinking that way which was a bit faulty in my opinion. I think he was maybe a bit too egotistic. I felt that you wanted to have control over someone or some people.

Lead interviewer

so you felt that he was micromanaging you

PBM3

yes

Lead interviewer

how long ago was that

PBM3

that was in 2012 or 2011

## Q9: Demographics of participant

Lead interviewer

we would like to ask you some details about you as a person at the time, if you can give us approximations to our questions - thinking of the effective feedback how old were you at that time

PBM3

21

Lead interviewer

and you come from where

PBM3

I'm from Hungary

Lead interviewer

what was your highest education at the time

PBM3

I'm a land surveyor and a geo Informatics technician. I went to college but it was one of those times are Crossroads when I had to decide what I wanted to do and it turned out not to be something I wanted to do so I had to decide do I stay or do I go somewhere else or try to work. so I dropped out after the first year so I guess my highest education was this technician.

Lead interviewer

how long have you been with the company

PBM3

it was my first year

Lead interviewer

how long have you worked with the person giving effective feedback

PBM3

I think it was two or three years because of all the changes in the company we had to change manager but he was still kind of in the background he still visited us and I remember a time when we were having this meeting at the end of the year when everything was finally done we thought as we agreed and then we had a conference call with our new boss and our old boss and our new boss was like we told him we've done 80% everything was fine and our new boss was why not everything? and



we said that's what we agreed on we worked our asses off to do it but he still wasn't satisfied and then our old boss was keeping him in check I had to leave the room at that point because I was so angry. but he was still around for a few years then he moved to another branch in the company.

Lead interviewer

and where did he come from

PBM3

he was from Switzerland

Lead interviewer

did you have a good relationship with him did you meet with him at different times relatively frequently both formal and informal meetings

PBM3

yes he was a really nice guy, he tried to make us feel good about ourselves and that we were valued he also brought us a Swiss knife with our names engraved in them he was a really nice guy

## **Q10: Demographics of effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

what sort of age group was he

PBM3

he was close to pension I guess 60s

Lead interviewer

and do you know what his education was

PBM3

he probably told us but I don't remember

Lead interviewer

where was this?

PBM3

it was in Hungary Germany and Switzerland these three places, that's where we were travelling to most of the time, we had to work at all the plants in those countries

Lead interviewer

how would you describe the rest of the working climate where you I a conglomerate of many nationalities or were you primarily Swiss or German

PBM3

if you went to a factory it was usually one nationality or at least most but the whole project was worldwide; first Europe than America and Asia. the work itself requires to talk to lots of different people but in a particular factory it was mostly one nationality

Lead interviewer

the group you worked with would you categorise them as a specific group, ethnicity or culturally

PBM3

then we were German Swiss and Hungarian.

### **Q11: Demographics of ineffective feedback**

Lead interviewer

moving on to the ineffective feedback that you spoke about I would like to ask you similar questions about that incident, how long have you worked together with him?

PBM3

2 years

Lead interviewer

and you had been in that company for how long

PBM3

5 years in total

Lead interviewer

so you did know him quite well as well

PBM3

sadly yes

Lead interviewer

when you had interaction was it always a poor relationship

PBM3

yes, he was the kind of guy that you always felt was pretending, he was really difficult to have an honest connection never felt that he was ever being genuine.

Lead interviewer

and this was something that everybody felt, he was simply not a people person

PBM3

yes exactly

Lead interviewer

His age group

PBM3

He was younger, I'd say in his 40s

Lead interviewer

do you know his education

PBM3

I'm pretty sure he bragged about it but I can't remember, he was working in resource management, he was responsible within the project for delegating the work, leading the project, he was responsible for us in a sense he was trying to manage all kinds of things he had no proper overview of

Lead interviewer

His nationality

PBM3

German

Lead interviewer

where was it

PBM3

in hungry usually he came to us

## Lead interviewer

so he wasn't actually located at the same office

## PBM3

no we were one of those really weird departments the only one really if you didn't have the managers on site. I was joking with my colleague that we should make a t-shirt with makers managers on the front and please on the back.

## Lead interviewer

do you think that that had an element of fact in your feelings since you weren't in the same office as each other to the fact that you're there is difficult relations

## PBM3

I don't know because the other boss [effective feedback] went really well, he was in Switzerland most of the time. I think what it came down to was his trust in us, that we know what we were doing he didn't try to micro-manage us so to speak, he trusted that we know and take the right step and take the right decisions even if you had to have some kind of meetings then he would call us and ask for our guNote takernce or ask us to go there. he involved us in every way.

## Lead interviewer

did you go from the boss that give effective feedback directly to the boss that gave ineffective feedback, and did you find that that had an effect the fact that they were chalk and cheese. Could that also had an effect, you had your expectations quite high from experiencing this really good supportive boss and then you get someone who you feel doesn't trust you, micro-manages you etc. would you say that contrast maybe made it feel worse?

## PBM3

definitely, also because basically everything that we have done in the company regarding software or documentation whatever we were working on it was kind of our baby in a sense we knew everything we knew how it worked we knew what the people wanted because when we started this job we had to go through all the factories all the customers surveys, the experts that were working quality management to get an overview of the process how everything works. So we knew everything basically and where things are going, and he didn't, and it frustrated us whenever he did something and didn't tell us but he was kind of crossing all kinds of people and he would generate trouble so there was a lot of frustration in the both of us that he was handling us as being less than the other boss did and basically he wasn't trusting that we would be capable enough to help him or do the work.

## Lead interviewer

How long had he been in the company, was he relatively new?

PBM3

I don't know how long he worked there, I just know a lot of people did not like him. what I know is that he there is this phenomenon of "falling upwards" that he was going up, even though nobody was really happy with his performance.

Lead interviewer

did he act differently to people in the hierarchy, did he act differently to his superiors

PBM3

Totally that is also why the trust wasn't there at all it always felt like an act.

### **Q12: Subjective perception of similarity of effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

if you had to think about putting a number on the effective feedback on how similar you are on a scale as in one nothing alike and 10 being very similar. this is purely subjective where would you place it?

PBM3

I would say eight

### **Q13: Subjective perception of similarity of ineffective feedback**

Lead interviewer

and if you try and do the same for the ineffective feedback giver, if you try and put him on a scale what number would you give him

PBM3

we are really really different I want to say two

### **Q14: Basis on subjective rating**

Lead interviewer

and when you think about these numbers that you have given what was it you thought about was it the way you treated each other or the fact that he was also male from round about the same area - what was your thought process when I asked these questions?

PBM3

the way I was thinking about it was that my first boss who was a really good person, he was good at managing people and working together with the people, however he wasn't open minded enough for making things better. This was before we could kind of make the system still ok but after that point there was no turning back and he was going in a certain Direction so even he was a bit blinded by the

management goal. I think I am kind of different in that sense, I don't say I'm a Rebellion but I always try to find a better way if possible that is better for the people. the workplace better basically for them

Lead interviewer

so you feel what made you just seminar was his feeling of structure and this is how we've always done it this is how we will always do it

PBM3

not exactly, it was more about he wanted change, but he didn't think what should be changed because other things were great which we shouldn't have changed but we should have built around them, but we didn't think that part through so he was better in that sense that he saw that something was wrong and it had to change but it was still too much of a dramatic change instead of ok let's sit down and look at what is good and let's keep that and add some other things on top of it to make it better.

Lead interviewer

and then when you reach it the other gentleman a two, what was behind that?

PBM3

that was based on same sort of thing, we work very dissimilar. [additional note at end of interview] I don't think that gender or age really matters in this at all, what it comes down to is that person how much does he or she, how much they actually know what they're talking about, I don't know if it's just a sense of mine but after a while you can feel if they actually know what they talked about. that is also one of the reasons I am careful about what I am saying because I am really perceptive of this so I try not to say things I don't actually know I think that matters more than gender or age. of course there are people who are really good talkers and can sell themselves but they really don't know anything but you can see through it if it's your boss eventually.

## **Q15: General comments on feedback**

Lead interviewer

do you have anything to add when it comes to feedback in general, given that you have actually been a supervisor had to give some feedback do you have any additional thoughts to share with us? there is no right or wrong answers, we are trying to investigate what is effective and ineffective feedback.

PBM3

I feel that is a difficult question to answer to be honest. I think one thing is it's kind of important and it's something that you make people feel that they are on the same level you don't make them feel that they are less and do not have a say in something. the previous department I was working for here in DNV-Company Z also had somebody called Ezheim Hamborg and a whole merger was going on and some of the colleagues came here and they were attending our department meeting. it was the beginning of the year so we got first goals of the company what we should do and what the management expects from us. so our department would sit down and come up with some ideas of

what we can contribute. nearly all of us could come up with some things what we think our work can do towards those goals and our German colleagues literally said that we're too small of a cog to make any difference. And I think when working together with people and making them feel that they do make a difference and that their opinion matters it also helps them to open up and give their opinion which can help and actually making things better. because one person can see so many things but it is nearly impossible to see the whole picture so getting feedback from others is really important. Being brave enough and feeling that there is no danger in saying the truth - I think that is quite important.

### Lead interviewer

so did you feel there was a cultural difference, I feel I heard in the undertone the German and the Hungarian attitude that you mentioned now?

### PBM3

yes - it is difficult for me to say my opinion on this because it was my first job so I don't know how other companies in Hungary are either, which are mainly Hungarian, this company was more International. So, what I've heard from my parents working for a different company it can be really different in Hungary as well, the management not having an overview as well, but I definitely felt at least in comparison to the company I was working in and when I was visiting the German company I have quite a loud stomach so I don't like to be in really silent rooms because then I get uncomfortable when people hear my stomach rumbling so I like to work in a workplace where people are talking and listen to music as well to make the work easier. but when I went to Germany there was this really like silence really awkward silence in the entire building and it felt really uncomfortable. And I kind of felt that there is some kind of difference between us but I couldn't really pinpoint what the difference was with the cultures but there was definitely differences.

### Lead interviewer

I don't have any more questions but more of an observation that I would like you to confirm if this is true or not, it seems like the majority of your statements and opinions are based on personality or personal chemistry at work rather than workstyle. Some people when asked about effective or ineffective feedback, they may say constructive criticism, that's nice they can say that you do this well but you can do better whereas others may say that I feel bad and I don't want to do that anymore. you were talking more about the personal chemistry like the feelings you had towards one person or the other person. and when you were rating the people on a scale that was also based on personality and approaches and behaviour. does that sound about right?

### PBM3

I think so it definitely has some or quite a big role in it, I don't know if I just got lucky as I've heard a lot of bad things before I started to work I've always seem to find people who I was able to get along with even if I had this one boss who nobody could get along with, so I always knew that people who could actually, actually there is a good example there is a key account manager who I couldn't get along with, so it definitely matters the person they are and how open they are for help from other people as well.

Lead interviewer

and these two other bosses that you describe you didn't work with them in the same way as we work with our current bosses as in that we sit in the same office with you every day. how often did you actually meet them what was the frequency of your meetings?

PBM3

it really varied but in the beginning of course we saw our boss every week, after that he kind of let us take the reins and maybe once a month, and then when things started to get close to the project release date then of course he was travelling and we were travelling to this place so that was way more often. and the other boss [ineffective] maybe every two weeks he came out. he has been trying to get me on LinkedIn ever since, but I have not accepted.

Lead interviewer

thank you very much for giving us your time we very much appreciate it.

End interview



Interview PAF6 on 11 June 2018 at Company A.

## **Q1: Supervisor**

Lead interviewer

First of all are you a supervisor

PAF6

No not at this time

## **Q2: Effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

so we're thinking of a time that you received effective feedback can you describe this incident in as much detail as possible?

PAF6

[effective – receiver]

effective feedback, yeh, erm, it depends on what aspect you are really interested in. I'm a more technical science person and we get feedback on our technical stuff all the time like you know "you need to adjust this this way" there is also the more personal things like feedback about "maybe you are a little too open" things like that what are you looking for?

Note taker

really what you perceive as effective, if you feel one is more effective than the other or vice versa it's really all to do with your perception of effective feedback

PAF6

I think I take, personally I take all feedback in and I evaluate it. So you want an example of feedback that I got that had an effect. So I think personality wise I'm quite chatty and I guess this case about being too open - like I say a lot, I think sometimes when I did get this feedback it was like "wow I say a lot" - in a multicultural environment I realise that sometimes you just need to reduce... I now try to reduce what I say by about 50%. So that I am just addressing the key points and then it becomes really clear without a lot of noise around it, so that was a very effective feedback I think. Because it both related to my personality which is my natural tendencies to say too much, how effectively that is received by the other side and by filtering what I say, I'm then and more effective communicator.

Lead interviewer

so was this feedback that you got during a performance appraisal or did your boss come to you, or what was the context around it?

PAF6

I have got it both from my boss and during an evaluation from peers. We have this system for you to get rated by your peers on values. But too open was funny because I'm like "that's one of our values".

### **Q3: Why effective**

Lead interviewer

that is an interesting feedback to get you said it was effective because you said that you sort of incorporated that in the way that you work how did you digest that information did you have this period of challenging it and thinking "oh no that's not true at all" before you started internalizing it or did you just take a step back and think "ok maybe yes".

PAF6

I think I took a step back and said oh yeah because it's true and I know it to be true and I don't know if I realised before that it was a negative, but it was essentially because it was detracting from my ability to communicate a message because I was putting all the information out there. I'm the kind of person who likes to have all the information and that is of course why I was being that way but it turns out some people don't want it they just want it very direct. Whether or not I think that's good or not is a different issue.

Note taker

did you actually get, when you got it explained that you were too open, did they use an incident to show you, to give an example or was it just generally "PAF6 we feel that you're just a bit too open."?

PAF6

yes it was not a specific example that would have been useful to follow up with that person to ask what do you mean by that so that is how I interpreted it there was no follow up actually so I may be interpreting it incorrectly

### **Q7: Goal of effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

but you felt that... you said that you received that feedback a couple of times but when you went into the feedback sessions did you feel that the goal of the session was to make you less open "I'll make you change your behaviour" was that the communicated end game

PAF6

no I don't think so I think it was more just a general comment maybe you want something that's more applicable

Lead interviewer

no not necessarily

PAF6

no I don't think it was the full goal I think it was just kind of looking at the full picture of how you are and how you relate to other people it was under the context of "yay good job".

Lead interviewer

so this in itself was good feedback but the thing that you got from it was "this is something I could use". how long ago was this approximately

PAF6

probably 8 years ago and so it still stands out

Lead interviewer

when you went into this meeting or these meetings did you have expectations in advance did you think that this was going to be addressed

PAF6

no well I knew that we would be discussing the results of the 360 feedback, so I knew I was going in to get feedback on how I work, yes I was aware

Lead interviewer

the supervisor that gave you that feedback based on how he interacts with you did you have any expectations on how he would approach you?

PAF6

Yeh I know him pretty well so it was totally fine

Lead interviewer

So you expected he would give you something useful

PAF6

Yeh

#### **Q4: Ineffective Feedback**

Lead interviewer

now I would like you to ask you to think of a time when you received ineffective feedback can you describe an incident like that for us?

PAF6

yes, ok, so I have received feedback that I say "yes" too much to things, it is a challenge that I have been aware of for a very long time and I have been advised to prioritise and say yes to less things and I have not taken that on board but that was a conscious choice. And I understand why I should do it but I choose not to do it.

#### **Q5: Why ineffective**

Lead interviewer

so you felt that thank you but that is not applicable to me that is not something I want to use.

PAF6

no I think it is applicable to me, I think it is something I do, but the reason I have decided it is ok still to say yes to things is because I get a lot more opportunities and a lot more exposure to different types of things and their effect of course on me is more stress and you know I'm running around like always and I've decided that that negative is ok because of the positive outweighs the negatives. Perhaps it would be irritating... it is irritating, it irritates me as well that I'm like that, but it's something that I have just accepted.

#### **Q8: Goal of ineffective feedback**

Lead interviewer

so you felt the goal for this feedback session was to make you reduce your workload a little bit and prioritise how long ago was this

PAF6

2 years ago

Note taker

when you made the conscious choice not to follow the advice did you also give that or challenge back to the feedback giver

PAF6

no I didn't at the time because I had to process and think about it. Because when people give you effective feedback it's not something that... you're not necessarily seeing about yourself so you do need to have this process time. And I think for a while I may have actually did it, because I do what I'm told normally, (laughing) but then you know you go through a cycle

again and people are asking you to do things, and then I thought I had the feedback in the back of my head, and then I said this is the risk you're going to risk getting into the situation where you have too much work to do in a limited amount of time. But then I guess I do take some actions where I immediately say "I am actually very busy with the project here is where I can contribute I will not be able to go in depth into this but I can say very few things based on the data give me a day or so" something like that so maybe it was effective - but I still say yes.

Lead interviewer

But as long as you felt it was ineffective when your supervisor told you this did you feel it was because he was concerned for you because you were doing too much and stressing yourself or was it because he was trying to help you improve the quality of the job you would doing?

PAF6

that's a good question. I believe it was the first case that I was stressing myself too much. It turns you know when you have a certain specialty a niche that you work with that there really aren't that many people that can do what you do, you can also guide others like say ok somebody else who has more time perhaps, or has been working on the asset. I mean I don't think there's anyone in the environment that thinks I deliver 100% perfectly, that's not realistic it's always a battle between the amount of time you have and what you can deliver

## **Q9: Demographics of participant**

Lead interviewer

yes that's a fair observation. We would like to ask you some personal details for the sake of our research, you can choose not to answer if you would not like to just say "choose not to answer" and we all move on. What is your nationality

PAF6

American

Lead interviewer

line of education

PAF6

PhD in structural geology

Lead interviewer

and you've had that all the time you've worked for a Company A?

PAF6

yes and a post doc - so I am over educated.

Lead interviewer

we would also like to get some details from the times of these incidents took place and if you don't remember exactly that's fine, just give us an approximate answer. At the time of receiving the effective feedback how old were you

PAF6

32

Lead interviewer

how long had you worked at the company?

PAF6

2-3 years

Lead interviewer

Same position from when you started to when you received that feedback

PAF6

Yeh kinda, we reshuffled but essentially yes

Lead interviewer

How long had you worked with the person who gave you that feedback?

PAF6

well it was a colleague feedback

Lead interviewer

ok so it was not a supervisor it was a colleague

PAF6

yes and meetings

Lead interviewer

the colleague that you've been working with him for the whole time that you have been in Company A

PAF6

probably about a year or half a year

### **Q10: Demographics of effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

I would also like to ask you some questions about these people the other party in the incidents you have described again if you don't know the answer just give approximate guess the person who gave you the effective feedback you talk too much what gender was this person and nationality and ethnic group.

PAF6

Male, Norwegian, Caucasian

Lead interviewer

his highest education?

PAF6

I think Masters in Geo science, geophysics

Lead interviewer

and how long has he worked at the company

PAF6

6 years

Lead interviewer

How old

PAF6

37 - I'm guessing I just know he's older than me

## **Q11: Demographics of ineffective feedback**

Lead interviewer

and the person who gave the ineffective feedback would like to ask the same questions about her. Nationality, ethnic group, highest completed education, age

PAF6

Female, Norwegian, caucasian. I took the information onboard, I did, now I'm feel like, I listened to the man and not to the woman

Lead interviewer

no no no that's not what this is about. How long has she worked in the company

PAF6

15-20 years

Lead interviewer

How old?

PAF6

At the time 43 maybe

## **Q12: Subjective perception of similarity of effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

so this is a little bit of a difficult question so just take a little bit of time to think about it if you like but on a scale from one to ten where one is very dissimilar and 10 is very similar how would you rate yourself and the person who gave you the effective of feedback?

PAF6

I would say 7, hold on was 1 similar? No ok then a 3

## **Q13: Subjective perception of similarity of ineffective feedback**

Lead interviewer

and same question for the ineffective feedback

PAF6

I would say 4



## Q14: Basis on subjective rating

Lead interviewer

when I asked you this question what did you think about what traits or characteristics did you think about?

PAF6

interesting, because I was thinking in a worldwide context we are very similar because we have similar interests chose this line of work, you know. But within the workplace, personality wise, and experience wise we are a little bit dissimilar individually. The person who gave me the feedback that I took on that I was too open I kind of thought ok that someone who's fairly different from me and giving me feedback from a perspective of somebody who has been listening to me. Whereas the person who gave me the [ineffective] feedback I totally understood where she was coming from, she is very caring, she is caring about me, and that was more from her seeing I was stressed and I thought she was being very kind. I wouldn't say it was ineffective it was effective really, but I just made a conscious decision to still say yes, I took it on like okay don't get too stressed make sure you can handle the workload and accepted this is just how you are so in all cases I took it on I just consciously decided that I would continue to say yes.

Lead interviewer

so if I say I interpret this, that in the first place you kind of internalized it you took this piece of advice, let's just call it advice for the sake of simplicity, you took onboard and you started using it in your daily work life but for the second one you thought about it evaluated it and found that this is not something I want to do this is not advice I want to follow, is that correct?

PAF6

yes I still took it on and recognised what she said and recognised why she said it. It had a lot of value I just decided that I would not follow it as it keeps my job interesting

Note taker

you mentioned very early on that you work in a multicultural environment did you feel that that actually had an influence on the feedback

PAF6

yes definitely, I am a chatty American that's something I've learned a lot over the last 11 years being here I am far more reserved.

Lead interviewer

were you the only foreigner in your team at the time?

PAF6

at the time I was one of the only Americans I think there was only Eric Finnstrøm who was the other one. Since that time we have gotten a lot more [foreigners] but whether I was the only American or the only foreigner in the beginning no I think we've always had a lot of cultures in our teams actually.

Note taker

is it fair to say that most teams have a higher ratio of Norwegians?

PAF6

most teams do, yes, but in our team because we're in exploration excellence division which is like over educated scientists they come from all over actually, my team now I think it is not dominantly Norwegian. Sitting with me currently there is only one Norwegian and 5 Internationals, from Iran, US, Scotland, France, and Mexico.

Lead interviewer

would you say that personal chemistry has been an important factor during the feedback sessions do you think the personal chemistry makes a difference as to how you receive or how you interpret what they're saying to you?

PAF6

Yeh absolutely

Lead interviewer

so if you have a chemistry what does that mean verses when you have a bad chemistry.

PAF6

I think I have a lot of good chemistry with a lot of people I just like people. Can you repeat the question?

Lead interviewer

yes, if you have a good chemistry or a bad chemistry with the person what does that mean to you stepping into the room?

#### **Q4: Ineffective Feedback**

PAF6

That's a very interesting question. I'm going to say a couple of things about it because I've reflected on this in the past that are what we call challenging people who for some reason or another have some strange, not strange, but maybe an obvious chip on their shoulder or

something that's really bugging them and for some reason I listen to those people a lot or maybe some people do and some people don't but then I think "why does that person have this issue with me?" and you think a lot about it and you adjust your behaviour to fit somebody who is a really difficult and challenging person. Why? there's a psychological reason for it. perhaps you know better, I don't know but I've looked into it. Then I made a conscious decision to stop doing that because why are we falling over our feet for challenging people, if they have a valid point for sure it's valid and you see it because you're intelligent enough to do that. But if it's just they're being difficult because they have some issue I don't know what, then I have decided - why not focus on the people who are actually contributing to helping out and focus your energy there, just kind of don't let it get to you. so with the chemistry there yeah. And I found myself that I behave differently around the challenging people as well, all of a sudden, I would be more quiet I won't say things because they're super opinionated I didn't want to seem "actually I have a way better case". [phone rings] actually it's this guy. I'll just walk you through it in case you find it more interesting. I was in my PhD I did fieldwork in an area where I met this person and that's the reason I'm here with this company because we had similar schools and we were leading the field trip and I had a different finding than he had out in the field and I mentioned it and I think that in science debate is relevant and useful but then I went on maternity leave and I had literally written the guidebook like the whole thing. And he's great, like he has great work, but I went on maternity and when I came back he took me off the course and I was like "oh" and the feedback I got from that was that "Anon didn't like the way you disagreed with him about the joints or pressure solutions seams in the field on that one outcrop". And I was like "oh ok" then I actually followed up and called the people and then they said we just don't need to have that many structural geologists on the team. Then I've been on other trips where they have had three sedimentologists on the team and I'm like "I don't know then". I kind of thought "what is that?" And it upset me a lot and my boss actually at the time came and talked to me about it. And I was just like "you know ok fine I get it" but it matters it matters because those fractures are either going to be open in the substructure or the going to be closed and that's why it's relevant I never really... so I went on a field trip last week and I noticed, and this is like 8 years on, but I noticed within myself that I was quiet I didn't talk about things and I had to introspect and think "why am I doing this?" but that was because he was in a position of power he was leading the field trip and I told him I'm coming to be the HSE support, I've got the first aid pack back da da da I'll step in when needed. I did talk a little bit but I definitely toned it down huge [time] and I thought to myself "I don't know if I will do this trip with him again". And that was more a chemistry than a personal thing because when I'm working on other projects fine he doesn't have a problem with what I'm putting on the table but when I disagreed with him and something, it had a huge impact and on the chemistry and the way I behaved. so that was just another case

Note taker

but you probably would have still challenged had there been something that was relevant?

PAF6

I wouldn't have. I actually said to myself this is like an *intellectual me too*.

Lead interviewer

in a hypothetical way if you had challenged him what do you think would have happened? what would the consequences have been?

PAF6

he would have got angry with me he would have asked me to not say anything, yes definitely.

Lead interviewer

so he would have smacked you down again?

PAF6

Yeh actually it came up the pre-course, I was like I'm not going to say anything I'm just not going to bring it up.

Lead interviewer

you said that to him?

PAF6

yes

Lead interviewer

that's interesting actually I'm getting some chills just listening to it. It is an intellectual me too. it's not good

Note taker

do you know this person well enough to know is this something that happens all the time when he gets challenged by someone else?

PAF6

yes a little bit he's a very... his personality type is such that these things would bug him a lot, yes. You have to do a lot of base work to cover your ground and stay on the ground but I had done that so I wasn't worried about it and he was still... but then when we were out in the field I gave him feedback because he was making things too complicated, what a group of 22 people coming from totally different backgrounds learning this stuff he was making it very complicated I said "Anon you know you're over complicating it there's really 4 key messages and if you just say that then they're going to get the message".[he replied] "well but the reservoir engineers don't really care"... [I said] absolutely every reservoir is always more complicated but if you want to deliver a message in a course you need to keep it simple. So I gave him feedback but I didn't use the case that we discussed earlier

Note taker

did he take that onboard?

PAF6

I don't know, hopefully, but we'll see

Note taker

so you felt that it was his personality that he always had to be correct generally?

PAF6

or that he wasn't open to a scientific debate which is kind of anti-science

Lead interviewer

Is he much older than you? Is there a nature of seniority that he might have felt challenged?

PAF6

Yeh, sure, definitely, I think so.

### **Q11: Demographics of ineffective feedback**

Note taker

could you give some details about him regarding his nationality etc

PAF6

British, PhD

Lead interviewer

Approximate age

PAF6

he's probably 48 or 53 I've no idea, middle aged. If you're looking for generalizations I don't know if you're only going to leadership track but also senior advisors and leading advisors and all the technical track is a challenging subset of people quite intellectual and also people will have some less challenging personalities jumping to teams of people with technical know-how they are really challenging people socially they are slightly different if you know what I'm saying, in a roundabout way I'm saying "they're hard to deal with."

### **Q11: Demographics of ineffective feedback**

Lead interviewer

would you say that your line manager is someone who is also a PhD holder?

PAF6

she is Masters I believe

Lead interviewer

is she educated in the same field as you

PAF6

slightly different but geoscience yes.

### **Q13: Subjective perception of similarity of ineffective feedback**

Note taker

can I ask you to rate the British PhD 53 year old and yourself on the similar/dissimilar scale

PAF6

3, 2 maybe. mean we're all kind of similar really often you say that people most similar...

Note taker

this research is more inductive so we don't really know what we're looking at at the moment

### **Q15: General comments on feedback**

PAF6

ok here's the difference I would say. the way that the feedback came back... the chemistry was so... I was very offended and that might have had to do with my hormones because I was just back from maternity leave (laughing) and I had done so much work for it that it was kind of offensive that the older more powerful more senior people... but then after a while I realised that that's just business and that's just the way things are and now I kinda don't care too much about it but at the same time when I came back and did it again with him I thought ok I'm just saying yes because I would love to go back it's interesting I always get a lot of feedback from the people and it's a good thing.

Lead interviewer

so would you say if the delivery of this feedback had been nicer more constructive would you have received it better

PAF6

yes if you had come to me and said that you know last time we were out in the field we had a disagreement about this could we open it up to hear what you have to say we could come to a scientific understanding about it are agree to disagree or whatever or have it be a science unknown that's fine and we could approach it in some other way that would have been way better absolutely.

Note taker

did you get the feedback from him or did you get it from someone else

PAF6

I got it from someone else I didn't really understand what had happened, I guess I reacted strongly and my boss spoke to me and it became a big deal but then I said I'm fine about it. it was probably both my reaction to it...

Note taker

is this person now aware or has it never really been discussed openly

PAF6

I don't know if it's been discussed openly I'm going to actually ask one of the co leaders because I said to him at one point because we had a very good chemistry and we did a great job teaching it when I done it without this guy but he in a way... I was walking on eggshells around him and that is not really facilitating an open discussion about stuff and I said I don't know whether I should say something because I'm kind of getting a weird vibe. I don't know if that's me or if it's him and then I think he maybe said something to him, I'm not sure because then he was like nice. I don't know you never know what happens behind the scenes I don't feel comfortable talking to him about it I just feel it's not worth it.

Lead interviewer

What's interesting is that is stuck with you for 8 years it's still has an impact on your relationship with this guy.

PAF6

we get along really well otherwise we'll use each other quite a lot for all sorts of things it's kind of just like a little click that this is just how he is and you have to deal with people as they are I think it's ok. So I kinda look more at my reaction, "am I enjoying this" "is it ok for me to be in this powerless role and still participate."

Note taker

it's interesting you should say that because when you speak about the situations, you are saying you just have to accept people as they are, however you talk about the effective as it was actually changing you and what you are, which sounds contradictory.

PAF6

that is a very astute observation. it's true but these are choices. You get feedback in life and you realise some things you want to take on board and some things you don't. because but that's something I think with maturity that happens with me. now I am at a place where I am more confident about myself I'm more comfortable with my weaknesses and strengths and I can still adjust my weaknesses to make myself a more effective employee but that's my choice. I can take the feedback and make a decision on whether or not to take it onboard or not. But, you're right I do try to make myself better, but who doesn't it's called growth isn't it.

Note taker

but there are two sides of it as well, there are some that are very rigid and don't bother to change

PAF6

yes you can see that but I am more like a chameleon I will adapt to my situation. whereas some people are just like a rock they are always the way they are.

Note taker

and that's the thing, that may be because you are the Chameleon or you're more accepting and you have that growth mindset that people are willing to give you that feedback to say that sometimes you are too open for example with as if you were a different kind of person they may not even go there.

PAF6

I completely agree with that. another example is I gave a presentation after having taken a course on giving effective presentations so after I asked for some feedback and I nailed the presentation. the feedback was just like all complaints and then the next guy gave a really crappy presentation and there was no useful feedback given but then I thought it's because I opened up for feedback because if you were to compare them next to each other you would feel that one was far better.

Lead interviewer

I speak from experience when I say... that for example I'm a fairly good writer so when we do coursework and oftentimes if I'm asked to give feedback I am happy to point out "this is crap" or "this is not good you need to fix this and you need to do that" but if I read someone else's paper and they haven't asked for feedback I'm not going to give it to them because I would feel bad giving them something that's like, it's constructive but it is essentially negative



it is essentially still "this can be improved this is not good enough" but you have that barrier of actually going out of your way to say this is not good enough unless they specifically asked for it because then there is this aspect of, at least in the Norwegian society, am I going to hurt this person's feelings are they going to think negatively of me and all of that. it is a phenomenon, not even a phenomenon it just a thing.

PAF6

yes the social dynamics I totally agree with you on that. and that's true opening it up or not opening it up for feedback and I also think no matter how we say something you can basically get to something that's quite negative but you can say it in the right way that doesn't get received as being very negative as a positive thing.

Note taker

we did a course in creativity and he opened up for feedback on what he was showing us and everybody was negative and he actually said this is how we are so when you open up the feedback expect negative feedback nobody would have said we really like this that was not one person who said this was good.

Lead interviewer

I think there was one person who said this is good because it is so bizarre it can't be real or something like that

Note taker

and yet everyone else was negative so I'm afraid that's how we are as people it seems

PAF6

Yeh, and then you listen to the psychologist who says that for every one negative thing we need to say 5 positive things.

Note taker

correct but that's not how we live our lives, so ducks water and backs have to come into it.

PAF6

Yes exactly

Lead interviewer

I think we have got a lot here thank you

PAF6

if you need better numbers I can get those.

Lead interviewer

Not really one of the key elements is the perception so your approximate guess is probably more interesting than the real numbers to be honest.

PAF6

well I wish you very good luck.

Interview PAM2 on 19 April 2018 at Company A.

/translated from Norwegian/ - **No quotes used in thesis** as this has been translated only from Norwegian to English and not cross-checked by a third party translating back to Norwegian as a quality check.

[exposition dump]

### **Q1: Supervisor**

Lead interviewer

[...] Are you a supervisor?

PAM2

*No.*

### **Q4: Ineffective Feedback**

Lead interviewer

And... Thinking of a time when you received ineffective feedback, can you describe this situation in as much detail as possible?

PAM2

*What do you mean by... Uhm... Can you, uhm, rephrase the question?*

Note taker

Well, the reason why we would like you to describe a time that it was ineffective is that it is all your perception. So we would rather not put words into your mouth.

Lead interviewer

When we say ineffective feedback, what comes to mind?

PAM2

Ineffective feedback, the way I have worked, or delivered any work to others?

Note taker

It's up to you. As to – was it ineffective to you, was it ineffective to your boss, and it is completely your perspective of what that means.

PAM2

It's... I can't take any exact episode from that now, but it happened regularly, of course, and that's quite normal, most situations. So... I can't really take out or find a special example, no.

Note taker

If you describe the last one that you had, was that normal – the usual normal, regular, the last time you had your feedback session, for example?

PAM2

No, but – this is maybe a little beside your question... Often, there are changes to the input to my work very late, often the same day that I should deliver my work and... you get an email or /contradictory information compared to what you have received before... that's not unusual. And some of this information has been possessed by people for a long time without passing it on. That makes me have to do things all over again. But this is not really what you asked?

Note taker

Yeah. So you say that often... The information, they've been sitting on it, is that what you said? So you both get late input, and sometimes you feel the input could have come earlier?

PAM2

Yes, sometimes. There's also a lot of changes in how they want to do things.

Lead interviewer

So there's a sense of urgency occasionally that does not necessarily match up to your expectations?

PAM2

Yeah, I have one example. I used to have /three in-drawers on my desk. They were labelled "urgent", "very urgent" and «no longer urgent». And the very urgent stuff was often just put straight into the "no longer urgent" drawer. We have to do it this way and that way, we have to decide on the design for this top side, this module in this and that way, we have to look at the current costs – and often, when you come in to work the day after, you find out we're not doing it that way after all. So I did, actually, have on my desk, "urgent", "very urgent", "no longer urgent". And it might have gotten better over the past few years, it has. Fifteen years ago was very messy.

Note taker

And do you feel that was because there were so many cooks involved?

PAM2

/Yes, and no... but yes... and a lot of steps, like you have the asset owner or project owner sitting in Stavanger and receiving input from other projects about how they do things, and this spreads down until it eventually reaches the poor slaves at the bottom, rather than having a project manager cut through and say that no, we're doing this now. So we get too many alternatives – we're struggling with that. Looking at too many cases at the same time. And a lot of the cases are so similar, it is just a waste of time looking at them all. I mean, if it costs a billion, five hundred million, one is 1.450 in the early stages... it's not.... There are so many uncertainties in a weight/cost estimate to begin with, a lot of this is just a few millions one way or another, and we spend a lot time on those cases, and... well, put a lot of effort into it, and I mean that's a waste in these early stages.

Note taker

So can you describe a situation, because the reason we need you to describe a situation like is, is because we need you to think about the person who actually gave you the feedback as well.

PAM2

gave me the feedback?

Note taker

Yes. Is there a time that you – a time when you received ineffective feedback. Is there a time you can – it's entirely up to you what time it was, but when a situation like this has arised?

## **Q2: Effective feedback**

PAM2

It's a – it's ongoing. It's a problem that we have in the project, yes. Uhm... Some of the project leaders are better at being a buffer for changes. Especially an, uhm... A Canadian project – that project leader is very good at saying no, you're doing this. He's also... /very receptive for us saying that enough is enough, we can't do this. He's good at stopping things at that point. Others keep saying that it has to be done by tomorrow. We have to look at this. Even if.... Yeah, as I said, it can feel like a waste of time sometimes.

### Lead interviewer

I think you have actually described – if not a specific situation, then at least a specific reoccurring incident involving say for instance two different people. This one, who says no, we gotta do this by tomorrow, we gotta finish this all, and the other one who says okay, I'll take your input for it, let's wait a little bit and let's do it this way... So if you can just use the two of them, do you agree [to Note taker]?

## Q2: Effective feedback

### Note taker

Well, if you can... Could you also describe an incident of effective feedback? A time when you had feedback that you thought, this is effective?

### PAM2

/What do you really mean, or what do you attribute to...? Well, as I said – from my side, in this one project, the management of the project has been very clear on what needs to be done and what shouldn't be done, and they have managed to stop "what if" studies. And it seems to me that they have gotten better lately. It might be that we gotten a kind of «lean» way of thinking, and... Or, well, I say that, but I've just seen through a project where we look at seven different cases that have almost no differences; we could really have told them from the beginning that we don't need to look at this, it costs more or less and – often, the errors within the estimate bigger than the differences of the different cases.

### Note taker

So then if we can use the ineffective as these seven different cases that you've been asked to look at, with this kind of format in them, and the effective maybe with the Canadian project manager?

## Q10: Demographics of effective feedback

### PAM2

He's a Norwegian, but it is a Canadian project. He is very Norwegian.

## Q6: Comparison of the effective/ineffective

### Lead interviewer

Because we are, not in so many words, but just to be a little bit meta about this... The point of the interview is sort of to... not compare, but contrast the two situations, the effective and the ineffective. So we're trying to pinpoint different sort of elements or dimensions that occur in the ineffective vs those that occur in the effective. And this is very much about the communication between you as the worker and your supervisor as the feedback or communication... giver. The sender of the message.

### PAM2

/Within the department I have a one-to-one relationship with feedback from my supervisor, she actually sits next to me. So we have a very nice tone and she has been an estimator for many years, so she knows what the situation is. So that's not really a problem at all. In the projects, there are lot engineering, managers, project managers with different attitudes to things. There, we occasionally have... Well, some people wants to look at everything, really, without really comprehending.... I mean, they don't always look at the bigger picture, it becomes too detailed.

### Note taker

So then if you want to choose ineffective, for example [...] is the one with seven different cases a good example of it?

## Q4: Ineffective Feedback

PAM2

/I might have a better example of ineffectivity... and that is when we want to develop our tools, and the money is so rigid in this company. Absurdly rigid. I mean, we use many million on... Uhm, you become a bit careful with what you want to say...

Note taker

Well, nobody will know – this is not going to be part of the thesis anyway, but even if it was, we don't name people. Nobody knows who anyone is.

Lead interviewer

Yes, and this is going to be deleted.

Note taker

It's totally anonymous.

PAM2

[?????mumble] /No, uhm... We have the opportunity to develop an estimation tool, but that costs a lot of money of course, and we're not spending a lot of resources on it, but this will make our daily lives easier and ensure the quality of our estimates quite a lot. But we have to go up and up and up in the system, but it's no and no every time, and we have to argue our case with several A4-pages letters, that is... long emails with our reasons for why this is important, and it can take a year to get the improvement of the system through, it's.... So in that way, it kind of becomes a project problem, a little bit... Yeah, we're used to it taking a week or two, but this is... For instance, Siesta, our estimation tool, we had to go through several rounds, and it took over a year to get the approval for subscribing to it, and now that we have new Aspilt [sp?] platforms that we need data from into the program, they don't want to pay for it. And the newer information we have the better our tools, the better we estimate, and we can save a lot more money on estimating than the total cost of integrating the information into our tools. We're struggling with that. And I understand – and my closest manager completely agrees, but this is so much higher. It's with Anon and – actually, it's before her. It's with these middle managers climbing upwards that want to show that they can save money. We're struggling with that. It's very important that these middle managers can show that they can save on their budgets.

Note taker

But this is more of a system problem rather than ineffective feedback. And it's ineffective to your leader, maybe. I guess if he was sitting here it would be him that would get the feedback from the middle management, saying no it's not possible. But you're saying your leader understands you and actually supports you.

PAM2

Yes. /but it is still us who have to make all the arguments and spend time on trying to get the ones above us to understand and approve that we can actually spend money on this.

Lead interviewer

In that sense, it's more than a dyad, it's... it exists on different levels as well. Because the feedback situation does not exist in a vacuum of the two people... that's something we can include... Is there anything specific about the way that your leader or manager talks to you when she gives you – say that you sit next to her, so she can give you feedback all the time, she can talk to you, tell what you're doing... is there any way she is communicating this sort of response to your work that you feel is effective or ineffective? What does her communication about your job, what does that tell you?

#### **Q4: Ineffective Feedback**

PAM2

We have this yearly “people at Company A” meetings, four times a year or so, and there is some positives about that and some... Well, I am sixty years old, so my slads [??] and my ambitions for the next six-seven years... it’s very well suited for younger people. But when you have decided long ago that you don’t want to be a manager, that you like to... /execute a job, deliver a piece of work to the project, then much of this “people at Company A”... that’s a lot of ambitions and making plans and stuff, and much more suited for those who want to become a manager. My impression, at least, is that much of «people at Company A» is more about your future plans, your future ambitions, to climb up the hierarchy. I have never had any desire to do that.

Note taker

But the technical pipeline, is that not more suited?

PAM2

sorry?

Note taker

You’ve got the leadership pipeline, which is the one you’re speaking about, and you’ve got the technical pipeline.

PAM2

Yeah.

Note taker

So the technical pipeline is for people who don’t want to travel up and do the sort of hierarchy –

PAM2

Yes, but that’s... A daily ongoing for me in a different project, different... /problem. Not a lot of seminars, although you have had a load of seminars, so... Yeah.

Note taker

Yeah, but that’s the one you use when you don’t want to use the other one.

#### **Q15: General comments on feedback**

PAM2

/I work as a kind of... bridging, or whatever you want to call it. Since I have been here for so many years, a lot of people come to me asking for help and advice, and I’m used a lot in colleague checks and reviews of other people’s work and stuff like that.

Note taker

so the positive of “people at Company A” is if you are interested in doing the climbing of the system, then you think it’s a positive tool? But the negative is if you don’t want to do that?

PAM2

No, I can’t say it’s negative. /But.. Sometimes I feel like this is a little bit wasted work as well. But this is such a big firm, so it needs a lot of... routines and tools to develop its employees. So I understand it, but I am used to running my own company prior to starting her, together with three-four others, and a one-to-one dialogue there is something completely different. It is mostly, when it gets as big as this place is, a lot of things become really ingrained.

Lead interviewer

Sounds like it's a little bit systematized... I guess this, the "people at Company A" is more about identifying and pushing forward the people who want to grow in the hierarchy rather than people who want to grow in their current position, in their current job?

PAM2

Yeah, that's... Yeah. /I guess I'm feeling that, at least. Can't be completely wrong. I don't have a clue, actually, I feel that if you're happy where you're at right now, the questions in "people at Company A" are phrased in such a way that you feel that you should be more ambitious to reach higher up in the system.

Lead interviewer

/Is this done by a line manager or a third party?

PAM2

/Line manager, first and foremost. So I can state my opinion freely. So I can say that I think this is just nonsense, if I want to say that.

Lead interviewer

/So it's like, she knows you, you know her, free communication all the way?

PAM2

/Yes, and that's the way it has been with all the others who haven't sat next to me as well... I have just changed manager again, there has been... a lot of shuffling of managers, for my part, in estimation. They wanted me to be chief engineer, but I said no. I don't think administrative tasks are interesting at all, and the minute you become section leader, because we have several smaller departments within estimation, but the minute you become section leader, you mostly just participate in meetings, mostly administrative stuff, it's HR and those tasks, and the one who was the section leader before has gone back and become chief engineer rather than section leader, he didn't want to do the administrative tasks, he wanted to work with the field, and I'd rather do that too. More practical.

Note taker

But I thought that was what the technical pipeline was all about, for those who only wanted to work with their actual subjects, instead of – because there are loads of people who dislike the administration, loads of people don't want to become a leader. But still want to have some kind of form of advancement, so I thought that was the whole reason for – instead of just having the leadership pipeline, they actually developed a technical pipeline.

PAM2

/Yes, and that's... My impression, at least, is that the opportunities to climb on a salary level is very limited if you don't pursue leadership. Unnecessarily limited in Company A.

Lead interviewer

/But there are only so many leadership positions.

PAM2

/Yes, there are too many already. So I understand that.

Lead interviewer

/Is it to increase competition, you think? To push people to aim for these position in order to select the best ones, or is it...



PAM2

/My understanding is that they very early on pick out the young people that they want to push forward to these various leadership positions. I know several people who have been put to various trainee tasks or positions very early on, becoming assistant project managers in projects... One guy is going to be offshore soon as the assisting platform manager, and he was chosen for this at an early age. That is, to go in that direction, to climb highly on the ladder. So I'll give them that. I know several people who... Already as 30-year olds were picked to do that. So it's an early selection of people whom the management wishes to go forward in that direction.

Lead interviewer

/[So talent management, and a little bit less focus on... The technical workers? Is that a company policy or an impression you have?

PAM2

/More an impression. I can't say that that's company policy...

Lead interviewer

/No, that might be a little bit troublesome...

PAM2

/Yes But those that I know, who've been selected to do these things, they are very talented and clever... Bright, intelligent people, so in one way I'm impressed that they have managed to get them through the system from such an early age.

Lead interviewer

/Do you think that these people have a different impression of this system, the "people at Company A", the development, being put in different positions and stuff like that, do you think they experience this differently than you do?

PAM2

/Yes, I think they will. But I didn't start in this firm until 2011, and then I'd been working relatively long as an independent. And then I was a hired consultant here for 15 years, so... So in that way, it's very different for me to enter the "people at Company A" conversations compared to the people who come straight from school and start here. But if we are going to talk about "people at Company A", there are some... I mean, HR is very present here and evaluates a lot in relation to salary raises, etc. And this one guy who's running to become platform manager, he had a superior who simply told him during their "people at Company A" meeting that "I don't like you", and that's a kind of message about... That is, he isn't getting the most positive... I mean, HR won't get a very positive evaluation about this guy from his manager. Sometimes it can be a little bit too subjective, the messages the superiors give, so.. But this guy has fortunately been liked so many other places that he's about to become platform manager. He's fine.

Note taker

But maybe he or she did him a favour by saying it directly, because that means he can move elsewhere.

PAM2

/Yes, but he was already enrolled in one of these trainee programs saying that he's supposed to be in this and that department for a certain amount of time, on his way up, to acquire information from various fields. So in a way, it didn't matter much. But let's say he hadn't been, that he had been stuck in this department, then... It would have been a problem.

Note taker

So now we need to close... Which ones we're going to follow up from the ineffective and the effective, and it has to be something you have experienced. So I've noted down the different things of the generalization...

PAM2

/Yes, but the most ineffective is how we are going to improve our tools.

Note taker

But that's... Would you say that's directly with you? If we were then to ask you questions... It's really, about you having to take the work, but it's your boss who's having to take the feedback from the people that are stopping it, isn't it? He's a messenger, to you?

PAM2

/Yes, he is.

Note taker

But I guess you can use that, and we can see –

PAM2

/For my regular days at work, to feel like I'm doing a higher quality job, I need the latest information we can get, experience number and base. For them to be updated with the latest information we have. And when that's cut short because of small sums, you become a bit grumpy. Because we know how much money we make, and then when we can't use 100000, 150000 [kr] on updates of an important system, but we can spend 2.6 million on changing our name. Yeah, then you get a little bit like... Hello?

Note taker

But that's why I'm wondering whether that's the example we should do the follow-up questions for, because then... Well, we can try. Do you want to try and do the follow-up questions and see if it stops up because of the actual dyad?

Lead interviewer

I was gonna say, how do we identify the second party in either of those?

Note taker

No that's what I was trying to say is that we're looking at dyads, which is just you and your boss, and... Yeah, generally, you and the person supervising you or giving you feedback. I think with that one, it's actually difficult to do that, isn't it?

PAM2

Mhm...

Note taker

Because the dyad, [??] the ineffective is really when they're getting stopped, and then that's your boss, because your boss is supporting you.

PAM2

Yeah.

Note taker

... By the sounds of things, so if you... You see what I mean?

PAM2

/Yeah, there's a pretty young person who's become chief engineer. And he's tried to stop me a few times, and then I've had to write some pretty long emails to get him to understand that this is actually important.

Note taker

Okay then maybe that's the dyad we should concentrate on. Because that's being ineffective to you, and that's following what you're saying that the tool you're using is not being invested in and affecting the quality, and then the dyad is the one you just spoke about. Then we can use that with this description for the follow-up.

PAM2

/Yes, it's – he's kind of a middleman, though. The woman who sits next to me is section manager, and he's chief engineer, the job I did not want, and he's tried to stop a few of those things that I think are important that we all have in our department. But I have had to spend a lot of time, even waking up an old colleague, named Anon, where he came with some useful input that then... He was back at work, all of a sudden, after having been retired for three years, but then he came back immediately, because this irritated him so much. But you know, why should I spend three days on this, something so important, and he's.... [laughs]

Note taker

It's okay, we're not taking any names down.

PAM2

/No, but everyone understands chief engineer.

Note taker

But they don't know who you are!

PAM2

/Oh yes they do. Recognize my voice.

Note taker

This is a man who speaks about conspiracies, I forgot about that. Anyway. Right. Yes.

PAM2

I need more Or...

Note taker

Yeah, it's a bit late for that one.

PAM2

No, it's never too late. Talking about conspiracy.

Note taker

Yeah, exactly, I think he's been doing it since he was fourteen years old. Okay.

Lead interviewer

Uh.. Trying to figure out where we are...

Note taker

If we do the follow-up questions for the ineffective, if we take it that ineffective is also between PAM2 and this other person who stopped it?

Lead interviewer

So if we take that as the description as the answer to why this is ineffective...

PAM2

Well if the reason is that that's the system that makes it ineffective, in one way... /The person who is chief engineer in Company A, he is chief engineer for maximum three years, and then he has to go, has to be changed. And then there will be a new chief engineer. And the last chief engineer we have now, perhaps doesn't have enough experience to be chief engineer. With the previous one, the upgrade of the estimation tools would have gone straight through, nothing to even discuss. So maybe three years is a little bit short for someone to be in that position, they need some time to get warm and confident in that situation. Because coming in – when you're chief engineer, you're not just doing subject material, there's lots of administration, and if anything happens you're getting sent here and there across the world to try and put out fires, so... Three years may be a bit short, but then again, if you get a chief engineer who isn't capable, it might be a good idea to change him out early.

Lead interviewer

/When you say that this person being chief engineer lacked experience, do you mean experience from before, working with the subject material, or do you mean experience in the position of chief engineer?

PAM2

/Not that – eh, the first thing you said. That is, age, work experience, in general...

Lead interviewer

/So put in this position a bit early?

PAM2

/Yes. He's good in a lot of ways, don't get me wrong, but...

Lead interviewer

/He should have had something more?

PAM2

/Yes. Some people are a bit like... Some of the people who are young and get the chief engineer position, they are very good at asking others for advice and help. But others, when getting the position, they're very quick to make decisions by themselves and at once, and then maybe on failing grounds, because they don't have a sufficient background, really.

Note taker

And that's the experience you have with this one?

PAM2

Maybe, yes.

Note taker

He doesn't reach out enough to others?

PAM2

/Yes. You shouldn't be afraid to ask. And some people, who get this responsibility, are afraid of asking others for advice.

Lead interviewer

/Yes, maybe it's this feeling that asking means undermining their authority.

PAM2

/Yes, maybe it's that they're not... They feel, yeah, not strong enough in the subject material, and don't want to show this to others. But I believe it is much more important just to ask.

Lead interviewer

/And this is a current ongoing situation, someone's doing this right now, or is it something that happened five years ago, for example?

PAM2

/No this is pretty fresh. But I feel like I'm seeing improvements now.

Lead interviewer

/It's a situation in development?

PAM2

/Yes. So in three years time, everything should be good.

Lead interviewer

/When he's switched out, things will be good.

Note taker

So we've got the ineffective here, and then the effective we identified was the Norwegian that worked at the Canadian project? When is the last time you had any interaction or feedback from him?

PAM2

December.

Lead interviewer

/Is this a closed, or completed project, or –

PAM2

/No, it's on-going. Actually... That project got tasked with looking at another project. Because there were no one available to take one of these new projects. So those of us involved with the Canadian project were put to one of the Brazil projects. On very short notice. And we did. Even got... Well, considering the time we were given, I think what we did was very good. In all disciplines.

Lead interviewer

/And do you think... Considering the time you had, it turned out very, do you think that can be accredited to the leader in some kind of way, this Norwegian leader?

PAM2

/Yes, amongst other things. He cut down on... In this situation as well we had several cases, five cases, but we only had time to look at one case, and this one was chosen, as a reference case.

Lead interviewer

/So he was like... The job he did, the leadership he demonstrated, did that have a considerable effect on the final outcome of the project in its entirety? He wasn't just there to be a figurehead in the leader position, he actually had an influence?

PAM2

/Yes.

Lead interviewer

/Do you have any more examples of this, except when he cut through and said no, we have to do this, we have to prioritize that, etc?

PAM2

/There have been others who have been good at this too, but sometimes, there's... In some of these early phase projects we get a lot of good ideas which we should be better at saying no to. And all of these good ideas usually come from... Not necessarily in these projects, but there are asset owners in Stavanger, and they suggest, can't you look at a cement platform instead? When we're in the middle of building a ship.

Note taker

So is that an element of it? That people who don't have the whole holistic view of the projects come in with suggestions?

PAM2

/Yes, those who are project owners, some levels above... Project manager.... Before, it was PAM2d asset owner, but now we have changed to project director, I think. I'm crap when it comes to titles and names. What you're not interested in, you don't know much about.

Note taker

We can probably go on to the details of them.

## **Q9: Demographics of participant**

Lead interviewer

Right. /So we have two situations, the negative one with the chief engineer, and the positive one with this project manager. Are you okay with us asking a few personal details? If you say no I'm sure Note taker can fill in the blanks anyway.

PAM2

/No, she probably knows more than I want her to.

Lead interviewer

/It's not very detailed. But yes... We are going to ask you about some details regarding yourself, and some details about the individuals involved in these situations, and if you don't know the exact answer, just give an approximation. If we take the negative situation with the chief engineer, that's happening about now?

PAM2

Mhm.

Lead interviewer

/How old are you now?

PAM2

60.

Lead interviewer

/And you are from Norway. What is your highest form of completed education?

PAM2

/Engineering college.

Lead interviewer

/Is that a master's degree?

PAM2

/No, it's not a civil engineer, so not Trondheim, it's an Oslo engineering college.

Lead interviewer

/Perhaps the same system with schools and degrees didn't really exist at the time...

Note taker

There was no proper form of education when you went to school!

PAM2

/It's a step below civil engineer, I guess. The engineering education is about using formulas and rules, while the civil engineering education is more about elaborating how you established the formulas and rules that you use.

Note taker

How many years was this education?

PAM2

/High school and two years.

Note taker

So that's /high school now plus two year, so a bachelor's, I would think.

Lead interviewer

/Yes, there is a similar thing now, profession schools I think. How long had you been working in the company at that point, was it about 15 years? Or 15 years as a consultant, was that what you said?

PAM2

/Yes, or, I'd been in Hydro as a consultant before.

Lead interviewer

/But let's say this specific setting, then.

PAM2

/This specific setting, that's been... Since 2011, really, as an employee that is. But before that I was working almost 15 continuous years as a consultant, but that included a lot of traveling, new build projects, on site during the building. Now it's more the basis, pure estimations of new build projects. New projects. And that's what the firm I had before, what we were really doing. We developed the tools that were used at that time, and the tools we are still using now. That was developed at that time, in that firm. But as a consultant I didn't really work that much as an estimator, it was more about follow-up on a building site.

Lead interviewer

/So you weren't here a lot, in this office?

PAM2

/No, I wasn't here at all. I was a week commuter, to all sorts of odd places around this country.

## Q11: Demographics of ineffective feedback

Lead interviewer

/Okay, so now we have a few similar questions about the two people involved in the situations discussed. First the chief engineer, approximately how old was this person? Is?

PAM2

35?

Lead interviewer

/Man or woman?

PAM2

/Man.

Lead interviewer

/And he was Norwegian?

PAM2

/No, he has not Norwegian. He was from... Bulgaria, I think?

Lead interviewer

/And then we're supposed to ask about ethnicity, but that...

Note taker

That's Caucasian, isn't it? He's a white Bulgarian?

PAM2

Gypsy, isn't it?

Note taker

Sorry?

PAM2

/No, I'm not sure. Bulgaria? Bulgarian?

Lead interviewer

/I thought maybe... Romanian?

PAM2

/Yeah, just use that. He might be from Romania and not Bulgaria, even. I don't know about the countries around there, have lost control completely.

Lead interviewer

/And I presume he had some sort of specific education that made him qualified to work with this. Do you know what kind of education that was?

PAM2

/Yes, that was... Uhm... No, I don't know exactly what it was, but some kind of engineering education, possibly also civil engineering, from... Well Romania or Bulgaria.



## Q10: Demographics of effective feedback

Lead interviewer

/He has some years from a university or college. And then there's this Norwegian project manager, a guy, that means we already have some information, he's a Norwegian project manager and a man, approximately how old was he?

PAM2

/Fifty... Just above fifty. Fifty-two or so. He's a civil engineer.

Lead interviewer

/He's ethnically Norwegian as well?

PAM2

Yes.

Lead interviewer

/And has what educational background?

PAM2

/Civil engineer.

Lead interviewer

/Oh yes you said that, I'm losing track now... And then I forgot to ask for both of them, how long have they been in the company, but that might not be so easy to say anything about if you haven't been working here with them?

PAM2

/No, I don't know. The chief engineer, he's hired after meg... So 2013, I think, 2012-2013. The other guy has been here longer, he came from Hydro, I think.

Note taker

So twenty?

PAM2

Yup. We have got rid of the worst of them.

Note taker

We're not going there. We're running out of time, I think.

PAM2

/Someone who downright harrassed other people in meetings and stuff, with other people present. He's retired now...

Note taker

You could have used him for ineffective! But anyway.

PAM2

/I didn't remember until now. Don't want to think about him, it ruins my mood.

Note taker

If you were to speak about your relationship, did you have any kind of relationship with the [...] chief engineer? Either a work relationship where you felt that you spoke with him all the time, or outside for a beer, was there any sort of....

PAM2

Yeah, he's actually okay, and I actually taught him how to use our tools –

Note taker

So you have a good working relationship?

PAM2

Yeah. /I don't know if I was a mentor for him but I was a mentor for someone else, from Brazil I think. But I taught them to use our estimation tools, and our background for it. So don't misunderstand, he is good and understands, but he is a little bit square and wants to decide that this is how it is going to be, instead of taking time to ask questions and stuff.

Note taker

And the relationship with the other guy? Was he based in Canada?

PAM2

No, he's here.

Note taker

And did you have a good working relationship with him?

PAM2

Yes.

Note taker

And was it a daily working relationship, so you saw each other a lot?

PAM2

Yes.

## **Q12: Subjective perception of similarity of effective feedback**

Note taker

And then finally, since we're running out of time, if you think totally subjective and say how similar are you to the chief engineer, on a scale of one to ten, one is no similarities and ten is very similar, can you put yourself on a scale about how similar you are to each other?

PAM2

/The candidate barely understood the question.

Note taker

So if we said that, okay take you and I. How similar are we? And how similar are you to this guy, for example, would you say that you are very similar to him?

PAM2

Yeah. The project manager?

Note taker

Yes, on a scale from one to ten, would you go so far as to say 8-9?

PAM2

7. Yeah.

Note taker

And with the chief engineer?

PAM2

4? Give me a dice and I'll give you the answer.

Note taker

Is there anything else?

Lead interviewer

No, I think we've covered most of our points, anyway. All the things we wanted to get through.

PAM2

/But we haven't spoken about the top management of the company. There hasn't been anything about that.

Note taker

Because that's not a part of our question, we're into the dyads –

PAM2

/Because I think that's gotten a lot better over the past few years. The trust in the company has increased after this... Anon took over.

Note taker

He's just making sure that if the tape comes out, he's securing his job in the company.

PAM2

/No, he... That was becoming really thin for me towards the end with the last one. But of course he was also the boss during that great downsizing, money saving era, where they found so many dumb cost reducing methods, right, so my attitude to him reflected that I had seen too many silly cost cutting programs. Like moving all of IT to India and all this other nonsense they did, which isn't cost cutting at all... Fired everyone at the help desk, so if there were any issues, we had to report a case to India, and then that was to be brought back and resolved on your phone in Norway, it couldn't be done to make this efficient. And those things have largely been resolved after this new guy has taken over. If that's on him or not...

Note taker

I don't think so, I don't think that's related.

[TAPE CUT]

Interview PBM10 on 14th June 2018 at . COMPANY B

## **Q1: Supervisor**

Lead interviewer

first of all are your supervisor

PBM10

no I am not a supervisor

## **Q2: Effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

can you think of a time when you received effective feedback and describe the situation as much detail as possible please

PBM10

[effective – receiver]

yes sometimes I do something wrong I normally receive feedback right away and when I do something right or do according to expectations you normally don't receive feedback.

Lead interviewer

do you have an example of a specific incident that this has happened just any normal situation that you can describe to us

PBM10

yes this could be very precise when I remove some data which was used by others what happened a few years ago and I was told you should not remove the data.

Lead interviewer

that was in an immediate response from your supervisor

PBM10

it was not from supervisor, but from my colleagues who were using the same data I thought it was only for my use

Lead interviewer

how long ago was this approximately

PBM10

it was around 3 years ago

Lead interviewer

and how did they tell you this did they just sort of walk up to you, and say “don't do this” and then walk away again

PBM10

it was more like wow who has removed these files and they indicated that the files that were removed and it was me and we just discuss the ownership of the files and who should be allowed to do what with the files. It wasn't a big crisis because these files are not files that could not be restored or reproduced so it was just an extra job to create these files again.

### **Q3: Why effective**

Lead interviewer

so it was resolved quite quickly

PBM10

correct.

### **Q4: Ineffective Feedback**

Lead interviewer

I would now like you to think of a time that you received ineffective feedback could you describe a situation like that please

PBM10

ineffective feedback, I actually cannot recall any ineffective feedback sometimes when people are just complaining about something that could be better next time, I think when feedback is not related to some practical things then it is not very effective because you can't do something to prevent the same situation.

Lead interviewer

so you need something concrete in order to be effective

PBM10

correct, I think if it's a feedback that's related to some practical things and very concrete not very abstract.

Lead interviewer

you had performance appraisals in March, the PA. could you briefly describe you don't have to go into detail about what your supervisor told you but can you describe the situation the atmosphere and what kind of feedback you got then.

PBM10

[ineffective – receiver]

normally we have this twice a year in this company we have the PA process which is from your management. Here we go through goals at end of year and at the beginning of the year we set the goals then we see how did you perform according to goals and then the manager gives you an estimation of how he thinks you have been performing according to the others and this has some influence to year salary adjustment for next year. The question was?

Lead interviewer

were you happy with the one you had some weeks ago

PBM10

it was quite a long time ago actually that I had a PA conversation with my manager but I would say that it is very formal and it doesn't show a relationship, or a direct relationship to the adjustment. It has become a more formal process I think this process was established around 4-5 years ago and it is new to both managers and employees so originally it was much more engaged in the process but after 5 years it has become more official standard where we try not to spend too much time I'm doing this session.

Lead interviewer

is there any immediate sort of things that you can think about or steps that can be taken to improve this conversation any concrete steps that could improve this session

PBM10

I think that setting goals once a year is not enough actually because we are now working with agile work I would say and then setting goals for one year might be not very relevant at the end of the year. sometimes the manager is not very directly engaged in your work, I am working as a technical person and my manager is not a technical person at all. So I am working on projects which the manager is not participating in, it is a type of project that you do not receive feedback after the project so my line manager probably doesn't know how I perform if he doesn't hear anything from the project managers on the project I am working on. So that means that he has a very high level of trust between me and my manager, for me to say if I am doing well or not so well so it is based on my feedback actually for my line manager can evaluate am I performing good or not.

Lead interviewer

OK that is a level of trust

Note taker

is it just feedback from you that allows your manager to give the evaluation or does your manager go to other people

PBM10

I think my line manager is supposed to get feedback from others but I don't know if my line manager does this so much, at least I have never been asked from my line manager about other person's so I don't think that happens. I think that we know each other very well and we see... so without given a kinda an official statement from other colleagues...

Note taker

but then that also means when you say you don't spend as much time is it because you feel that isn't very much value in spending a lot of time

PBM10

even is it supposed to be a kind of chance for you to discuss your future and salary you always say that is external factors like the market which have much more effects what will be your next yearly statement than these discussions that's why we are, I personally think it's a very formal process both from line management and employees we're just try to do the process and make it done rather than to discuss wishes

Note taker

so it ends up a bit of a box checking process

PBM10

yes because you get reminders that you have to follow this workflow which you have to do in order to close it

Lead interviewer

you mentioned that you are an engineer and your manager is not, does that mean that you are working on projects where he or she is not working with you how often do you see your manager usually

PBM10

not very often actually I do sometimes see each other and we sit next to each other occasionally we talked about some practical things expenses for example when you buy some small things from the kiosk.

Lead interviewer

even though you think the processes are a little bit formal do you usually have expectations prior to this feedback meeting and do you find that during the actual meeting itself it responds well to your actual expectations

PBM10

usually the line manager has a goal then as an employee I use this possibility to give my expectations or reasoning or demands or if what we should call it then we negotiate with my manager what the current situation is and what can be expected and what cannot be expected. so mostly I can say very practical things so we don't say too much upfront, so it mostly comes to the ongoing projects for example where you can go or where you cannot go and assumptions about promotions and what will be your next tasks or which area you would like to be more involved in

Note taker

does the system work from top down or bottom up do you come with goals for yourself or does your line manager set the goals for the team and then discuss which ones you can contribute to or is it a bit of both

PBM10

basically we're supposed to prepare our goals so we have a process of dividing goals and you can choose the division goals or division or department goals and my personal goals so normally my personal goals some goals like improve my knowledge in some areas or develop myself in these product areas improve for example Norwegian

Note taker

do they always have to be relevant to your job or can you actually say learn Spanish even if it's not related to your work

PBM10

it's a good question actually but I don't think it should be accepted actually I think when I set my goal it should be relevant to the job personally I might have a goal to play football but I don't think it makes any sense actually. when I set my personal goals it is related to the job so my manager can see the bigger picture and support me reaching my goals and of course the division goals are mostly set by the manager because I think he sees more needs and better overviews for what is needed for the company then I can see



Lead interviewer

so he delegates the department goals to his team members including you

PBM10

I think she is she actually I have a manager who is she and she is taking more of a proactive part in establishing unit goals. so normally the goals are coming from top to bottom so my manager's manager is setting section KPIs and goals for the unit and then she is trying to split these expectations to lower level.

Note taker

so generally come down and your personal goals go up to strengthen the unit

PBM10

yes

### **Q9: Demographics of participant**

Lead interviewer

we would now like to get some personal details from you this is for research purposes if you don't want to answer just tell us and we will move on. what is your age, nationality and what is your line of education

PBM10

41, Belarus, Masters degree in science information computers IT

### **Q11: Demographics of ineffective feedback**

Lead interviewer

and taking you back to the incidents you described to us we would like to get some personal details of you at that time and if you don't remember or don't know exactly just give an approximation or you guess. so did both of them happen in same company as you are now

PBM10

the incident with an ineffective feedback happened a long time ago and it was in another small department which was part of the merger but it's kind of gone now so not maybe the same legal entity but it happened in Norway around 7 years ago. it was related to the person who was not in a very good mood which happened once and I think after a few days we were talking again with this person about this incident when we had calmed down and and then we just found that that was the end of the incident that happened once because of a bad situation or some personal factors which were not too much job-related actually.

Lead interviewer

how long have you been in the company at this time

PBM10

11 years

Lead interviewer

and both incidents happen around the same time

PBM10

No the incident where I remove the files is a normal working day and it happened about 3 years ago, it was just the first thing that came to my mind. it was a new team that I worked together with and normally we don't have much time or we don't have the knowledge to know before what you will or will not do or what you can and cannot and once it happened of course I've got a little bit stressed and there was not so much big damage but it is not expected when someone asks who removed the data and then I had to say "it was me".

Lead interviewer

it was just a bit of luck that you were a team maybe where you were still new to each other in the establishing phase

PBM10

yes it is possible of course to establish routines for everything you're supposed to do in your job but sometimes you can just try doing something and see if it is something you should do and not fail. and learn what you should do to prevent from doing this again

## **Q10: Demographics of effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

we would also like to ask some questions about these people that you interacted with and again if you don't know the answer just your best guess this person who gave you the effective feedback 2 years ago how old was he or she

PBM10

50+ I don't know there age is actually of my colleagues

Lead interviewer

that's as accurate as we get in these interviews we find. was she Norwegian and do you know the highest education was

PBM10

I think higher education but I don't know, she works in information in my department as well

Lead interviewer

Had she been working in the company for longer than you?

PBM10

yes she had been working with this product for longer

### **Q11: Demographics of ineffective feedback**

Lead interviewer

and for the other person, the ineffective

PBM10

it was actually also she but she was resigned I think how we call it she would due to optimisation and Resources there was a reduction she was very close to pension age she was from Romania but has been in Norway for a very long time. She started before I started some more than 11 years

Lead interviewer

Higher education?

PBM10

Masters I think but I don't know.

Note taker

I was just wondering more about the performance appraisal whether you feel that if the person giving you the feedback you worked with daily and actually saw what you did with that solve the feeling that they are not really valuable

PBM10

I'm not quite sure how easy it is for my line manager to setup this alignment because if she is not involved then what should she do how could she understands how I perform they normally don't ask very often sometimes you can have 5 to 6 projects during the year and normally the line manager does not ask the project manager's how you perform in the project maybe they do but I don't know but I don't think so I think it's a more formal process for line manager to see in the unit what how you are performing in comparison to the others.

Note taker

but does it not come down to if you are cocky for example and go in and say "I am the best employee" or if your humble and you say "I think I could do better" and if it's on a trust basis for both those employees does it not come down to that the cocky one is rated better because they are cocky as opposed to that you are actually a better performer. making it a slightly unfair system

PBM10

yes I would tend to agree it is very dependent on how you can sell yourself in such a situation. It is also very dependent upon whether it's a product or a project that you're working on so if it's a product which has a big budget and is popular using modern technologies you are more likely to be promoted than if you are sitting on a project which is very old and does not have too much attention of management it is very dependent upon the project as to whether you will be moving on.

Note taker

if you have four or five projects per year is there also an element of the last one being more salient than the earlier ones of the year

PBM10

it might be but I think it's not whether it's the last or not but the size of budget. Sometimes it's a project which is delivered and forgotten. if it's a project is delivered to the customer then it might be forgotten but if it's a project that goes on for many years then of course it's much more focus because then you have to perform very well to deliver this project or services.

Note taker

who is it that chooses who goes on to which Project?

PBM10

I get it from my line manager

Note taker

so the line manager decides on which resources to use so they are in full control of which employees go onto which project. so they know which projects are prestigious and they would then know which people to put on a that Project but this is where you're saying that is a little bit of a mismatch?

PBM10

you can also say for example that I am ready for that job so when I have a conversation with my manager that I would like to be more stronger in this and I would like this courses so that I can offer another solution in the project. and then of course when she knows that you have

these qualifications she might put you on this project. but I am working with maritime so it's not very often we get big projects with new Technologies. we have a new solution Digital Solutions where there is new technical advanced changes in projects so sometimes you're just put into a project which that is not so many opportunities where it is possible to jump into new technical Solutions.

Note taker

so if you hear about a project that sounds very interesting can you also voice your wish to join the project

PBM10

yes but unfortunately I'm not part of the stakeholder meetings where you can actually raise your voice so where it is decided as to who should take over the project it is coming from the business site as opposed to the technical side but as soon as a program or a project is organised then the project manager can choose or select people or units who shall support them.

Note taker

then it's the project manager who will be with you on a daily basis to do the project

PBM10

after you become a team of the project then the project manager will give you tasks so normally it is not up to your line manager or at least in my case.

Note taker

so in this case the project manager would be the ideal person to give you feedback

PBM10

that's true, I think it set up in PA that line managers should set up meetings with project manager to get feedback but it takes a lot of time and if you have a lot of employees it doesn't work in real

Note taker

And the average number of employees per line manager, for example your line manager

PBM10

I think we took 15 maybe.

Note taker

15 people that possibly have more than one Project per year

PBM10

yes some people have one project for several years but I'm usually jumping from project to Project

Lead interviewer

you've spoken a little bit about your line manager and how you two work together to coordinate your performance at work. can you briefly describe her to us

PBM10

I wouldn't say we have some formal processes between employee my line manager we normally communicate when there is a need, about how you should register your timesheets, register your hours or you need a new project number or need to to verify for example new tasks which are coming from colleagues or some other colleagues in our company which you shall start work on so you would normally go to your line manager and ask this person is asking me to do this in this, do you have a project number can I start working or shall get some kind of approval from other stakeholder. so this is a typical one for example if I participated several projects then you will get some clarifications from your line manager which ones you should pay attention and which one you should prioritise.

Lead interviewer

so this is a woman do you know her age nationality and education

PBM10

Norwegian [age] I have not asked I would not do that, she has a higher education I think in business.

Lead interviewer

some sort of business administration. what department is she in

PBM10

I am actually moving between departments several times but now I'm in Martime. but it is still software

Lead interviewer

On a scale, for your line manager the person giving you ineffective feedback and the person giving you an effective feedback, on a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 is totally dissimilar and 10

is very similar how would you rate yourself and the one giving you effective feedback how similar would you say you are

### **Q12: Subjective perception of similarity of effective feedback**

PBM10

I think we are very similar because the one that gives me a effective feedback is the same technical role working the same Project so I would say 8.

### **Q13: Subjective perception of similarity of ineffective feedback**

Lead interviewer

the one that gave you ineffective feedback same question

PBM10

I would say 4 maybe

Lead interviewer

and your line manager

PBM10

I would say 6

### **Q14: Basis on subjective rating**

Lead interviewer

in the first case you talked about your work style how you work is that the only thing you can see do it when you gave these ratings or what sort of traits or characters came to mind

PBM10

normally when you received negative feedback you don't think you are very close to this person so you would normally put that a little bit below but when it's a feedback which you would give to the other person's if you saw that other person's had done the same then you kind of put it in a scale that high.

Lead interviewer

so it's how you evaluate it, the situation

Note taker

so when you speak about the you would do the same then you are recognising that when you got the feedback you totally accepted that I should have done that so although it was negative feedback it was completely "oh you need the data too I didn't know that". so it was an acceptance that it was an error and it was a fair call out so when you feel that when you say that you would do the same is it because you are like minded

PBM10

you can expect that when you do something that affects others that this person will come to you and tell you that you should not do it. I think also it is important the tone and the kind of words that you use when giving the feedback. But most of all it is of course if it is a job related stuff which you would normally expect from your colleagues to come with, to raise these questions, these are expected questions we do expect that our colleagues correct you when you do something wrong, either in project or development that's my kind of assumption and I appreciate this. Because if you do the same or continue to do the same then it will affect other people possibly outside the department or environment, the production environment which might have bigger consequences and then basically you would be much more hit by what you did so when someone says early to you that you're doing something wrong it is actually positive feedback even if you might not recognise it at the first so normally people don't like when people say you're doing wrong.

Note taker

so would you yourself be quick to another colleague that they were doing something incorrect

PBM10

yes of course

Note taker

so that might play a factor in that you appreciated being corrected early on

PBM10

I wouldn't like someone that if it's seen better and not tell me and wait til the consequences are big, it's very good I think that we have enough Trust level within our unit to tell that you're doing something wrong without taking so much time or saying it very indirectly or sometimes. Sometime good and honest feedback given in time is very good thing actually.

Lead interviewer

so the timing is quite important here



PBM10

the level of trust is also important if there is a new person who is a few levels above you you probably would not go to him or her and say that you have done something wrong you would probably try to do something indirectly input to say shall we do this or shall we do that or should we change the whole procedures. rather than say this is not the way we should do it

### **Q15: General comments on feedback**

Note taker

but with seniority that you know, does that change things if you had build a trust basis the fact that seniority would not make a difference

PBM10

I think it is very much coming depending on team to team you're working and if you have a high level of trust I think it is very positive on the outcome of your team then you can open this see about any problems or communication issues or technical issues that you have within your team when you don't have the same level of trust you probably won't even raise your voice in these kind of problems with that everybody is familiar with, until the true baby cries.

Note taker

you have said that you have potentially four different projects per year and that you have experienced lots of different teams, do you find that that level of trust varies a lot

PBM10

yes it varies, sometimes it is colleagues that doesn't come from the technical side it's mostly business users who are asking you to do and then you usually communicate with them so it is very different and people are different with a different level of communication and level of discussion when you can agree or disagree shall we do like this or shall we do it in a different way but we don't have time where we shall kind of find this balance so this kind of discussions the more open and direct and honest and [?] then the more positive feedback so you don't have different expectations shall we do it this way or shall we do it with a great level of higher quality and suddenly you find out that you don't have the resources and you suddenly split to another project and then it is very bad feeling from a person who you were not able to communicate the time for example if you have to jump into another project and you have expectations that you will work one week with the project it is very good to share with the project who are affected in this team that you expect to work for one week so that you need to kind of having expectations that it will be finished within the week and don't wait until the last day and say sorry I'm out. so I think it's more about communications it is important to avoid problems

Note taker

so that would be the one element that you feel, from your experience, that would build trust, is that what you are saying that communication is key

PBM10

I think that that is the most important actually to tell whatever you think will affect the interests of the team or the business uses or project which you are working in so if you have some unexpected vacations or some kind of other plans or you're maybe not interested in working with this project, it is better to indicate it to the people as early as possible

Note taker

how much does the personal chemistry with the project manager for example since he or she is the person controlling these projects how much do you feel that plays a factor in the trust base.

PBM10

well it's very dependent upon the projects and the project manager it's normal that the more you work and the longer you work the better you know this person or people and then you have usually a bigger Trust than with the newcomers

Note taker

so you feel as an individual that you build the trust as an individual and then you can go into any Project because you now have a track record that you take the trust in with you the people around the table aren't such a big factor

PBM10

even if you are organised as a business unit and projects and Line Management it's very much an organisation in unofficial relations for some people developers for example they can actually recommend you to be part of another project rather than project managers asking or try and get people they will give a feedback from your colleagues and also from other projects for example and they recommend you or not so even if it's kind of from classical project management it's much still unofficial relationships in the company that plays a much more important role I would say.

Lead interviewer

one final question which is not necessarily related to these people specifically or this team you worked with specifically but do you think culture like from nation to nation or company to company have you noticed if that plays any role in the feedback and the kind of feedback you get in the workplacem:

PBM10

yes I have worked in Belarus for several years previously and in a similar enterprise with a similar size and then I worked 11 years there so as far as I remember my first feelings, because now I have been quite Norwegian I would say, my first feelings were after I started to work in the Norwegian company is line manager or actually is a manager that they did not give a very direct feedback here for example in our department we had some conversations

and line manager was trying to say something of how we could provide in for example it was never direct feedback so even if we know it was one person that was doing it, we had some issue I can see it actually we had a small department in Arendal and then that was one person who was smoking very often and the line manager said even if it was only one or two persons who were smoking but one person was smoking very often and someone complained to the line manager and a line manager came to us and said we need to talk because we have some people who are smoking too often and we need to reduce because it is not acceptable and we shall not spend so much time. Even if everyone knew who this person was he gave this feedback to everyone. my first feeling or the first thing I thought was why don't you just talk to this person and say don't do it instead of gathering the whole department and spending an hour to say a few words that was my first kind of experience which I remember so well. I think we have are more direct feedback when speaking to line managers. sometimes it hits you much more harder but from the other side you kind of get an understanding right away of what your line manager or the person you talking with what is expecting from you in Norway it is sometimes it can be said it is a very or in a way that you can't understand so sometimes you need to clarify so this is maybe the biggest difference I can see which I experienced in Norway.

Note taker

have you ever experienced when you give feedback to your supervisors that they think you are being too Direct

PBM10

yes of course but sometimes I also see that they appreciate it and sometimes they say oh, oh, oh...

Lead interviewer

Norwegians need to be challenged sometimes once in a while

PBM10

But it is also very good then you have a good relationship with your line manager so normally don't give very direct feedback for example a new line manager that you have been assigned recently then tend to be more formal with this person before you can claim or demand things from them. the more you know the person the much more productive the conversation

Lead interviewer

thank you we have so much to take from this, thank you very much indeed.

PBM10

ok so we are done?

Lead interviewer

We are done, thank you

Interview PBF9 on 14 June 2018 at COMPANY B

### **Q1: Supervisor**

Lead interviewer

First and foremost, are you a supervisor?

PBF9

No.

### **Q2: Effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

So then I'd like to ask you to think of a time when you received effective feedback, and describe in as much detail as possible what that was like.

PBF9

Effective feedback?

Lead interviewer

Yes.

PBF9

Well I got praised the other day.

Lead interviewer

And how was that, was it under a formal meeting, or...?

PBF9

No, it was under a work meeting. I had done some work and presented it and then I got praised.

Lead interviewer

Was it sort of they praised your performance, or how you did it, or...?

PBF9

Oh it was the result.

Lead interviewer

And can you give us some details about that? You don't have to tell us in detail about the presentation, but what sort of was the setting...?

PBF9

The setting was that we were going to go through something with some consultants, and then I had prepared lots of stuff, and the other team members hadn't understood before that I had done lots of work, and they found out during that meeting, and then they said wow.

Lead interviewer

So the praise came from peers or superiors?

PBF9

Peers.

### Lead interviewer

Do you feel that's there's any difference in the setting, or... any difference between when you get praise from your supervisor or your peers or subordinates for that matter, is there any other feelings, how you felt?

PBF9

I don't have a very concrete relationship with my superiors, I don't think. I have a boss sitting in another department that I never worked for or with. So then we meet once a year and he collects what he has heard from others, which is absolutely meaningless, and then there is the people I work with.

### Lead interviewer

So there's feedback from the people you work with, your peers?

PBF9

Yes, peers. And then there is this formal whatever it's called – PA?

### Note taker

Performance appraisal.

PBF9

Yes, performance appraisal when you don't work with your boss is absolutely meaningless. He doesn't know me, and he doesn't know what I do, he doesn't – I've never worked with him.

### Lead interviewer

And does he actually gather from people who do work with you, etc., so that there is some concrete information?

PBF9

Sometimes, yes. I've asked him to.

### Lead interviewer

And like the praise that you received from this one, would you then convey that to him so that that's also there, or would you depend on other people to pass that information on to him?

PBF9

No I depend on other people.

### Lead interviewer

You do... So the chances are that by the end of the year, that might be forgotten about?

PBF9

Yeah.

### Lead interviewer

The praise that you spoke about that you received for the performance you'd done and the work you'd done, was that sort of basic work that helped the whole team, was it?

PBF9

Yeah, yeah.

### Lead interviewer

How long ago was that?

PBF9

Two days ago. That's why I remember.

#### **Q4: Ineffective Feedback**

Lead interviewer

Two days, very fresh in memory. Can you also give me a time that you – or give an example of an incident of ineffective feedback that you received?

PBF9

Well I think the performance appraisals are ineffective, because I don't think the managers are in a position to have an opinion. So that's... The way it's organized doesn't work. HR doesn't go over the work, so....

Lead interviewer

And do you have any appraisals from someone you do work closely with?

PBF9

Yeah....

Lead interviewer

You do?

PBF9

Well, not formal appraisals, just – it's all informal.

Lead interviewer

So that's the only formal. And then... Is it him who chooses where to gather information from, or do you say, I've worked with x, y and z, and –

PBF9

No, I don't. The ones I work with, I ask them to phone him.

Lead interviewer

So he doesn't have to be proactive in getting the information, it's your colleagues who have to be proactive in giving the information?

PBF9

Yes.

Lead interviewer

So then he gathers it and tells it to you?

PBF9

In some form or another, yes.

Lead interviewer

So how does it work here in COMPANY B, are you rated, or is there –

PBF9

No, we get rated, and if we get a 5 we have to get a promotion, so we don't get that very often, if we get a 4 we should get a salary increase, but that is not transparent. If we get the 3 we're okay, if we get a 2... I think, I have never gotten a two, but – and 1 is getting fired, but 2 is very bad.

Lead interviewer

So 2 is sort of, you have some gaps and need some follow-up, is that it?

PBF9

I don't know what it says, but I think they... People who got 2 have been fired in the last year, so...

Lead interviewer

So how does it work for development and training? When you get feedback, do you give that to your supervisor too? If you go in to your supervisor and he gives you this feedback he's got from others, do you then say I need to develop in this area, because of the lack of understanding of what you do –

PBF9

Yeah, then I have to formulate a plan for everything.

Lead interviewer

So it's all one-way, really?

PBF9

Oh no he's quite helpful, he's a good guy, really, it's just the way it's organized so that the role doesn't function.

Lead interviewer

So you have a good relationship with him?

PBF9

Yeah, I like him. But he can't do his job.

Lead interviewer

And then is that the case for many in the company, do you know?

PBF9

Very very many. For everyone that's hired out on projects and then you're nearly internal consultants and that can be very far from the line in the organization. I think some kind of work with the same things as their boss, I think they do in IT support, the bosses are really close and they see the cases and then they see the work. Not if you're working on projects.

Lead interviewer

So the time that you got ineffective feedback now – when are the appraisals, is it long ago now?

PBF9

The formal appraisals?

Note taker

March is it?

PBF9

Yeah, I think so, March or April. Once a year. Maybe it's twice a year.

Note taker

I think it's only once.

Lead interviewer

So I'd like to ask some questions about the people you're speaking about, the ones who gave you the praise and the formal feedback. Uhm, sorry, so when you went into the meetings, the formal



ones with your manager, did you have any expectations, or did you already know that he's going to gather the information and give it, and... Do you have any expectations from him for the meeting?

PBF9

I always dread those meetings. I don't like them. He manages to make me feel a little better, because I can talk for a while, but... Yeah. I've asked him to visit me where I work, because I've worked away from him for five years, I see him once every year, and he works 200 meters from where I sit. It's really not – I think it's a joke.

Lead interviewer

And have you conveyed that to him?

PBF9

No. Not really. I have conveyed that he has a group that doesn't work together because I know that others are all away, and they send emails and complain that we don't have a group. But I haven't complained that much, no. I don't think he has a chance, really. I kind of feel for him. It's absolutely meaningless, this.

Lead interviewer

It sounds like it. Can I ask you his nationality?

### **Q11: Demographics of ineffective feedback**

PBF9

He's Norwegian.

Lead interviewer

And age group?

PBF9

Younger than me, but I think he's over 40. Think under 50. Maybe he's 45.

Lead interviewer

And have you got the same education, both of you a similar kind of educational background?

PBF9

The same level, yes.

Lead interviewer

So is that masters, or...?

PBF9

Yes.

Lead interviewer

And in which discipline?

PBF9

He has IT and I have physics. So it's not exactly the same, but...

### **Q9: Demographics of participant**

Lead interviewer

And can I ask what age you were... Well, what age are you, is really the question I guess.

PBF9

53.

Lead interviewer

And you're also Norwegian?

PBF9

Yes.

Lead interviewer

How long have you held the position that you're in?

PBF9

I think five years.

Lead interviewer

And how long have you been in the company?

PBF9

Since 2003, January, so that would be 15 years. Long time.

Lead interviewer

And is that similar to your boss, do you know?

PBF9

Yes, he's been here about the same time, about 15 years, I think we started about the same time.

Lead interviewer

And he's been in the position that he's in currently...?

PBF9

At least 8 years, I think.

## **Q10: Demographics of effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

And the praise that you received from your peer, is that a male or a female?

PBF9

Male.

Lead interviewer

Norwegian?

PBF9

Yes.

Lead interviewer

And similar background sort of education?

PBF9

I think so, yes.

Lead interviewer

And the company tenure?

PBF9

I think 8-10 years, shorter than me, I think.

Lead interviewer

And has he been in that position –

PBF9

All the time.

Lead interviewer

All the time, yes.

#### **Q4: Ineffective Feedback**

Note taker

You just said that you were not looking forward to these yearly performance appraisals, but you like your boss? You have an amicable relationship with him, right? But you didn't like them, is that because you feel like it's a waste of time, or because it makes you feel bad –

PBF9

It's a waste of time, they are formal, and they have some mysterious things where – I don't like being graded. I hate it – and I don't like that it's connected to my salary in ways they don't tell, I would rather have lunch with him or something informal and talk about work. It's the grading and salary thing.

Note taker

So it's the system you don't really like, it's not this actual meeting with this person –

PBF9

No no, I like him, yes. I just hate that system. It is really such a waste, and it takes so much time, and the managers are completely – oh I have a performance appraisal, and then they're out for a month, and no one can see them. I don't think it's worth it.

Note taker

And then you – because you're working in a project right now, do you have any immediate supervisors in that project, someone like the project manager... Do you get any regular, not necessarily formal, but regular feedback on how you are doing approximately, or is it sort of implied by the way your work is treated?

PBF9

The last one, yes. I do the work, they see the result, and... Yeah.

Lead interviewer

So if you then get feedback from the project manager, is it always the case of correction, then?

PBF9

No. It depends on the project manager, but most of them really like it when you do something that makes the project deliver.

Lead interviewer

And then they'll come and speak to you about it, and give you the feedback?

PBF9

Most – the best is when they say it in plenum, like yes, oh this was very nice. That's the best.

Lead interviewer

Yes, because then everyone recognizes it.

PBF9

Yes. Do you want negative feedback? Because I remember that too.

Lead interviewer

Yes please.

## Q2: Effective feedback

PBF9

Yes, I lost my temper, which I occasionally do. And then... I'm trying to think about what was the problem. Because sometimes it's not the problem, sometimes they say oh I'm relieved that somebody is saying that this is bad. Yeah! The problem was that I lost my temper and there was a consultant from not COMPANY B there, and I spoke badly of one in COMPANY B, and for that I was corrected, and I agree, it wasn't nicely done.

Lead interviewer

So then when you felt that, that was completely taken onboard because you actually agreed with the feedback?

PBF9

Yes, and I always feel ashamed when I lose my temper, I don't like it, but... Sometimes I do.

Lead interviewer

But although it was negative feedback, as you've described, you felt it was fair, as if –

PBF9

Yes, he was right, I was wrong.

Lead interviewer

So it's not a... You didn't go out feeling uncomfortable?

PBF9

No.

Note taker

What was the situation after the meeting, was it someone who'd been present who came up to you and said hey, I don't think this was very nicely done –

PBF9

Yeah, it was afterwards, at the coffee machine.

Note taker

And was that a colleague, or...?

PBF9

No, that was the project manager.

Lead interviewer

So he took it immediately and – yeah. But not formally, if it was at the coffee machine?

PBF9

No, I don't think he made a complaint, no. Maybe if he did it disappeared into the mysterious HR processes, so we have seven complaints or... No, I think he would have told me. Then he would have to give a warning...

Lead interviewer

And I think you would have to know.

PBF9

Yes, they can't make it and not – and that I trust. That they will tell me.

Lead interviewer

I think it has to be transparent and you have to be involved.

PBF9

I hope so.

### **Q13: Subjective perception of similarity of ineffective feedback**

Lead interviewer

I think so, if it's the same as other companies I've worked for. So totally subjectively, how similar would you rate yourself and your line leader on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is we're not alike at all, and 10 is we're very similar? If you just think subjectively and intuitively?

PBF9

5? Yeah, we're very similar on some things, we structure problems the same way, we have very different personalities, I think we have pretty equal values. Yeah, when we have these discussions – I think the value sets are very similar. But the personality is very different, but the way we think about the subject matter is quite similar.

### **Q12: Subjective perception of similarity of effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

And then if I ask you to do the same to the peer that praised you? If you think about the same sort of way, how would you rate this?

PBF9

I think that's a lot more different. Much more different than my line manager.

Lead interviewer

And would you rate it as far down as a 2, or maybe in the middle...?

PBF9

No, 4. But it depends on how we... He thinks differently, tackles problems differently. Different personality. Yeah, he's quite different, actually.

### **Q14: Basis on subjective rating**

Lead interviewer

It's funny that when you did this intuitive way of thinking how you were similar or dissimilar, you actually described your thought process –

PBF9

3 things, yes.

Lead interviewer

- you talked about personality, how they work, how they structure problems or fix them as the case may be...

PBF9

And the values.

Lead interviewer

Yes, interesting because we quite often find that people will come with a number, but they don't really know why they came with the number, and then they have to dig into it, and then quite often it's sort of personal chemistry. Did you take that into account at all?

PBF9

If I like them or not?

Lead interviewer

Well, yeah, personal chemistry is sort of like that, when you first meet someone –

PBF9

Oh yeah, if you feel a connection! I feel a connection with both of them, otherwise I couldn't – well, the boss I don't work with, so I don't really have a connection with him but the one I work with I do, you really have to have some sort of feeling of who they are....

Lead interviewer

Yeah, but you don't always have a personal chemistry with people you work with, sometimes you feel that – or you can have a personal chemistry, but it doesn't have to be positive.

PBF9

Yeah, no, then I do my utmost to not work with them. I really hate that.

Lead interviewer

Avoid.

Note taker

Do you think personal chemistry matters at all, like what is your feeling about personal chemistry in a feedback situation? Like in an informal or formal, do you think that matters –

PBF9

Of course. Because if you have chemistry, it makes the statements have value. It's... What do you call that? Yeah it makes the statement valuable if you have a connection with the person. If you don't, it has no weight.

## **Q15: General comments on feedback**

Note taker

So say you have someone with whom you have a very very good relationship, working relationship, and you get a statement from them saying, you were really effective on this project. And then you get the same statement from someone that you really dislike, do you receive them in different ways? Because they are both, really, positive statements.

PBF9

Yeah, because in the last instance, I would be very surprised. Would be very very surprised if somebody I didn't like said I did something good. That would be strange. I don't think that happens.

Note taker

But would you consider it in the same way, would you be as happy or take it onboard the same way?

PBF9

No, I would take it onboard differently, but I think I would be even more happy if somebody I didn't like said something like that, because then I have to reevaluate the relationship, I think. Yeah, that would be something to think about.

Lead interviewer

But do you find that you do the same with feedback? You know, when we just look at other people and we think about how we take onboard or how we think about things, when you have a poor relationship with someone, and you saw for example, if you had been in that meeting where you had done all this research, you brought it all together, even if you didn't like that person, wouldn't you then be tended to say, good job?

PBF9

I would try to. I think I would. But I think it would take more for a person I don't like for me to do it than somebody I really like. Because if I appreciate the person, it's easier to appreciate the work.

Lead interviewer

Which is possibly why you say you would take it onboard from someone you didn't like stronger, because of the way you –

PBF9

Yes, because it would be discordant.

Note taker

So this performance appraisal is once a year, right? Do you think it matters at all that it is in March or April whatever, that it's once a year, and the same time every single year, once only, and then – say you complete a project in August, and then you would like some feedback on that immediately, but you don't really get it until March or April, do you think that matters at all? Would you prefer instant feedback, or doesn't it matter if it comes later, half a year later...?

PBF9

No, I prefer feedback as it happens, of course I do.

Note taker

So if you have something that's less formal, like – you got this positive feedback from your peer, and if that had happened two weeks later, if he came up and said hey, remember this meeting we had a while ago, you did a good job before that. Would it then have carried as much weight as it did that day?

PBF9

No. No I think I wouldn't remember it then. Because if you are in that situation and you have just completed something, you're in that flow, and when somebody says something that was good, then you remember the whole setup, like oh that was nice. But if you do it and then come later, I think I would have lost the connection in my mind. I wouldn't remember it so well.

Lead interviewer

We also have discussed feedback with others, and one of the things we spoke about was that the timing was important, but also the fact that, you know in this setting, you had shown what you did, but some said that people generally know when they've done a good job themselves, when they go

into that meeting, that what they have done and what they are going to show is good. Did you have that feeling?

PBF9

Yes. I knew I had done a good job.

Lead interviewer

So it was confirming what you actually already knew.

PBF9

Yes.

Lead interviewer

Because one of the other sides that this one gentleman brought up was that it is quite often more difficult when it comes to behavioural, whereas performance, the people themselves generally know that this is a good job. I've done a good job on this. Whereas behavioural things are quite often not known to ourselves, because we cannot see us as others see us behave, or perceive it. For example, when you spoke about the negative feedback you got, that was kind of behavioural. And that feedback is quite often very valuable because we don't necessarily reflect on it so much ourselves, or even recognize it.

PBF9

Yeah and I got another one last week. That was to a group, we had a workshop, and then it got quite heated, and I liked it. I enjoyed it, I felt it was quite a positive energy. But then there were somebody who couldn't participate, because they were not – we started being loud, and walking around, and everything. And I was one of those who walked around. And then the moderator said we should think about including everyone and oh we have five ears and one mouth and all that. And then I thought oh Jesus I have to think about that next time.

Lead interviewer

And then when you did that, was – did it change the dynamics of the group?

PBF9

Well we'll see, because he did it after, he didn't do it during, he did it after as an evaluation, so we will see if it sticks next week, when we have the follow-up.

Lead interviewer

But I guess you need a balance there as well, because without being able to fire up and be able to do the dynamics that you enjoy, you might lose some of the outcome as well.

PBF9

Yeah, well... People are different. I think some people feel scared when people put lots of... What's it called? I wouldn't say quite passion, but I think nearly passion for something, I think some people are really not... They don't get it.

Lead interviewer

But that's why I feel that there's a balance, because if you're not allowed, if you've got to rein it in all the time, then you might not get that positive energy...

PBF9

No then they would lose me. Because oh let's sit and take it around the table and see what everybody thinks, then I just fall asleep. So this like now you can speak for five minutes and you can speak for five minutes and, ugh. Yeah, nothing happens then.



### Lead interviewer

So that doesn't work for you, then. So hopefully the moderator, if it's the same one, will hopefully take into consideration that what doesn't work for someone is also...

PBF9

Yeah, we'll see.

### Note taker

I have one more question. So a reoccurring theme here is that all sorts of ad hoc feedback sessions with you, like whether it's at the coffee machine or after a meeting or something, those have been generally well received, like you seem to enjoy those and get some useful stuff out of them. Whether it's something negative like you can do this better next time or hey don't do this, or positive praise, keep doing this...

PBF9

Yeah, I think they have worked on me, those feedback sessions.

### Note taker

And meanwhile, the yearly formal – sorry, the performance appraisal, the yearly one, doesn't really work at all because of the system. So could you describe a hypothetical ideal feedback situation or feedback practice here at COMPANY B?

PBF9

Well the ideal would be that people are kind of taught to say when you did something good, to not hold back when they see something nice, and also that if they need to correct someone's behaviour, that they don't do that in plenum. Instead take them aside and say, and close to the happening. That would be good.

### Note taker

You still would prefer small, informal feedback situations rather than improve on the formal one?

PBF9

Well you can't improve the formal one unless it's tied to where you work, because the HR and the work situation is not the same, so when I was a consultant, we always had someone who has the HR or line manager, but we never worked with them, because... You never did. So then it was formalized that the feedback happened in the projects, but then that was too much, and we had 360, and we had to rate our peers, and we had to say something bad, and it was like... Ugh... So you wrote something nice about your peer and then, say, what's the bad thing? And you had to fill in something.

### Lead interviewer

You were forced?

PBF9

Yes. It was too much of a system, and it took hours to go through all of that. But at least it was where the things happened, and then it was formalized so that the line manager got all those reviews. But here they have kind of said that we're a line organization, let's put the HR on the line, and then I think very many people work like me. That the managers have no clue of what we're doing. So they need to be aligned, that's number one. And number two, I think we shouldn't get graded.

### Note taker

Because this is the manager who grades you, right?

PBF9

Yes. And what's the point? It's only because they need something formal to tie to the salary, but it's hidden, you don't know anything about the process that goes on to salary adjustment, so I think they should drop the grades.

Lead interviewer

If it wasn't connected to the salary, would the grade matter to you?

PBF9

No. I'm over 50. I'm finished studying, I've been there, done that, I don't think we should get grades. For example, if you're ill a year, and you're not performing and you can't concentrate, and you have three months where you sit and doodle at work, because that's all you can do. What's the point of getting a 2? You already – there's no point.

Note taker

Yeah you know you're doing a bad job if its like that.

PBF9

Yeah, if you're out of sorts, you're out of sorts. And what you need then is to tell the people you work with that you can't expect so much from me because I'm out of sorts. That you should do, but then you don't need to get a grade.

Note taker

That's a reoccurring thing we've gotten from another company that we've done as well, that grades are really not ideal, because they tend to either demotivate or take the focus away from the actual work that you're doing because it's more like... Oh I gotta perform so well so I can get more money. Or I got to perform so well so I get my promotion and bonuses and everything. But meanwhile there's a lot of people who are just like, I just want to do a good job, please don't make me think about these grades.

PBF9

Yeah and if you then do the grades, in the consultant company you got the grades and there were fixed routes for promotion, if you had three projects with grade 5 you should become a manager, you know it was completely programmed, then it makes some sense at least, but here they put the grade on, you don't know how they got it, and then they give you a salary adjustment. But they don't put the reasoning on it, you have no clue how it's connected, you have really no clue. So it's all hidden processes and then they can just keep them hidden if they don't want to... If they want to give us a salary letter every year with no reasoning behind, then do it. Don't pretend.

Lead interviewer

Have you ever brought this up to your supervisor that the actual – you know, I've got my letter here, why? Can you... Explain why? Or do you tend to probably just, he doesn't know either?

PBF9

I think he doesn't really know.

Lead interviewer

So you just sort of accept it?

PBF9

Yeah and then he just goes I have ten people in my group and some are undervalued and some are young and you are old and bla, bla, bla.... I don't think, I don't know how it happens.

Lead interviewer

So you prefer a system that is more transparent?

PBF9

I prefer a system that is transparent, or at least not pretend.

Lead interviewer

You're okay with a system that's not fair, just don't pretend to be fair.

PBF9

Yeah. Because I don't think salary systems can ever be fair.

Lead interviewer

No. And do you know, is there any collaboration across the system where the managers go, okay I've got these ones on fives, and you got these ones on twos, so that you can see that okay, I'm very generous with my marking and you are really tough, is there any way to check this?

PBF9

I don't think there is an adjustment, I don't think there is any... Gauge thing. The consultancy, they had to have the grades following a guide so if you have five wonderful people, some of them – most of them have to get a three. That was very stupid. I didn't work there, but I heard about that, that was complete idiocy.

Lead interviewer

But we have also experienced another company where maybe I am very generous and I am very generous with my grading whereas Note taker is very strict, like 3 is satisfactory, I expect you to deliver that kind of thing. No, you didn't perform so good so you get a lower grade. But in fact it's actually purely and utterly because we've got different expectations from our people.

PBF9

Yeah, but that you can't guard against. It happens here, it must happen here. I'm sure.

Note taker

There is a level of subjectivity in all these grading systems, I reckon. Surely there must be, because as you said, there is no transparency, and if there was some sort of transparency, you would probably see that oh we use this and this to calculate, but you can't put numbers on everything you do.

PBF9

No you can't. Have you found anyone happy with the formal appraisal and grading?

Lead interviewer

Not with the grading system, I don't think. With formal appraisals, yes.

PBF9

But have they been aligned with – that's where the managers have been close? Because then I think it would make sense.

Lead interviewer

Yes. And some people see it as an opportunity. To give feedback also to their supervisor, so that some people who wouldn't normally go and say, I have stuff to say, they would get a platform. So then it could be positive to the people who wouldn't normally be the first to say things, possibly to their supervisors. And likewise, for supervisors who are not always the best to...

PBF9

To watch everyone.

Lead interviewer

Yeah.

Note taker

This has typically been in small teams where you have up to ten people who are working closely together, and the manager is there.

PBF9

The manager is there, he's a part of the team.

Note taker

Yeah, he's a part of the team, he's not just doing HR for these specific people. He's actually part of the process.

Lead interviewer

Yeah, so then we've had some positive. But no one, so far, has been happy with the grading.

PBF9

No, and if you ask the bosses, it's not needed to set the salary, because I'm sure they know this. They really do that. And maybe if they feel that somebody need an increase they put a high number just to justify, I mean... Yeah.

Lead interviewer

So it's been – yeah, one person described it as toxic, the grading.

PBF9

Yes and you have to spend some energy ignoring it. And now I ignore it, but... If I got a two I would be devastated.

Note taker

And I reckon that... Say you're like me, 25, fresh out of university and into your first real "adult" job, and you go immediately straight back into this grading system... Of course when you come from university and school and stuff like that, you're very used to getting grades, and that's fine, you're used to it, you're accepting in, but of course you get very caught up with it, because when you do your thing at university or school, you kind of have to get good grades to get into further education, get a good job, get a scholarship, all of these things, so you get very – for someone like me, it's very very easy to get caught up in it, so... But I'm not sure if that actually gets worse or better with time.

PBF9

The point is that... What's the point? The point is that you have to be motivated by doing a good job, not... When you work, you don't have to work towards stuff like that anymore, the grades are not a ticket to anything, so it's not... And it's uncomfortable. You don't really like it when you're a student either, I don't think anybody enjoyed them. So why should we have them until we die, I don't see the point. I think it's degrading.

Lead interviewer

And there seems to be a trend of dropping them, the grades. It started in America really, we've got a bit of literature on it. And we've also heard a few other companies in Norway starting to drop it. Because of course we've got a whole lot of these HR systems starting in America and getting brought over. So it sounds like maybe it's on its way out, hopefully for you. It's not going to continue for too

much longer. I don't know, I haven't heard anything from here, so that's based purely and utterly on trends. There's a lot of research showing that it's not positive.

PBF9

Yeah, I read some research saying that they've quit the whole appraisal process. But I think that might be stupid. I think we need to have these meetings, but it must be aligned with the work, and then it would be fine.

Lead interviewer

Yeah. But there seems to be a few people that's keeping the appraisal process, but using purely words now to speak about how the performance is. So that you've generally just got, we're pleased, we're happy, this is good, we do recognize that this could have improvement, and you don't come out with a four or a three or anything. You just come out with feedback.

PBF9

Feedback, yeah that makes more sense.

Lead interviewer

Yeah, because you can work with it. I think we have a lot to work on here.

[END]

Interview PAM7 on 11 June 2018 at Company A

PAM7

what is the name of the thesis

Lead interviewer

pending

Note taker

the way we're doing the thesis actually inductive so we don't actually know what we're looking for, so at the moment we can see some trends but we won't really know until we do the all the analysis, so there isn't going to be a right or wrong answer

PAM7

Cool

### **Q1: Supervisor**

Lead interviewer

so first thing's first are you a supervisor

PAM7

yes I think so

### **Q4: Ineffective Feedback**

Lead interviewer

Right we will proceed as you are; thinking of a time when you give ineffective feedback can you describe such a situation to us in as much detail as possible?

PAM7

[ineffective – giver]

Uum yes, I'll just start by giving some examples, of course I think a lot about these things all the time in my role I think it is important to be considerate how you do give feedback. Umm ineffective feedback sometimes I find giving feedback for instance you have a group of people and not all people go well together, and you get some insight from say person A about person B, that is a situation for me that is difficult to give effective feedback because you need to be fact based you cannot base feedback on rumours. You may see that this is an issue, but it is very difficult to give effective feedback to combine this with being true to the facts and at the same time address the issue so that is one I just like to highlight. That's when it is easy to not get the effect you are looking for.

Note taker

do you have an example to give where that was the case, just to sort of understand the ins and outs of it

PAM7

yes, I understand it was a bit cryptic but let's say that persons A and B are not cooperating very well for some reason, and they will have different opinions of the situation and then it can be very difficult because you need to be very careful to take either position in a way, you need to understand it but you can see that it's not doing any good for the team for instance so you still need to give some kind of feedback. One way to address it, as I have seen it, is to try to not construct but to get into a situation where this becomes real if you like and then you are part of it. That is sometimes the way I tried to address it.

Lead interviewer

Can you think of an example of where you have actually sat down with a specific person and talked to them about these things? When you sat down with a specific person and said "hey I noticed that you have some problem with this guy" or "I noticed that so and so, so I have something to tell you", during a performance appraisal for example, a specific example with a specific person? Can you give an example of that?

PAM7

Erm can you repeat it again with slightly different words?

Lead interviewer

OK so what you have told us right now is slightly general, a general philosophy about giving feedback when ineffective, but can you think of a specific situation, a specific experience which you have had with someone where you have sat down and had this conversation with them?

PAM7

Yes, you can sit down with one person and you can get into it in a way. But this person doesn't really relate to the situation they don't see it as a problem. And that is because you can have one person who is very open and direct and is used to conflicts cooperating with a person with sort of a different personality and they are both right in a way what in total when they co-operate it doesn't really or at least not the best cooperation if you like. I guess that was also quite general.

Note taker

In the scenario that you describe would you address the individuals separately or would you get them all into the same room?

PAM7

Yes that's a good question and often when someone is giving me, or describing a situation like this, I will often say that I cannot address this very specifically unless you are part of it. No I have not been in the situation where all the different parties have been sat down and discussed it.

Note taker

So the way that you have addressed it yourself when these situations come up, is to almost construct it like you say so that you're part of it so that then you can take that specific incident and address it with the individual?

PAM7

Yes, so try to see that in this meeting with that agenda I should be present because then that is likely that this will occur, the likelihood that the situation may well emerge.

Lead interviewer

Is this something that occurs regularly would you say in your workplace?

PAM7

No not regularly but they can be quite important things for the group dynamics. so typically, in a role let's say that you hold a role for approximately 3 years or something like that maybe a couple of times during that period. But it can shape your group dynamics quite a lot.

Lead interviewer

Do you have an example of a time where you tried to talk to someone about this and the message you conveyed hasn't been communicated when you walked out the room you felt that you didn't get to say what you want to say, "I don't feel like the person on the other side of the table understood what I was trying to tell them?"

PAM7

Yes, I think so because like I said you have to be a bit careful in sticking to the facts and then your message is likely to be not that clear in a way, and at the same time if you have a person which is quite comfortable with that relatively high conflict level, then you were back to a situation where I feel it is often ineffective.

## **Q8: Goal of ineffective feedback**

Note taker

In these kinds of situations what is the ultimate goal of the feedback? is it to give them an understanding of the situation or is it change behaviour, what is the ultimate goal?



PAM7

the ultimate goal is in a way to try and address the behaviour and explain that your behaviour is causing this and try not to point fingers because we all behave differently and there is not a right or wrong answer in a way but still I think all of us need to understand what our behaviour is doing to others.

Note taker

and do you feel when you do convey it, it has been taken on board willingly or do you find because of the challenges that it's a little bit unclear that it actually becomes not taking onboard willingly but more begrudgingly?

PAM7

I think it is the latter [taken begrudgingly]. I think it is not easy to, and it's the kind of message, in an area like that you probably need to get that message many times before you take it in, in a way. it's probably not doing a lot to you when you get it once.

## **Q2: Effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

how would you contrast that with an effective feedback session?

PAM7

[effective – receiver]

let me look at my notes. so effective is... well when I get an effective feedback, when I sort of know it myself. That this is a good point it becomes very strong in a way. So for instance in my case, I know my communication style is quite compact if you like, and I can receive feedback that I, "you have to use more words you have to explain better why you argue for this or that" then I think it's a very effective feedback because I recognise that this is a good point, and I understand that the person has something to offer.

Lead interviewer

So it is relevant and concrete

PAM7

Relevant

Lead interviewer

And when you are giving feedback and you want it to be effective what sort of steps do you take to make sure the feedback you are giving becomes effective.

PAM7

It's to tie it to specific cases. Again, its um also the timing immediately after events to see it. I mean you are researching into it so you will probably be aware that this is one of the essentials. To do it immediately after the good performance if you like or when it needs to be adjusted in a way. It is a lot easier, the way that I see it, to give feedback on the delivery part, Note taker is aware of that in this company we talked about delivery and behaviour dimensions, it is a lot easier to talk about the delivery part and a bit more challenging to talk about the behavioural aspect in terms of feedback.

Note taker

I think it is potentially... it's not just the personal... it's easier to change the delivery than the personal and if you're aware of that in itself it can make it uncomfortable to say we need to look at your behaviour.

PAM7

and again as I say, to me, it is very valuable to get feedback on the behaviour because I know less about that I think a lot of people know when they have done an excellent performance in the form of a delivery but to get a feedback on how you are perceived by others.

Lead interviewer

it's challenging but important

PAM7

exactly both in terms of receiving and giving. I tend to send people an SMS directly after the performance because then we will also see that you are thinking about this outside the event so that is one thing I use to make it stronger

Note taker

would you use that format for both behavioural and delivery?

PAM7

probably not, and behaviour not that much then it would be quite a general statement on behaviour and probably not if it was feedback addressing some issues that needed some improvement. it would be more in the direction of saying "this was excellent" or "the way that you did this meeting was very good".

Lead interviewer

so you would rather do the any negative feedback face to face

PAM7

yes because then you would need to see all the details facial expressions and body language items.

Lead interviewer

if you had something you had to address with someone would you set up a formal meeting, sort of "we're booking this room at that in that time, come in and I will give you an evaluation", or would you just sort of say "hey do you have five minutes let's have a chat?"

PAM7

yes that's a good point, if you set up a long time before you create a lot of stress I think because you have to say something about what this is about so usually the latter [let's have a chat] unless it is something on the formal side, on the very formal side, where you need to document things and bring in other people.

Lead interviewer

So in a yearly performance appraisal?

PAM7

or if you have special issues you need to deal with

## **Q7: Goal of effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

do you usually go into these, when you have this feedback meetings with your supervisees, do you usually have a goal going into the session?

PAM7

so now I need to understand a little bit better, because feed back to me is every or can be every day and if you talk about feedback meetings are you thinking about more formal things like annual review

Lead interviewer

not necessarily when I say feedback meetings I just mean meeting between two people not necessarily a formal meeting just a situation of communication so in a situation where you are giving feedback to someone else do you usually have a goal going into it, as in "I want to achieve this by the end of the meeting" or "I want to communicate this by the end of the meeting".

PAM7

maybe in my head but not structured very often, I may make some notes of what I should remember to say but not often structured like that.

Lead interviewer

OK

PAM7

one thing if I may add, I'll comment, it goes in both directions but when you give feedback about improvement things to me both in receiving it and giving it. It is important that something can be done about it and that is one of the less effective feedback I have ever gotten when you get feedback that this is not good but you know immediately that it could not have been done in a different way or it is too late to do anything about it, so to frame it in a way that it is possible to do something about it at least in the future, that is important

Note taker

so would you come with the suggestion how to improve or would you allow the person to come with sort of this is the scenario "what would you do Note taker how do you think you could have improved it?" or would you say "the way that I saw it if you had just pulled back and listened..." which way would you normally tackle it or is it very different from case to case?

PAM7

um it can be both cases, but the first you said [allow the person to come with an improvement suggestion] of course is inviting the other one to a much better degree so both but sometimes you have something that went wrong and you cannot do anything about it but then it's important to put it in the context of the future in a way even if you don't see any more of those cases still being able to put it into a future context rather than just talk about something that did not go well.

#### **Q4: Ineffective Feedback**

Note taker

when you speak about ineffective feedback can you think of an incident that you experience that and tell us how we go that was? you said that it happens one or two times a year have you had an instant like that that you've had to deal with lately or which one did you think about when you mentioned that

PAM7

the one I mentioned was maybe about 10 years ago I think one of the worst feedbacks I've ever got. I think my supervisor at that time was very stressed for different reasons so that is part of the picture of course, but a new routine had been introduced to the company - for any decisions above a certain level you should have a memo to describe it - and of course for one of the items in my area there was no memo because the new procedure came after, it came too late in a way, and then it was just a very non constructive feedback that "this is not good enough if you cannot deal with this you should find another job." and that is not very effective you simply start to browse for new jobs when you get feedback like that.

Lead interviewer

Yes not very constructive

PAM7

and it could have been given in a perfectly constructive way with another framing.

Note taker

so this was actually feedback that you received and did you get the opportunity to convey that to your supervisor at the time that you felt that it was less than constructive?

PAM7

no I did not but that is probably my mistake as well but I just felt that I didn't care to deal with it you sort of lose trust in this person immediately which is not a good thing.

## **Q9: Demographics of participant**

Lead interviewer

how old were you approximately at this time?

PAM7

I think this was approximately 10 years ago so 40 years old

Lead interviewer

and this was still in Company A?

Note taker

Company A

Lead interviewer

but at this time it would have still been Company A

PAM7

it was just before the merger so yes it was Company A.

Lead interviewer

and your supervisor at that time how old was he?

PAM7

probably 5 years older something like that 5 to 10 years older

Lead interviewer

and was he Norwegian as well?

PAM7

Yes

Lead interviewer

how was your education levels obviously he had some kind of seniority but was that just tenure or was he your..., or were your education levels comparable.

PAM7

Yes I think so

Note taker

That's both PhD's isn't it?

PAM7

I don't have a PhD, I have two Masters.

## **Q2: Effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

do you have a similar incident that you can recall on effective feedback? I see some of them but hopefully they will be very different, a memory that sort of stuck out to you, that this is a good session feedback.

PAM7

I think the best feedbacks I have received will be on the behaviour side.

Lead interviewer

was there one specific case where the delivery was good and the content was good. Where there was a specific incident where you had communication with one person where you said the two of us had a good meeting or a good interaction at a communication level.

PAM7

Yes sometimes when you work in a team you get some very strong feedback from some of the people reporting to you and people are quite different there but some people are at least sometimes you get "you are the best leader I have had" and that is a strong feedback extremely positive it's a positive circle in a way and not many dare to say that. That is one thing I try to remember in my position as

well to try and remember and give that feedback to my leader because it is very often when you talk about feedback you talk about talking to your subordinates but to me it is equally important the other way.

Note taker

and when you get that would you start probing "why you think that" or is it something you just take on the board and then continue with the feedback?

PAM7

an easy probing. very light because I think for many people it can be intimidating to give that because so few do it but I can typically try to ask "in what way" just to get some headlines but I would not probe very deep

Lead interviewer

so you've gotten this feedback before can you just think of one person who has given you this feedback. one person who has said that you are the best leader I've had

PAM7

yes you were thinking about...

Note taker

we're just thinking if you could think of that specific incident then we can ask details about that incident so if you have it in your head then Lead interviewer can ask questions about that incident

PAM7

OK

Lead interviewer

Is this just sort of unofficial meeting where you just met in the hallway or was it a meeting at lunch or was it in relation to a specific task or job.

PAM7

this can typically be in a discussion like the yearly dialogue or something like that when you go through the deliveries then I usually ask, try to be inclusive, and ask people do you have any feedback to me or the things I should be thinking off and then a comment like that can come as part of the feedback to me.

Lead interviewer

So this is typically during a yearly appraisal, where on paper where you are usually the one who should provide the feedback as the supervisor, but you use it as a dialogue.

PAM7

I try to invite comments, yes, because I would like to get their views, again I sense this huge difference of how people use this opportunity, if I can call it an opportunity, some people use it like that and some people say nothing there is a lot of variation.

### **Q10: Demographics of effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

please describe a person who's giving you the type of feedback, age, nationality, education. Describe one person who has used the opportunity to give you this type of feedback.

PAM7

Yes, so it can be a male from UK 52 years or a woman from Norway 43

### **Q13: Subjective perception of similarity of ineffective feedback**

Lead interviewer

sooo thinking first about this guy who gave you in effective feedback who said switch jobs [ineffective] on a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 is very similar and 10 is very dissimilar how would you rate yourself with this person intuitively

PAM7

what was similar

Lead interviewer

10 is similar one is dissimilar

PAM7

to that person?

Lead interviewer

Yes

PAM7

I would say like 2

### **Q12: Subjective perception of similarity of effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

for one of the people you had an effective feedback session with for example the male from UK



PAM7

I think I would be quite similar to him so quite high I would think up to the top scale about 8

### **Q14: Basis on subjective rating**

Lead interviewer

can I ask you what was the basis for this rating, what kind of traits or characteristics did you think about when tried to compare yourself to these people

PAM7

I assume it is you try to understand what you like and dislike yourself and apply that in your own work in a way

Lead interviewer

so work styles and behaviour at work

PAM7

what you believe will work in a way that's a good point but I am the one that's being interviewed.

Note taker

when we get asked intuitively how you would rate another person often we would first look at well what am I like before you look at the other person and think "we are totally different". What was it you thought about? Personality, or was it other characteristics?

PAM7

I think I know what you're asking about, Note taker you are talking about liking people?

Note taker

well it's just that when we asked about how similar we are to someone... if I was asked that right, I would maybe think we're both females we're both doing a Master's degree or would I think she is half my age she has a different perspective of life the way she does her work at school is completely different from me what do you think about when you start looking at how similar am I to the other person. One way we could rate her very close and then the other way I can read her as very distant - it has to do with prospective.

PAM7

may I just comment as well, this is not necessarily an answer, when I start to reflect myself when you put it this way I immediately see that when I think of the positive feedback is from the people that you have built a relationship with so there is an element of trust which has been established which of course means that people are starting to open up and you get this reinforcement and people are

starting to open up with as the ones that are giving negative feedback there's more distant relationships more performance orientated and less people and personal if you like.

### Lead interviewer

that is completely in line with what we have seen before. Personal chemistry has certainly been a factor in our previous interviews as well, do you have any comments on that I see this as part of personal chemistry, what role do you see that in the personal feedback

### PAM7

I think it plays a big role because when you get this trust building you can also go into domains you did not dare to do without the trust both in constructive and trying to change things but also in the way you relay positive feedback. it is also a pitfall in a way, because liking... if you like someone very much it can sort of clutter your views in terms of 100% of objective feedback

### Note taker

do you think there is such a thing 100% objective feedback?

### PAM7

no the first that the liking can clutter and you need to think about it all the time

### Note taker

is it something that you as a supervisor take on board every time you prepare, when you have the opportunity to prepare, to think I need to think about this a wee bit more because we get on like a house of fire but I've got to make sure that that doesn't clutter my view

### PAM7

I tried to think about that a lot because feedback doesn't necessarily have to be feedback is also the way you relate to people around you and if you like someone quite a lot you may spend more time and pay more attention etc etc and that is also part of the feedback

### Note taker

so favouritism is something you have to think about all the time as a supervisor, but then as a subordinate do you also think about it from your leaders do you think "he spends so much time with me that I must mean I must be his favourite"

### PAM7

you also think about it but I'm not that concerned about it because it's sort of that persons choice in a way but you have a good point it goes both ways

## Q15: General comments on feedback

Lead interviewer

can I ask about something completely different, or almost completely different, do you also think about culture? good organisational or national culture whether that affects the feedback at all. The way you give feedback or the way you receive feedback do you think that has an impact or is it something just on the complete peripheral edge of the situation

PAM7

no I think it has a great deal to do with how you give feedback I think the Norwegian culture is quite special in some ways when it comes to this sort of casual environment where there is great opportunity for both leaders and those reporting to the leaders to say what they feel. In other countries you feel this is very different and I have to be extremely careful about how I frame things there are different views of authority and lines of command and democracy at work etc etc so that shapes the feedback.

Lead interviewer

I'm not going to ask you to judge them necessarily but do you have a preference for what kind of environment you like to work in? Do you like the Norwegian casual environment or do you prefer the hierarchical system?

PAM7

in general I prefer the former [casual] the trust based where people contribute based on competencies and insight instead of position within the company but they are of course situations where you need to have a very clear discipline around who is making the call and who is preparing the decision basis etc etc. Company A is not the best example but in project where you have extremely tight deadlines and crisis situations etc are typical examples where there is less time for discussion and viewpoints and you just need to execute so sometimes the Norwegian culture has gone a bit too far in one way as I view it. Of course you still need, I don't have the English word around .... but you need to have some respect for the system in a way at least in big companies but still I prefer the open trust based flat systems to that extent possible.

Note taker

So the change of Company A's way of doing things now from changing from the 1-5 rating to the 1-3 rating where will no longer be going to have a number where you used to have ratings for behaviour and delivery it's now just going to be getting feedback do you think that supports the more trust based?

PAM7

yes I think so and it makes it more transparent and less complicated it will be more and less the same as far as giving an understanding.

Note taker

and is that the way it has been communicated the reason for the changes why did they decide to change that particular part of the feedback process

PAM7

I think it was felt of being too complicated and a lot of calculations and arithmetic and then of course during the last year's salary increases have been typically modest so then you end up with a lot of bureaucracy for a point 2 decimal on your pay check and it doesn't really make sense

Note taker

will it be more that most of your team will get the same and less nuances.

PAM7

I think it will be more like trying to highlight the very clear talents and highlight those who are underperforming to a very large degree basically there are a lot of clever and skilled people so then you are back to feedback and trying to develop them rather than debating for hours wit should be at 3 or 4, it will be better

Lead interviewer

but since it is still subjective did you receive any sort of training before you came into your current position in order to evaluate and give feedback and so on or was it just like you are now in this position and you can deal with it however you like

PAM7

you're talking about feedback in general now?

Lead interviewer

Both

PAM7

you get some training in the form of this is the way we are doing it but I think the best training I got was when I did my masters in management we had a lot of psychology training and that was probably the best place and, as it was paid by the company, you could argue that they train you but it was voluntarily but that's where I learnt most of this in the psychology training.

Lead interviewer

And you use this when you give feedback

PAM7

absolutely I'm quite interested in it so I've read a lot of books about it

Note taker

do you receive a lot of feedback from your immediate superior now, do you feel that there is enough feedback both informal and formal

PAM7

I have just started a new role so it's a bit early to evaluate that but in the previous roles I would say not much [feedback] but when needed in a way, typically in the roles I have been quite independent but the leaders have provided some good insights typically in a year a leader will point to two or three things and you recognise. If you get two or three good points that's very nice rather than a lot of words just a couple of points. I've also had with some people and maybe you've talked about that with others, when you build a certain trust level with a person you can also start to ask that person "hey can you give me some feedback from this meeting, how did I do that?" is also very useful but it requires a good great deal of trust.

Note taker

what we have heard a couple of times is when you open up to feedback, quite often the go-to is negative [e.g.] I give a full presentation and everything is wonderful but on the third slide there is an error when opening up for feedback people will often criticise they don't necessarily mean to do it but people will look for the errors.

PAM7

That's quite interesting Note taker because when you read someone's report for instance you notice a typo but sometimes I will not comment on it, because it makes me little in a way commenting on this. I would rather make comments on the holistic picture and something more valuable than commenting on the small typo. even though you see it

Note taker

another interesting trend we have seen is that people also felt that trust helped to give negative feedback as well, [e.g.], when you build that trust people will start to say "PAM7 listen, I just want to mention that ..." because you feel that this is something he's going to want to hear and it's going to help him in the future so therefore I'm going to put myself out there and do it even if it feels uncomfortable, do you also experience this?

PAM7

yes but it is quite seldom that you get to that point I must say when I think of my career it's not very often you get to that level at least not diving into the more heavy stuff.

Lead interviewer

Great, I think we have a lot to work on here thank you very much for your time.

[some general conversation about the thesis]

PAM7

have you talked a lot with others about giving feedback to your own leader because in any company like that the higher you get into the position the more lonely you will be

Lead interviewer

that was my hypothesis actually

PAM7

that was your hypothesis (laughter) so people will probably be quite happy when that happens.

Note taker

A trend seems to be that as you go higher up in the system you seem to be very aware of the importance of feedback, you think about feedback a lot, you put a great deal of value- but as a leader you get very little feedback and you as a leader will not seek it from your leader.

PAM7

interesting I would like a copy of your thesis. The effect of feedback can almost destroy teams or create teams - with feedback so it is very interesting. - good luck with it [thesis].

Interview PBF16 on 20 June 2018 at COMPANY B.

[The recorder was not initially switched on and is therefore only scant notes **no quotes used in thesis for this part** – recording is started after first 5 minutes]

## **Q1: Supervisor**

Lead interviewer

Are you a supervisor

PBF16

No

## **Q2: Effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

Can you describe a situation where you received effective feedback in as much detail as possible.

PBF16

[effective – receiver]

Yes, I think effective feedback is constructive, if there is something to work on you should be given specific details. About a year and a half ago I had my PA or at least a feedback session with my project manager. We had had a stable project and I felt loyalty towards the project and project manager. It was a project which I had to learn a new application, a more financial application rather than production application. She very much appreciated how I documented the project and cases I worked on. I also had contributed positively to the working atmosphere and she generally gave me a rating of 5. Unfortunately when I had my official PA with my line manager I received a rating of 3. My line manager generally approves timesheets and stuff like that and is not involved in my everyday work [see below for recap by participant]

Lead interviewer

Did you challenge your line manager

PBF16

Yes I did question why but didn't really get a proper explanation.

[more written notes not taken – more information on effective feedback further down from recording]

## **Q4: Ineffective Feedback**

Lead interviewer

Can you describe a situation where you received ineffective feedback please?

PBF16

[ineffective – receiver]

Negative, yes maybe in my last project I was given the feedback that I was too detailed orientated and it was a very detailed project and the two of us who basically did the project were both very detail orientated. we have received feedback from support that everything has worked really well afterwards because we had been so detail-oriented. Because even, I mean one status on a file if the customer doesn't want to see that file or wants to see or doesn't want to see that file in the portal then if it's not a 100% detail and then it doesn't work and it's really sensitive with the project with the migrating all the new buildings from COMPANY B or from Company Z to COMPANY B. if not everything has been 100% perfect some customers could have seen other customers files, like drawings of ships and stuff technical drawings and it would have been really, I mean it would have been in news it would have been a lawsuit and everything so we were very detail oriented and I feel like giving that type of feedback is very unfair because it had to be, and I don't think the people in charge of the project understood because they don't know the work process and they don't know the details. luckily the co-pilot I had in Germany was asked detail-oriented and knew that it had to be perfect otherwise we couldn't have done it. I mean you can't put stuff out on the portal without making sure that all those product companies and this is what you see and this is what nobody else sees and everything like that. but that was after the project was over and I know myself that it had to be that detail oriented. so I guess I don't really care but I guess I feel it was unfair when people giving you the feedback when not really understanding what they're giving feedback on. they don't really understand the consequences. I could have just changed one number on a file and another customer would have seen that file and it would have been a disaster if you show the general drawing of a cruise vessel to the wrong customer it's just chaos. so they really didn't understand the project they were managing.

Lead interviewer

did they give any explanation to you as what being too detailed orientated meant, because as you explained it was very important to be detail oriented. did they come up with a counter argument, like that it took too much time or anything like that.

PBF16

no not really but I think that's probably what happened that they think it took too much time but we were saying the whole time along that we couldn't release the project until this quality QA had been done on all the files because there was a lot of programs that transfer the data and we had to do a lot of QA on it afterwards, and we tried to make these programs perfect in the beginning and it took too much time and every time the programmers change something, something else came up so at the end we said we'll leave it as it is now and then we have to do these and these things manually afterwards to ensure everything is ok. to even get started on the migration and they agreed on that but they didn't understand that cost that we had to do some manual QA afterwards. so I just think it's the lack of understanding down in the detailed level of what they are managing. some managers are just up at a high level and they had been doing migration of fleet and service first, which is not very detail oriented it at all it's just a status you have these surveys and this owner and this flag and this class notations and you can move that data from there but you don't move 10,000 technical drawings uploaded by 120 different companies and you don't mix. I feel that it's just that they didn't understand



what we are doing and of course that's our job to make them understand as well but this was feedback after the project was over. but I felt it was unfair

Lead interviewer

from the project manager or project managers plural

PBF16

yes there was two project managers, one was doing it at the beginning and then the other at the end but they were kind of overlapping.

Lead interviewer

how long ago was this approximately

PBF16

about two years ago or two and a half years ago

Note taker

did you challenge the feedback, did you explain at the time when they said you were too detailed orientated

PBF16

no because I felt the project was over and it was just... no not really. just well that's there opinion but they don't know what they're talking about

Note taker

so it really meant nothing to you because you felt if there was a lack of understanding

PBF16

well I thought it was unfair but still I just talk to this the other co-pilot in the project and she agrees definitely. at least they wrote that I had good knowledge of the work processes which means I kind of knew what the detail level had to be, I mean I know the portal and how the information is shared with customers and the portal and the struggles they have there with all the different companies uploading drawings and some customers are supposed to see what other customers upload but not with others again upload and it is really a mess. if a company sees something that they shouldn't see it's really critical. we also have restricted designs where only some people in the company can see the drawings and it is really a delicate issue that I feel like at least the one project manager didn't understand it all.

Note taker

But the leader to the person that you were saying was the co-pilot, they did not get the same feedback

PBF16

No, no

Note taker

and you feel that was because they had a better understanding

PBF16

yes but that whole section has been reorganized so she doesn't have the same leader anymore he's actually not a leader anymore I don't think there's been a lot of the organisation and that side as well. I had lunch with her in Hamburg about a month ago so she is moved to a different position. but no no no she got good feedback and I worked really well with her and I wrote her boss after the project was over I wrote her boss a recommendation saying how happy I've been working with her and got positive feedback so I think he knows we did a good job (laughing).

Note taker

do you think that would have affected, I'm not mixing the incidents up, but the rating at the time the lack of understanding when giving a rating could have had a knock on effect of the rating you would have received that year

PBF16

yes I think it affected my rating yes

Note taker

was that the same time I just realised that one was two years ago and the other was half a year

PBF16

known this must be then 2016 or 2017 rating

Note taker

but that didn't then make you feel that because it affected your rating that you have to get this message through to this person

PBF16

no I think it is certain stage you just have to kind of move on, it's too stressful to make a big deal out of it it's just better to move on. but I mean I haven't been in the situation in general in the company it's just been since that project and that project manager before that I've been basically very happy with my or much more happier with my line managers.

Note taker

but the Matrix system has been the same at all times the project manager which is closest to you but the line leader is the one that gives the PA

PBF16

yes but I think in general earlier I've been in more like internal projects within the section not external projects like these two projects like this one that I'm in now and this larger one that I was in. that has been more external projects and I think that is also due to the re-organisation of the company and maybe not needing so many people in the section that I'm actually employed a lot of stuff happens at the same time and a lot of migration project and a lot of larger projects and been going on lately and due to this and not yet finished.

## **Q9: Demographics of participant**

Lead interviewer

I think we can move onto personal details just for the sake of research, and again if you prefer not to answer just let us know and we'll skip it. your nationality is Norwegian and how old are you approximately

PBF16

57

Lead interviewer

and what is your highest form of completed education

PBF16

master in computer science

Lead interviewer

is that an MSc

PBF16

well actually I went to school in the US I have a bachelor's and then like three quarters of a year added on to become a civil engineer by NTH. and with nth you have this civil engineer

title which is transferred into master of science so when I first started working here in a daughter, daughter company of DNV and I was going to make my first company card I wanted to put bachelor of science on my card and my boss said well why should you put bachelor of science and I said it's a bachelor science I have from US and he says well you are civil engineer and everyone else has civil engineer here and they have massive signs on their cards and that translates so I was convinced to do so but I never really liked having a master of science in my card. but then I've also taken a business degree from BI so I really feel I have enough education now plus we never use business cards anyway. but it's called a masters of science because of NTH

Lead interviewer

what was your degree in BI was it business administration

PBF16

it's called business candidate actually, it's one year during the day or two years during the evening, what do they call it "bedriftsøkonom"

Lead interviewer

we would also like to get some details of the people you have described during these incidents if you don't know the answer then and approximation is just fine. I'm going to see if I can get the timeline straight the effective feedback that you got that was quite recent but the ineffective that was approximately 2 years ago.

PBF16

yes

Lead interviewer

and the BI degree did you take that last year

PBF16

no that was in the early 90s

Lead interviewer

the effective feedback first, how long have you been working in this company

PBF16

I was employed by a daughter company first but I was working here so I kind of feel like I've been here for 32 years, but I've only been employed by DNV for 12 years because I worked with a daughter daughter company for 20 years. but then out of those 20 years the last 13 years I was Consulting for DNV full-time. so I've been here the whole time except for half a year between my two leaves of that absence with the kids I was working in sandvika as a

project manager for a project there in this daughter daughter company and then I started after my second believe I started working here employed by DNV. so I feel like employed for 32 years even though I've only been employed for 12. I mean I started here in the 19th of January 1986 and my husband as well in my kids were up in the daycare.

### **Q10: Demographics of effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

that was a good day care (laughing), so this person who gave you the effect of feedback at that time your line manager no sorry your project manager is this a man or a woman

PBF16

a woman

Lead interviewer

and do you know how old she is approximately

PBF16

60

Lead interviewer

and her nationality is Norwegian

PBF16

yes

Lead interviewer

And what sort of educational background does she have

PBF16

engineer

Lead interviewer

engineering computer science as well

PBF16

No, you know better than me (laughing loudly) [realised researcher knows the project manager well]

Lead interviewer

Ah got you

PBF16

I don't think it was civil engineer at least because when I started working for them they were saying that I was the third civil engineer woman that was working full-time for them not when I was employed but when I started Consulting full time they didn't have very many women civil engineers

Lead interviewer

no her background is IT and project management

PBF16

So engineer instead of this civil engineer I think yes

Lead interviewer

how long has she been at the company

PBF16

35 years

Lead interviewer

and she's been in that position as a project manager for about 10 years I guess.

### **Q11: Demographics of ineffective feedback**

Lead interviewer

and for this one that you received ineffective feedback about being too detailed, if we take the person who gave you the feedback towards the end you said there was two people involved but we just consider the one towards the end what's this Male or woman.

PBF16

woman

Lead interviewer

Norwegian

PBF16

yes well the one towards the end that was German

Lead interviewer

employed in Norway full time

PBF16

no in Germany in Hamburg

Lead interviewer

do you know her educational background

PBF16

similar to mine I think approval engineer, or approval engineering background

Lead interviewer

did she come from Company Z

PBF16

Yes

### **Q12: Subjective perception of similarity of effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

this one is a little bit tricky so take your time but on a scale from one to 10 where one is completely dissimilar and 10 is very similar how would you rate yourself and the person who gave you the effective feedback

PBF16

8

### **Q13: Subjective perception of similarity of ineffective feedback**

Lead interviewer

and the same question for the ineffective feedback giver

PBF16

well the one person who was giving the feedback about being too detailed orientated is not the same German one it was the other one but what do you mean by similar or dissimilar as a person or..

Lead interviewer

what's most intuitive to you

PBF16

I would say quite dissimilar so I would say on a scale from 1 to 10 I would say like a 2 or 3

#### **Q14: Basis on subjective rating**

Lead interviewer

so when I said intuitively what sort of things did you settle on considering what sort of elements personality or personal background education work Style

PBF16

all of it's probably at the same time we are personally quite different I think and also not the technical background. because I also feel that being quite different because I feel like some of the project managers they just move from one project to another and they just kind of leave behind what they have and they don't care. I feel like I have dragged on a lot of my old stuff and helped on the other stuff because I don't feel like just leaving stuff behind if I've been responsible for something I really feel that I can assist with those issues as well but some project managers at least like her towards the end she was then starting on a new project and always halfway out the door kind of just leaving us behind to do the whole cleaning up the whole mess and I feel like I would never have done that so I think we're quite different. then she probably felt that the job was done but basically we had a setup that we still had 30 or 40 new buildings projects to move and she was already out the door to her next Project so another one kind of stepped in and took over some of the more lower level details or responsibilities.

#### **Q2: Effective feedback**

Note taker

I would like to try and get a summary of the effective feedback again as I do feel we don't have that on the tape recorder and my notes are really scant as I didn't think I need to use them to do the transcript can I ask you again to recap a little bit about the effective feedback, that was when you said you've got constructive and really good feedback because you prefer if there was some negative but that tends not to happen but what you did get you felt it was effective. Can you maybe just recap a little please



PBF16

Yes, I felt it was detailed enough that it kind of gives me a feeling for what they were happy about for instance documenting the project and the cases I was working on well and working well with my colleagues and bringing some, you know, positivity into the group and stuff like that.

Note taker

so it was both performance and behaviour

PBF16

yes. and also information that I was able to learn the application quite fast and kind of change setting from the system I used to work on to a totally different in the finance world but that was quite a new big gap between those applications but still that I was able to attain a lot of the knowledge and quite fast to start working within the application. so I think that it was detailed enough that they can I give you good feel for what things mattered especially in documenting it makes sense to document what you do again because they like that level that your at you know, maybe not too detailed but still enough so that other people understand what you've done so I felt it was good constructive feedback.

Note taker

it's interesting that you say that you don't enjoy change although obviously in this particular situation the change was very positive because you took it on board and you learned quickly and you embraced it.

PBF16

plus I think at this time with the company it is good to work with a project where you your knowledge is needed and also I can bring with me my knowledge of the production systems and this is the financial system taking or getting the payment for the jobs being done in the production system and then to kind of understand the whole all the systems and integration the whole architecture and everything so I feel like I can use a lot of the old knowledge I have and then add on with new things which I feel will be important the next 5 or 10 years which is important I think. if you work with the production system there's not that many changes going on in our section anymore most of it is run through projects they changed the work process and change the tool accordingly and I think at this time both with my age and with the company changing so much it's good to being a project where you feel like this knowledge that you have is important with company for the next 10 years and it's not like I mean they're laying off so many people now you have to think about what part of the company your at and what knowledge you have and put things you work on instead of plus there's other people working with support and a lot of people can do that but there's fewer people who can do what I do now and I feel that's a good position to be in as well. especially since both my husband and I are working in the same company it's good that we both feel like what we do will take us... if you see for instance approval engineer so many people have lost their job because there's maybe 15 approval engineer's approving machinery drawings and if you're just one of them then if they only need ten then some are out. so I feel that's good and

plus there's a lot of consultants working in the project and I think it is good we have some people employed by the company and also having been here for such a long time I know a lot of people in different positions so if we have an issue with something I can just go and ask anybody and basically they help me which is important I think and then of course the most of them are employed by COMPANY B as well so then I think that's good that I can utilise my network within the company in this position as well.

Note taker

so the changes you don't like it's not necessarily a system changes because you see the long-term value and that you enjoy that and you enjoyed contributing in a very positive way but the changes you don't like as more than organisational changes

PBF16

yes the name change to COMPANY B merged with the German company that part of it I didn't like that much and I think, I guess they have done some evaluations of the technical Solutions and stuff but I don't think they've ever done any evaluations of how people feel being in the company and all the reorganizations. all the reorganisations that we have done lately I have not liked as well. earlier I was in that must be like 10 years back, eight or nine years back I was in that time and then in a re-organisation I was moved to GSSIT together with some other people and I really didn't like it, because I was working as a single point of contact for new building and responsible for all the new building support and the tools in the production system and then they just move some of us over to GSSIT and I really didn't like that at all. my boss called me into meeting and said we are reorganizing and you and this other guy I being moved over there and by the way I'm taking a long weekend so I'm leaving in half an hour. "Ah ok", and I had no clue and then I said who's going to be my line manager and he said I don't know but I'll find out and then he left and I was like s\*\*\* what happened since I don't like change I really didn't like that. but this was before Company Z but that type of reorganisation it's not very good. but I knew so many people in IT so I just walked over and said I've heard I've been moved over here who am I being moved to, and then I was sent to some people and found out and then I never even got a reply from my line manager saying who was going to be my line manager.

Note taker

so it sounds like you have to, or choose to use your network quite actively so when you speak about your network do you think of your network being there because no working relationship or generally because of the personal relationship you have. do you generally reach out to people that you have a personal relationship to or because you worked with them of course it may be both.

PBF16

I think it's because I know them and it's easier even though that wasn't the person for instance in IT I could just walk over and talk to the boss of the whole thing and say and what section have you put me in and also for my colleague who was moved at the same time. he ended up being the project manager and the project I was working for he ended up being the line manager that was later kicked out. so we worked together for many years, and of course we

had a personal relationship and how many times have people at home and stuff like that I feel like that's part of the whole business as well if you have a project for instance that you would have everybody over for the Christmas dinner or something like that I mean you know people quite well after years.

Note taker

That may also be strengthened as you and your husband work under the same roof

PBF16

yes but I don't really see that many colleagues as friends outside the company or do that much with them I used to play a lot of tennis and that was of course and the DNV team with colleagues but otherwise I don't really see people, but of course I have three kids and they're quite small because I had kids late so every evening just goes to driving them back and forth and doing activities and stuff. so I don't have that much time to see people outside so if I see people outside it's my old friends from school. but I still within the working environment have a lot of personal relationships so I can utilise that and they also asked me a lot so it goes both ways. I get a little bit frustrated when people tell me I have to go through 8989 because I'm so used to picking up the phone or linking people and they would help me and they would do the same to me

Note taker

is 8989 a helpdesk

PBF16

yes

Note taker

thank you for that recap. you mentioned that you'd actually been a project manager yourself

PBF16

yes I've been a project manager and also head of section.

### **Q15: General comments on feedback**

Note taker

do you have any general thoughts when you think of effective and ineffective having been on both sides of the fence

PBF16

in general I feel like some managers are very afraid of taking up the bad things and I think in a sense it's not very good for the employees either because it's good to get this feedback so

that then you can change otherwise how can you change something if you don't know about it that is an issue. so for instance when I was head of section for 6 months as my boss was on paternity leave I took up some things that he had not taken up and people had also ask me why he hadn't done anything with this and I feel that it's much better to get it out of the way and organise it and I got help from personnel and brought it up because I knew a lot of people would annoyed about one person not doing his job and just spending 7 hours or less every day and when they work in the same queue it was really annoying to other people. I think my boss at the time had never brought that up because it was probably uncomfortable and plus he may be felt it didn't matter that much but to other colleagues it mattered. so I got help from personnel and brought it up with him and I think it improved and at least all the people in the section were happy that someone had done something instead of just leaving it and everybody being annoyed and everybody taking notes about when he's coming when is he leaving and checking that he was never online in the evening. I guess when you work in the same queue it matters more if you don't do your job it affect other people.

Note taker

how did he receive the feedback

PBF16

well I think he was first trying to say that he didn't agree but I just basically told him that I noticed myself and all his colleagues have noticed. I said that he needed to change and I said that if you wanted to work in 80% position he could but if you wanted to work out 100% he had to to spend the same amount of time as his colleagues are and we had a follow up session and I met him alone but I had talked to personnel first so I think that really helped I got some tips of what to say and what not to say. I think it worked I think he respected it of course he may have kept against me in the way that he wasn't very happy it was brought up but for the whole section it was good because if the whole section is really annoyed with one person it really doesn't work well. I know now since I moved away to projects that he is moved away as well so he wasn't really interested in doing that job and that really shows I guess in your commitment.

Note taker

and then finally how did the manager who return from paternity leave and you filled him in in the details was he relieved that you're taking it

PBF16

yes I think so

Note taker

so he is knowing that it should be taken but I haven't done anything. and that you taken it it I had improved that was a big relief to him

PBF16

yes

Lead interviewer

and do you think this reluctance to address problems that they might be a little bit awkward uncomfortable it might be something to do with the culture like this Norwegian culture or German American culture for instance because you said you studied in the US.

PBF16

no well I mean I've been to one of these culture differences workshops and they say that Germans are very much more direct but I haven't really noticed against me I feel like in general people in Norway are a bit reluctant to address negative issues. but I don't think it has anything to do with men or women or anything like that. I think there's a lot of cultural differences one of my colleagues and Germany I remember said she told me that she really thought this merger was very well for the woman in Germany because she said that when she came here and walked around she really felt like she was valued in a totally different way than she has felt before. I also know that she had never brought her kids into work in the German office but now after the merger she has and she told me that she would never have done that before. and even when she she told me also when they had a section meeting and a guy came in and they were going to introduce the whole section and her line manager was introducing the people saying that this is he and he has his background and then when it came to her he said yeah yeah this is and her name and she has two kids and then moved on to the others and she said it was really amazed her nothing about her having a degree or anything and I don't think that would have happened here. so I do think that are cultural differences in Germany and here. she told me after she'd been here the first time and came back to Germany she told her husband that it was so amazing having been here she really felt like she had fitted in even being a woman where she probably have not in the German office.

Note taker

so the region culture sounds like it has trickled in throughout the whole organisation

PBF16

yes

Note taker

and do you see any of the German culture having trickled in here

PBF16

getting the coffee shop (laughing) we didn't have that that was because of having a coffee shop in Germany I think. it's hard to tell if the German culture is more direct I don't know what people have been more direct to you I don't think I've noticed but I think also maybe people in Germany are little more laid back when it comes to dress code then they were when

it was just Company Z. and I also think there's some of the people when they come here they dress up less than they do in their own office. I don't know what if, the whole company has changed a whole lot because of the merger and due to all the organisational changes, probably a lot of people are also comparing how are things done in Germany and how are things done here. but I know for instance my husband they have been reorganizing quite a lot as well and he said that the opposite section in Germany for them it took months and months and months before they even got started in here when they told people they would do the re-organisation they basically did it right away. but in Germany they had so much struggle between the works council that it was still ongoing and they couldn't quite get it done. the Works Council is very strict also with the system like we store everything in the system so I can go in and see who did that change and all this and that's really restrictive in Germany with all that. for instance you can use the production system and see how many drawings did that person approve last year and how many did that person approve and stuff like that and they are very afraid of these type of data. because you could actually use that against some person if you wanted to. also I can go into the production system and steal someone else's job I mean if they have a job a mechanical job or something in their queue then I could just take it and do something with it and send it back or send it to someone else or whatever. but I think and there are systems they could not even see each other I think it's sort of hidden so they were really sort of shocked when they saw our systems. they asked how is that even possible and I said well if that person is sick or if I speak to that person during lunch I can just take that job and work on it and send it back you can still see the history that I've done it but you can always do it. so I think culturally is quite different. also what I've heard a lot is that in Germany there much more reluctant to making a decision on stuff whereas here it's more like a decision is made and we get on with it but as there is more likely to be pushed to someone else and that is quite different. also I think that we question if someone tells us to do something we question a lot more then they do. they would just say no no I don't want to do that because of this and this and this. so I do think there are some differences

Note taker

that sounds contradictory to me because if you have a hierarchical system in my head I would have thought that that would have meant really quicker decisions because the boss will tell you and you don't doubt them you just do it. Whereas in actual fact it sounds like it's working against it by the sounds of things I'm not taking the decision on passing it to you

PBF16

Yes

Lead interviewer

I have one final question if you have the time. We have spoken quite a lot about personal relationships, you know someone professionally and you know someone off work or you don't know them off work, and that you have people who you know in the office and colleagues that you are friendly with and you consider peers, but since you have experience giving and receiving feedback do you think how close you are to a person affects how you give or receive feedback is that an element of the process that can impact the outcome

PBF16

yes I think it does, what type of relationship you have I'm sure some people would be that hard to give a negative feedback if you know that person personally but on the other hand it could also make it easier kind of because you know that person and you have to be able to say well now we're having a personal talk and now it's professional I mean I feel that you can't have a personal relationship with someone at work unless you can sometimes see that this is business you know when I tell you to do this and now it's personal I mean there is a difference and I think we should all be adult enough to know the difference and split the two. you know what is a professional relationship and what is a personal relationship but I'm sure some people reluctant to give a negative feedback if they know that person but it doesn't really pay off in the end of the day but either person actually. of course if you have a very distant relationship with a person I don't know if they then care that much about the feedback they give if you have a personal relationship and you also want that person to develop both in positive and try and do something with the negative but maybe you don't care that much if it's somebody that you don't have the good relationship.

Lead interviewer

all of the things you just said are things that we've heard from other participants. well that was my final question thank you very much.

Interview PAF1 on 17 April 2018 at Company A.

### **Q1: Supervisor**

Lead interviewer

Are you a supervisor?

PAF1

*No*

### **Q2: Effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

Thinking of a time that you received effective feedback – could be 10 years ago, could be 20 years ago, can you describe this incident in as much detail as possible?

PAF1

[effective – receiver]

*Well I have to say that the first thing that comes to mind was from a job interview. The feedback I got was on very specific questions where they kinda chose someone else over me. Where, why the answer that was given was not what they were looking for and also some more actual constructive tips as to how to answer those kind of questions in the future.*

Lead interviewer

Ah very nice

PAF1

*So it was a very um about the subject matter it wasn't just a general you're being nice or you are being like this, it was an actual concrete action point.*

Lead interviewer

So did you receive these questions or at least the feedback via email or in person

PAF1

*on the phone, phone call*

Lead interviewer

did you feel happy about it afterwards or sad?

PAF1

*No, that was a good thing because of it was a rejection but at the same time because of the way it was conveyed and the kind of feedback that was given it did not feel like it was just I've done something wrong, it was actually ok - I could work with this it made me feel better than just being rejected with a reason they gave an explanation.*

Note taker

can I ask how was it conveyed was it the words was at the tone

PAF1

*a little bit of both it was a friendly tone but it was also because like I say because it was so specific. it was ok this question where you gave this answer we were more looking for this it was concrete, not just "you seem friendly" or you seem something like this it was an actual concrete thing to work on.*



Note taker

one more thing about that when you see it was effective have you been able to use that feedback since then to make it effective? Or why is it effective to you, or just gained knowledge?

PAF1

*It's my gained knowledge, I have not been in an interview situation since so I have not been able to use it again but it made me realise what I could do for the next time.*

Lead interviewer

I think we have a fair overview of the effective session, from the way you have described it so the next question is, how long ago was it approximately

PAF1

*about a year ago*

#### **Q4: Ineffective Feedback**

Lead interviewer

thank you that's all for that situation, now I'd like you to think about a time that you have received ineffective feedback can you describe this situation

PAF1

[ineffective – receiver]

*pausing, I don't know, I guess a time to be given too much praise when it feels out of place either due to the amount of praise or compared to the task you've actually done I understand that people are trying to be positive and reaffirming and all that, but this was after a rollout of a new way of working here and I was helping the facilitator and what I was doing was taking minutes basically. he was "oh my god this is so good", it was all just so out of this world compared to what I was doing I was just typing down what other people were saying. So, it felt like it was more patronising than it was actually praise, because of the magnitude of it in compared to what I was actually doing. so that to me just it doesn't make me feel good it doesn't give me anything to work with it just feels a bit like something you would just say rather than something you actually mean. it just feels like I have to remember praise everyone, so I guess that was actually a positive feedback that didn't work very well.*

Lead interviewer

a positive feedback delivered in a poor manner

PAF1

*Yes, it didn't do what it was intended to do*

Lead interviewer

did you feel that it was not personalized enough

PAF1

*Yes, it did feel like it wasn't - either if it was personalised I would be disappointed how little he expected of me, but it did feel like it was more of a give praise to give praise rather than because I done an actual good job.*

Note taker

Yes, this person, have you had other encounters and feedback where you actually felt that there has been effective as opposed to ineffective feedback, is this is a one-off or is this something that you felt?

PAF1

*I did feel that this person, well not towards me, but in the fact that he is a facilitator so I did see him coach other people and he was overly positive and encouraging. that's very that's good but let's look at it another way, well you never say anything negative and nothing is ever bad or no you can't do that. I don't know if it was his personality or his role but he was very encouraging person where nothing is wrong there is no wrong question and answer, but let's look at it this way. so it was either just the way he was but he did do that generally in the session I did see him.*

Note taker

did you get the chance to give any feedback to him?

PAF1

*I did not, because I felt it for the work the group was gonna do it was a good thing, it kind of got them through it but for me personally I did not. so as a tool as a facilitator it was a better approach to it with that attitude when asked to give an actual feedback I'm not so sure. and also it's a different style than what I would have done but that doesn't necessarily mean that I should knock it. doesn't mean he's wrong.*

Lead interviewer

when you say you would have done it differently can you come up with some examples that he could have done that would have made you feel that this feedback was effective rather than ineffective.

PAF1

*what I felt was that he would let things go in the wrong direction go on for way too long and it would get into a deep hole before he will pull it back and to me, ok you maybe learn from making those kind of mistakes but it takes up a lot of time so to actually step in a bit earlier and say ok now we are going in the wrong direction or we're not going towards where we're supposed to be going and to guide them a bit sooner so that they wouldn't have to be all the way out into the trenches and then get back in. which is again I know different styles of teaching and letting people learn I'm pretty sure that in that group there were other people who had a different opinion than me of this but to me this was a bit too lenient.*

Lead interviewer

too much of the hands off the laissez-faire

Lead interviewer

how long ago was this approximately

PAF1

*three to four years ago*

## **Q6: Comparison of the effective/ineffective**

Lead interviewer

what would you say is the main difference between the two kinds of feedback you speak about.

PAF1

*to me it was the main thing is to actually talk about something that's constructive, something that I can do something about, that it's an actual, not just a general statement but something that's concrete. that is one of the main things when you talk about details or something, one point or one fact, yeh concrete. When you talk about details or something concrete it shows that you're actually paying attention and noticed not just a blanket statement. that they didn't pay attention it doesn't mean that they didn't mean it - it just means that it doesn't feel personal then you can't feel that you*

*take it on. to be constructive and talk about it a subject matter or specific question or whatever, a specific task if that's what you're giving feedback on to be concrete is a very positive thing whether the positive or negative feedback.*

## **Q9: Demographics of participant**

Lead interviewer

now we will ask you some personal details you may choose not answer if you do not like to - ask us just move on if you feel uncomfortable.

Lead interviewer

what is your nationality

PAF1

*Norwegian*

Lead interviewer

what is your line of education

PAF1

*I'm a beauty therapist and a make-up artist*

Lead interviewer

and here you are - how exciting

PAF1

*it was not the plan no*

Lead interviewer

it never is

Lead interviewer

now we would like to go into some specific details about you at the time of the incidents, so please try to remember the ones you've given us, we will also find some details about the feedback giver nothing too deep or personal and if you don't know the exact answer if you can just give us an approximation. at the time of receiving the effective feedback that would be the interview situation what age were you?

PAF1

*37/38 years old*

Lead interviewer

at the time of receiving effective feedback what was your highest form of education

PAF1

*the same*

Lead interviewer

at the time of receiving effective feedback, how long have you got to the company - guess that's not be applicable

PAF1

*this was for an interview I was still working here this was for an external interview whilst I was working here. it was not someone I knew, it was a job interview situation.*

Lead interviewer

at the time of receiving the effective feedback how long did you know the person giving you the feedback

PAF1

*I have never worked with her before, besides interview process, so I knew her for about 2 weeks in total*

### **Q10: Demographics of effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

even if you've never met her before it can you briefly describe the person you have you received the effective feedback from

PAF1

*well she was younger than myself maybe between 5 to 10 years. do you mean to describe them as a person or physical things?*

Lead interviewer

just whatever comes to mind

PAF1

*this was an interview process she was in HR, she was very easy to talk to you she was very open. the very easy conversation with first interview we were both with another person and that's this was the only time I've ever met her she seemed very open she would answer questions she seemed all so good at what she did she had a good overview of what she was doing. that's about what I can say*

Lead interviewer

was she Norwegian

PAF1

*yes, I believe so, interview was in both Norwegian and English, she was late 20s*

Note taker

you described her as being easy and open and being professional do you believe that had an effect on the feedback that you received as you already had an impression of her

PAF1

*not necessarily, as I had a second interview with some other people. but there is a connection as she may not have done that if she wasn't that open person. it just kind of confirmed the impression I had. even after that impression I was very surprised that I did get that kind of thorough feedback. I wasn't expecting people to take the time.*

Lead interviewer

so she reached out to give you the feedback you didn't specifically asked her for feedback

PAF1

*no – so I think I didn't hear so she kinda contacted me to give the status thing. She had given the feedback through the agency, but they hadn't given that feedback to me so she then gave it to me directly. she could have just said "sorry we decided not you."*

## Q11: Demographics of ineffective feedback

Lead interviewer

we would like to get some similar information from when you received the ineffective feedback. can you describe the person who gave you the ineffective feedback.

PAF1

*yes this is a person who works for this company and his role was to travel around to the different teams to conduct or facilitate the training of this new way of working. and that his role that I met him in where he was the service provider. he was a very how should I put this, organised and systematic person, one that was not so energetic and gungho but did everything by the book and by in the proper manner he was also very friendly and nice very easy to talk to you. easy to work with and very respectful extremely nice and very friendly and nice.*

Lead interviewer

was it potentially too friendly

PAF1

*this again, very different for me, maybe someone else would think this was just the perfect amount of friendly but for me it was just a little bit too much a little over the top compared to the tasks that I had. I am very much in favour of giving positive feedback but it also has to be relevant and on the level.*

Lead interviewer

feel that he gave feedback just for the sake of giving positive feedback

PAF1

*yes - don't get me wrong, I do think he thinks I did a good job, but its what I would expect kinda the bare minimum. Then again my standards could be different from others. I mean I enjoy attention and praise if I gone above and beyond then I would have appreciated that - it shouldn't just be "so good everybody loves you". we are still too Norwegian for that*

Lead interviewer

do you mean Janteloven?

PAF1

*I'm not your typical Norwegian, but it is that I feel that sometimes people get in their head that they're going to give praise anyway, it's the same way as Norwegians handle tipping. We either just tip because we feel that we have to, not based on service and it's the same with feedback you're told that you have to give feedback and you do it uncritically without actually there being something there to praise. It doesn't have to be more than "nice job" or a small thing as long as it is something that is relevant, accurate and to the point and not just in general "you're such a good person". That grows old real fast.*

Lead interviewer

what was the approximate age, gender and nationality of the facilitator

PAF1

*he was definitely Norwegian typical Company A mid 50s - average age now is 46, you was a typical Norwegian from Stavanger - there is a difference (from Stavanger)*

## **Q12: Subjective perception of similarity of effective feedback**

Note taker

if you were to take a scale of 1 to 10 this purely subjective (gut reaction) thinking about the first instant where it was effective feedback if you say one we're completely different and 10 we are very alike where would you put yourself

PAF1

*has difficult since I only had a few hours with her but just going with my guess, I would say 6*

## **Q13: Subjective perception of similarity of ineffective feedback**

Note taker

and for the facilitator

PAF1

*I guess it's not a one but I would say 2-3*

## **Q14: Basis on subjective rating**

Note taker

when I asked you to think subjectively what did you think did you think about how they acted, how they treated you?

PAF1

*it's more the gut reaction and the rapport you have with people of course with the facility guy I had more chance to actually work together so I could see where I would have done something differently where's with the other interview only a few hours I didn't have the time to see that. it is more of a feeling to see similarities and the way of approaching people responding and handling questions that come up.*

## **Q15: General comments on feedback**

Note taker

is there anything you would like to add when you think about effective vs ineffective in a general term to expand upon what you have given.

PAF1

*from my experience and what I see in the company as to the feedback it is the constructive and concrete that is difficult. people tend to give blanket statements instead of addressing actual issues or tasks or examples of where they did good or bad. they'd rather give a blanket ok so you're good in general on this or you could improve on that and of course you can agree but without actual concrete examples it is difficult to actually do something about it. in various feedback sessions where I've been told I need to work on my patience whereas where was that an actual issue. Impatience can be an actual good thing as well. Where is the example where issue, example of when good. given some examples of where it was actually shown to have an impact either positive or negative*

Lead interviewer

do you feel a little bit (just throwing out a suggestion) it as if someone has been to a conference or some sort of course on management and managing with positive feedback and they've taken exactly what they have received and tossing it back out to you, is that the issue or is it just that they are just fumbling a little bit?

PAF1

*I think, It's not just that they are being positive even when they are being negative they are giving blanket statements. Where is it even worse as need to know how to address this. I feel it's more a*

*little bit of, I don't know how to put it just, cowardness they don't want to, it seems like they think its mean to give poor feedback.*

Lead interviewer

this Norwegian thing where confrontation is bad so we avoid picking on personal things

PAF1

*exactly I have heard discussions where people saying no we can't say that but this is where I believe I would rather have concrete negative feedback than just a positive yeah brilliant because I want to learn and grow. I also know that a lot of people like that they don't want to hear anything negative so I do understand it might be difficult conversation to have as well but I do feel there's a lot of times they don't want to have the confrontation they don't want to follow up afterwards that things are actually done are handled in any way. They don't want to have the confrontation both because they find it uncomfortable and they don't want to be seen as mean in the moment it's uncomfortable and also the reputation from it. I also feel that they don't see the value in it and this might be because they've never had constructive or positive and negative feedback or they've never been able to give it and see what it does. so they just see it as something they have to do, just have to get through it. They don't see the value in it so they not gonna try and make the best of it.*

End interview

Interview PBM15 on 20 June 2018 at COMPANY B

### **Q1: Supervisor**

Lead interviewer

Are you a supervisor?

PBM15

No, I am regular employee.

### **Q2: Effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

A regular employee. Can you think of a time when you received effective feedback, and describe it in as much detail as possible?

PBM15

Effective feedback? I thought about this, about feedback, but I don't think we get that much feedback in our section or department. Effective feedback... I am having a hard time coming up with some examples. Sometimes I get good feedback, not very formal, but good feedback and that feels good.

Lead interviewer

And is this from your line manager or your colleagues or...?

PBM15

I very remember once! At the coffee machine. Not in my landscape, but I got feedback from a guy that I now know is very high in the system. He said that, because I develop software, he said that all that they got from me was very good. It was never any errors, and I have thought about that several times, and it felt good getting that knowledge, or that knowledge. The confirmation.

### **Q3: Why effective**

Lead interviewer

And did you yourself, when this person approached you and said really good software, never has any errors, did you kind of feel that, I knew that already, but the confirmation was good?

PBM15

Yeah. I think I do a good job, so yeah.

Lead interviewer

Did it matter what status? You mention that he was high up in the system, did that matter to you?

PBM15

Well he wasn't at the time. I think he was just a line manager at the time. But nowadays I know he is up and up.

Lead interviewer

How was that to do with recognition of your hard work? Did you feel you put more effort into it than you had necessarily been required or whatever?

PBM15

No, I'll do what I do anyway.



Lead interviewer

So it was just a good feeling.

PBM15

Yeah.

Lead interviewer

And how long ago was this?

PBM15

I've been here a long time, so eight years ago, I think.

Note taker

This person at the time, was he your line manager?

PBM15

No, he was a completely separate part of the structure, because I was software, COMPANY B software, and he was or is in COMPANY B maritime?

Note taker

So how did he then know that you had done this job, or that this software was the result of your performance? How did he connect it?

PBM15

I was in that landscape to discuss parts of the project or something, but I don't think I was in a meeting with him.

Note taker

So he just used your software and heard your name, or...?

PBM15

Yeah, something like that. I didn't ask.

#### **Q4: Ineffective Feedback**

Lead interviewer

And then can you think of a time you received ineffective feedback, and can you describe that.

PBM15

Yes. I have one example at least, from my boss. Which I haven't discussed with him, but this is anonymous, so... I was home with my sick son, he was ill. And then I got a mail from my boss that said that he expected me to work a little bit – it was written in bad Norwegian, even if he is totally Norwegian, but as far as I understood from the mail, he said that it was expected from me, or he expected from me, or he and someone else, because he wrote we expect or something like that, but I got an impression that it was not okay to be home with sick children... And I had a 20% leave with my other son at the time, so they expected... Or he said, I don't know if that was just to make an effective way of saying, maybe it was only him. But he said that they expected me to work in and not take a sick leave for that child. And I felt that this was very unreasonable. And it completely ruined that work, because I was sitting and working anyway, so it felt very unreasonable.

#### **Q5: Why ineffective**

Lead interviewer

So it had the polar opposite effect. You'd been sitting and working, and that was...

PBM15

Yeah. And I spent the rest of the hours I had set aside to do work that day thinking about that and being angry.

Lead interviewer

And when you received this email, was it only to you or was it copied anywhere else?

PBM15

It was a copy to – because at the time I had a group leader, now she is a colleague again because the structure has been reorganized – but it was a copy to her also.

Lead interviewer

So you sat there feeling very vulnerable, with having to look after both your two sons and then suddenly this demand that was unreasonable and uncalled for and unnecessary.

PBM15

Yeah. It was.

Lead interviewer

And as you said, you never addressed it. But was it ever brought up again?

PBM15

No, it was never brought up again. I answered it and said that I was usually working a little bit or what I managed to do when I was at home with sick children. And then he replied okay, and maybe a smiley, I don't remember.

Lead interviewer

So it just felt unreasonable, mainly, it just angered you.

PBM15

I have slightly discussed it with.... She that was my group leader at the time, because I know her very well, and she totally agreed with me, and said it was completely out of line. Maybe I should have discussed it further, I don't know.

Lead interviewer

And how long ago was this? Approximately?

PBM15

Half a year, maybe.

Lead interviewer

So then the indication from your group leader was that it wasn't just out of line, but this could actually have been taken to HR, because it crossed that line, but you chose not to?

PBM15

I haven't done – no. I chose not to.

Lead interviewer

Did you feel that was crossing that line that you could have done?

PBM15

Yeah. I have thought about it. And there are several comments indicating the same things in the landscape, so I think the managers are doing a poor job on this part. They don't manage to say it

directly or in a clear manner if they have problems with something, but there are a lot of bad and strange comments in the landscape.

Note taker

Is that about this particular boss, or several other managers?

PBM15

At least that boss, but maybe also his boss again, I'm not sure.

Lead interviewer

So you don't feel that this was an isolated incident?

PBM15

No... I'm not sure. No, I don't feel like it is isolated, but it is my impression, I choose not to do anything about it, but it does not feel good.

Lead interviewer

But this is the same manager that you have to do your PA with? Performance appraisal?

PBM15

Yes.

Lead interviewer

So when you do that, do you feel that this has done anything to that relationship? Did you have a relationship before this came out?

PBM15

Yeah, I've worked for this boss for more than ten years, and this has made – or I had a good relationship with him before, but I think that this is not good, I am not satisfied with the situation.

Lead interviewer

Do you think he recognizes that there is a change?

PBM15

I'm not sure. I think he is very practical and I... Well, I don't know. He's not that into HR things, so.

Note taker

Was this the first time you'd been home sick with a child?

PBM15

No.

Note taker

Did you receive any similar emails before? Or any comments after you got back to work or anything like that?

PBM15

No, nothing.

Note taker

So this was very unexpected this email that you got –

PBM15

Yeah, it was. My oldest son has – or they have been very much sick, with asthma and different things, and first year in kindergarten is a lot of sicknesses anyway, so we've gotten these extra 10

days from NAV for chronic illness for the kids. So I'm feeling a little bit about being much at home or having been much at home, but I think anyway it's completely in my rights to be home with my children, and I can't do anything about them getting a fever and colds and... Yeah.

Note taker

So this was your line manager who sent you this email, right?

PBM15

Yes. At the time, he was actually my group leader's line manager. My group leader was at the time my line manager, I think.

Note taker

Okay, that was actually going to be my follow-up question, what was the hierarchical relationship between this boss and your line manager. So he was her leader again I guess.

PBM15

Yeah I think I sent the email to both of them. I must have done.

Lead interviewer

Then that kind of raises the question, how did that person even know you were home with the children, if this was your group leader's leader?

PBM15

I think I sent the mail to them both. I must have.

Lead interviewer

So you sent the mail saying I'm at home with the kids, sick.

PBM15

And that's why my group leader was also in the reply, because he took reply all, I think.

## **Q9: Demographics of participant**

Lead interviewer

Can I ask you a few personal details about yourself, first of all, and then the different people that were involved in these incidents. You obviously haven't challenged the feedback, you just left it, you said... Can I ask how old are you now?

PBM15

41.

Lead interviewer

You're Norwegian?

PBM15

Yeah.

Lead interviewer Education?

PBM15

Master in solid mechanics.

## Q11: Demographics of ineffective feedback

Lead interviewer

And regarding the... I think we'll go with your line leader's leader, this guy, if we're speaking about the dyad, if the group leader was not the one who gave the ineffective feedback, they were just in the loop, really. When we speak about that person, it was a male? Norwegian?

PBM15

Yeah.

Lead interviewer

And age group, approximately?

PBM15

Not too far from 55.

Lead interviewer

And had they been working in the company for many years?

PBM15

Yeah, since 1990s.

Lead interviewer

And you'd worked together with him for ten years?

PBM15

Approximately, yeah, since 2004.

Lead interviewer

And do you know what the education of this person was?

PBM15

Yes, he's marine... Marintekniker from NTH?

## Q10: Demographics of effective feedback

Lead interviewer

And then if we think about the time when you received effective feedback from – at the coffee machine. Again, male or female?

PBM15

Male.

Lead interviewer

Norwegian?

PBM15

Norwegian.

Lead interviewer

Age group?

PBM15

I'm not sure, again 55 maybe?

Lead interviewer

And I guess it's difficult to guess the education?

PBM15

Probably also same, but I'm not sure.

### **Q12: Subjective perception of similarity of effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

And then... This is a little bit of a tricky question, but we'd like you to think about the two incidents you described, and the people you described, and on a scale from 1-10, where 1 is we're not similar at all and 10 is very similar, where would you put the one at the coffee machine, who gave you effective feedback?

PBM15

I don't think I'm very similar to him, because I will never go for a leader role, so... But we work in the same company, so maybe 3?

### **Q13: Subjective perception of similarity of ineffective feedback**

Lead interviewer

And again, rating the one who gave you ineffective feedback, if you were to grade him on a scale, how similar are you?

PBM15

Maybe 4? On a scale from 1-10? Yeah.

### **Q14: Basis on subjective rating**

Lead interviewer

And then thinking about that, when you intuitively started thinking, where am I, what factors did you take into account? You mentioned you would never go for a leader role, but what other factors did you think about when trying to rate yourself, are we similar or not?

PBM15

I think I thought much about this leader role, because maybe when it comes to work maybe we are much more alike because we have probably the same education or similar education. Outside work, I don't know them that much. I know my boss a little bit better than the guy at the coffee machine, that's why I said 4 rather than 3.

Lead interviewer

Did you think personality at all?

PBM15

No I didn't think so much personality.

Lead interviewer

It was the professional side of things? That they've gone for the leadership roles whereas you prefer the technical roles. That were the main thoughts behind it.

PBM15

Yeah. Maybe I'm more like... Maybe I should have put 4 or 5. I don't know.

Lead interviewer

No, it's very hard and especially when it's intuitive, sometimes we have no idea where it came from, it's difficult to say. But it's interesting to know if there's any thoughts behind it or if it's just no I'm

not like that person, I'm like this person. So the person that gave you the ineffective feedback, do you know when you say that you don't really know them that personal, do you know if he has family?

PBM15

Yeah, he does.

Lead interviewer

So you feel that he should have a better understanding, that possibly, understood your thoughts.

PBM15

Yeah. But I also know that his wife was working 50% when his sons were small. So they probably have another way of doing – handling sick children. And I also know that he works almost all the time, also during vacation, so he has another relationship to the job than me, I would never work in a vacation. But then again he has more responsibilities and salary and more... Yeah, our situation is not the same.

Lead interviewer

But then you had a good working relationship prior to this, and then that relationship changed. Do you think that the reason he doesn't notice this change is because you yourself hide it? So when you go in and say, for your PA, hi, do you feel that you are the same person as you were before to him or have you not tried to really hide that anger and frustration that you felt at the time?

PBM15

I have not had that much anger, visible anger, so I don't have anything to hide in that way. But in my latest PA I said that I felt or had much feelings about being at home with my sick children.

Lead interviewer

And how was that received?

PBM15

He said yeah, the managers is starting to see that or... The managers above him is starting to see that. So I didn't feel any better about it. But of course, when I'm at home much, because my youngest son had his first winter in the kindergarten this year, so... And he was very much sick in January and February. After Easter he has not been sick almost at all, but in January and February I had a lot of sick-days with kids. But again, I can't do anything about it, and it was in my right to be at home.

Lead interviewer

Did you say that to him, that I recognize I've been home a lot, but I have these ten days and we've also been granted extra 10 days because of exceptional circumstances, so it's well within my rights, did you highlight that to him?

PBM15

No I didn't. I didn't go in to defend myself, I just... But before I thought more about it, I felt awkward about his comment, and felt that others are thinking about it too, not good. But okay. It's also nice to see that they see or that they see that I'm not at work. That's also something!

Note taker

Do your colleagues mention this at all, or do you talk about this being home with sick children, because it's obviously... It's been pressed with the managers, but is it something that your colleagues have ever expressed any worries or compassion about?

PBM15

Yeah, I know that other colleagues feel the same as me.

Note taker

So there is a sense of solidarity there, that you're not the only one feeling this?

PBM15

Yeah.

Note taker

And I'm sure that this is probably not something you talk about, but has anyone been confronted about this, the same way that you were in this email?

PBM15

No, no one has – I have not... I have just discussed it briefly, much later, with my group leader.

### **Q15: General comments on feedback**

Note taker

So when you go into, not necessarily right after, but when you think about having had this person as your line leader for a while, what sort of expectations do you usually have when you go into a feedback meeting? Disregarding the issue of sick children and all that, what sort of things do you want or expect when you go into a feedback session, this yearly PA or anything like that?

PBM15

I have had PAs for so long with the same line manager, so I know what to expect, and it's not that... Feedback, really. Long time ago, maybe I expected to get both the good and the bad, good and bad feedback, and things to improve, but I don't think it's that much... We have this character system from 1-5... Which is a bad system, I think. I got a lot of 4 before I got kids, and after I got the kids I got 3. But... Yeah, no. I don't have that much – what was the question?

Note taker

Exactly that, what were your expectations vs what were your hopes? So sort of what would you like to get out of a feedback session vs what do you get from a feedback session.

PBM15

Yeah, I don't think I have anything more to say about that, but... It could have been nice, maybe, with some... Maybe not nice, but one needs to, now and then, to get some areas to improve and work with, something like that.

Lead interviewer

Do you come prepared with areas in which you want to develop? Do you come with suggestions and say that this is where I would like to see myself in the future, or do you tend to go in unprepared because it's a one-way street?

PBM15

I don't prepare myself so much for the PAs. Really. No.

Lead interviewer

So his expectation is not that you come with certain developmental plans or anything?

PBM15

No, I don't think so.



Lead interviewer

And then he gives you the ideas of what projects you'll be going on to, is there any discussion about that?

PBM15

Yes, he gives – yes, a little bit. And I don't prepare myself much but I often say what I would like to work with.

Lead interviewer

And that's listened to?

PBM15

Yes, I feel that.... Maybe not every time, but. It is heard, and I also – if it is something I'd like to work with, I like to try and say it in everyday communication.

Lead interviewer

Does he also open up for feedback to you, sort of what do you expect from me as a leader?

PBM15

No, I don't think he has ever said that.

Lead interviewer

So in ten years, that has never been...?

PBM15

No, I don't think so.

Lead interviewer

Is that something where you'd taken the opportunity, had he opened up?

PBM15

No, maybe, but if it's not something I feel very strongly about, then I would feel it also awkward giving those kind of feedback.

Lead interviewer

So you'd rather keep your head low and keep soldiering on?

PBM15

Yeah yeah.

Lead interviewer

Do you know if there's anything that your group leader ever brought up to her line leader about, not necessarily about yourself, but situations that she felt that it was maybe not appropriate?

PBM15

Maybe, but I don't have any examples.

Lead interviewer

Maybe we should just get a little bit more details about the effective feedback that you got. Was that a team effort? When you stopped at the coffee machine and he said that was a really good job you did, was that a team effort?

PBM15

I'm not sure, but I took it all on myself.

Lead interviewer

So it's not something you took back to the team, if it was...?

PBM15

No I didn't – I don't think I've ever said it to anyone, maybe my wife.

Lead interviewer

And do you yourself like to give your colleagues a lot of feedback, or do you receive a lot of feedback from your colleagues?

PBM15

I don't think there is that much feedback between us as colleagues.

Lead interviewer

Do you put that down as a cultural issue, or...?

PBM15

Feedback is good, I think it's a cultural thing.

Lead interviewer

So the need is there.

PBM15

Maybe. I don't know. I haven't thought much about that, but probably the need is there. Feedback is good, always.

Lead interviewer

I'm sure you're going to find out about that when your boys get bigger. That's going to grow and grow and grow. Maybe we can ask something about personal chemistry, if you feel that this plays a part in it, that if you have personal chemistry that is good versus no personal chemistry for instance, if you feel that that matters when you go into a meeting or session or anything.

PBM15

Personal chemistry?

Lead interviewer

Yeah, so if you feel that if you've got personal chemistry with someone, does that make a difference as to how you would communicate feedback for example, or receive it?

PBM15

Yeah, I think that's important to me. And it's... All things are easier with good personal chemistry.

Lead interviewer

And if you had a good personal chemistry, do you feel that it would be easier to give negative feedback, or would you be more sort of – I'm going to preserve this good chemistry that we have, I'm not going there..?

PBM15

I'm much of this preserve good chemistry.

Lead interviewer

So you wouldn't necessarily feel that okay this is a good friend of mine, I can go there because our chemistry is so good, our relationship is strong...?

PBM15

Yeah, I think so, I... Yeah.

Note taker

When you think about the kind of feedback you get, what sort of feedback do you prefer? Is it the sort of feedback that goes more into – oh you deliver this product, this is so good, you delivered so well, the quality of your work is really high – but you can do so and so in this way, you can reply to emails faster, you can spend more time doing user interface, that sort of thing, or would you prefer feedback that goes more on you're a really nice guy, your colleagues really like you, you're easy to hang out with, easy to do teamwork with – you know, more sort of personal feedback, which one would you prefer to receive?

PBM15

Most useful is to get feedback on the work I do. I'm not sure what feels best, but...

Note taker

Which one would you like to receive more of?

PBM15

Feedback on my work, I think.

[END]

### **Q1: Supervisor**

Lead interviewer

First, are you a supervisor?

PBF11

No.

### **Q4: Ineffective Feedback**

Lead interviewer

No. Then can you think of a time that you received ineffective feedback, and describe this in as much detail as possible.

PBF11

Okay, in order to understand what you're looking for, what do you mean by "ineffective feedback"?

Lead interviewer

Well, that's actually one of the things we are trying to look at, what does it mean to you as a person? Because it's your perception of what is ineffective, and that's what we're wondering - whether there's something there.

PBF11

Okay, so...

Note taker

Take your time coming up with an example, we're not in a hurry.

PBF11

No, it's fine, I'm thinking like, what kind of feedback I get, and if I feel it's ineffective, or if it's effective... I think it would be easier to say effective first, but if you're looking for –

Lead interviewer

We can change around just in case the framing makes a difference, but if you're more comfortable thinking about effective –

PBF11

That's the first thing I'm thinking of, it's.... No, but of course, like... You get feedback on your work, but I also feel like, you also don't get as much feedback as you maybe want, or need, so when you get that feedback you – or when you *don't* get the feedback, maybe that's... That also means that something is okay, so probably, when you get feedback, there is something my supervisor wants me to change, so maybe the ineffective feedback is also... Not the feedback.

### **Q5: Why ineffective**

Lead interviewer

Lack of feedback in itself.

PBF11

Yeah. But it's very... So where I'm working right now, I get very direct feedback on the specific tasks, or the specific – if you write a proposal, it's a specific section maybe, very specific feedback, so that's very not-inefficient feedback, because that is something your supervisor wants to change in order for it to be better. But the ineffective feedback... No, I don't know, it's a very difficult question.

## Q2: Effective feedback

Lead interviewer

Well, why don't we leave the ineffective right now, and you describe an effective feedback, and the details around that. If you can try to think of a time when you came out and thought, okay, that was effective. Can you think of a time – it doesn't have to be with your current employer, it can be another time that you came out and thought, ah, that was effective.

PBF11

Okay, so... Yeah, maybe this one time we had an evaluation or the yearly evaluation, and I'm always looking for or asking for things where I can get better, and I think at one point I got a really good feedback, and that was that sometimes, I can be very... Run from meeting to meeting, be very fast, like going very quickly, so it was said like, maybe you should slow down. You know when you're in a meeting and a person just needs to run off to the next meeting, and that makes the other person feel not so important. So he explained it that way, and that made me kind of think about it myself as well. Like that if you just run off from this meeting, it felt like this meeting we had wasn't that important, another thing is also important, much more important. It's also the same with the phone you know, when you talk to a person and they start looking at Instagram when you're speaking, you feel that you're not that important. So that's something that I felt was very effective feedback, and it made me realize that I don't need to run off from the person, or that the other person that you're in a meeting with, or interacting with or working with feels not so important as the next thing. That was effective feedback, I think.

Lead interviewer

So this feedback that you received, first you recognized it in yourself, you thought "oh yes I do that", and then you feel that you changed your behaviour afterwards?

PBF11

I tried, yeah.

Lead interviewer

How long ago was this?

PBF11

Maybe one and a half year ago.

## Q3: Why effective

Lead interviewer

So since then you've taken consideration and tried to – where possible...

PBF11

Yes, and I also try to do it – it made me also think about it off-work as well. So to try and translate it a little bit more to the person I am instead of just a way of working, the feedback was more about how I am as a person.

Lead interviewer

So you felt that it went further than just the workplace?

PBF11

Yeah maybe that was more effective because it affected my thinking both at and off work. Is that the kind of example you want?

Lead interviewer

Yes, it's exactly that sort of thing that – it's something that you genuinely felt had changed you positively –

PBF11

Yeah, but it was more like a personal thing instead of, when you've written something, and it's like this section is not good enough, when you go outside and you think okay, I have to change it because I did something wrong, but that kind of goes over when you send back the proposal, you kind of don't think about it anymore. Maybe that's the ineffective feedback for... Maybe that's what you're looking for, that effective feedback is when you change your behaviour and you really change yourself, while when it's just like a mistake in an email or a calculation or a written thing, maybe when you get the feedback on that and you deliver again and it's correct, you don't think about that feedback anymore, or I don't.

Lead interviewer

I guess if it's effective, it's kind of that... In this you just discussed, it would be that the next time you wrote that mail, you would know, so –

PBF11

Oh yeah.

Lead interviewer

- maybe there can be an element of both. I do agree, but there could be... an element, depending on what it is, there could be just a one off and then of course you don't have to think about it, but... yeah, so, I think we'll leave the ineffective right now, and I can maybe follow up on effective since it's so clear in your mind. Can I ask you some personal questions?

PBF11

Sure.

### **Q9: Demographics of participant**

30, Norwegian, Master in Economics.

### **Q10: Demographics of effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

So then if I ask you about the person who gave you the feedback, did you say it was a gentleman?

PBF11

Yes.

Lead interviewer

And was he also Norwegian?

PBF11

No, he was German.

Lead interviewer

And the education, does he have the same education as you?

PBF11

Ah, I don't think so. Or, I don't know. Yeah, let's say so. He works in a job where he could easily have the same or the same amount of education, so I don't feel like it's a stretch. Could be.

Lead interviewer

And age group?

PBF11

50-60?

## **Q7: Goal of effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

When you went into this effective feedback, what were your expectations, did you expect to look at this performance as opposed to – or did you expect to see both, behavioural and performance?

PBF11

No, it was more like – the first thing you said, I didn't expect to get such effective feedback, no, I didn't.

Lead interviewer

So you expected to look more at, you delivered x, y and z, and –

PBF11

Yeah. How's your performance, yeah. Numbers, yes.

Lead interviewer

So that in itself might have also influenced how you felt, that it was a pleasant surprise almost?

PBF11

Now that I think about it, I may have felt different at the time, but I don't really remember that. Sometimes you can also feel very ambushed if you're supposed to just look at your performance on a scale, or numbers, and then you sit there and you get feedback on your personal behaviour or your personality, that can also, you can feel a little bit intimidated, or scared maybe, and so... The next, maybe... If it will happen again, I will probably be more prepared or feel better if I knew beforehand that it was also going to be that kind of feedback.

Lead interviewer

Do you still have the same supervisor as you had then, and have you ever been able to discuss it again? You know, have you had another appraisal where you've been able to discuss it again?

PBF11

Yes, I have had the possibility to discuss it again.

Lead interviewer

And did you choose to do so?

PBF11

Uhm, yes, I think so, yes.

Lead interviewer

And you felt that it was a positive interaction and that you both were happy with the difference of today's performance?

PBF11

Yes.

Note taker

Was this your first performance appraisal at COMPANY B?

PBF11

No.

Note taker

So you have had some kind of feedback session with this person before?

PBF11

Yes.

Lead interviewer

And do you feel that the relationship between you and this person had any factor?

PBF11

Yeah, I think so. I don't think you can – yeah, I think so. I don't know how to elaborate.

#### **Q4: Ineffective Feedback**

Lead interviewer

No, we can come a little bit back to that. And now I'll try to press you a little bit of an incident where you got ineffective feedback... Yeah, I don't know, I don't want to lead you anywhere at all, because it should be your thoughts of what ineffective is. But just think about, in your career, whether you've had feedback where you've gone out like, well that was useless, or thinking, that's an hour I'll never get back. That sort of feeling of, what was the point of that? It doesn't have to be formal, it can be informal as well.

PBF11

I can't really come up with something's that's really – of course you have meetings, with people, and... But it's not really feedback. No? Maybe, I don't know, I think about all the feedback. You can always – no I haven't gotten any feedback where I've been thinking that, okay, you say that, that's not true, or I'm not going to think about that, that's ridiculous. So maybe I haven't been working too long, but yeah, not in the game, I don't know...

Lead interviewer

No it could just be that you're very fortunate, actually, or it could be that you take feedback extremely well, and think about it.

PBF11

I don't have like this feeling or a situation that I really remember. If I do come up with anything, maybe I can contact you for another interview, but I...

Note taker

That's an interesting statement in and by itself, that you've never received anything that's obviously standing out in your head as this is an ineffective feedback session. But can you construct a purely hypothetical where you go, this would have been a poor feedback situation, can you imagine what sort of feedback session would lead you to think, this was bad? This is ineffective, this is not giving me anything, stuff like that.

#### **Q15: General comments on feedback**

PBF11

I think that would also... To get that feeling, I think it would need to be personal. Because if it's about just my work or my... Yeah, it needs to really touch me in order to feel that way. So it must be that they say something that... Just like the opposite of my effective feedback, that they maybe ask for something or that they see something that's not true. Like it needs to touch me personally in order for me to feel ineffective, I think. It needs to be personal.



Lead interviewer

You need to feel that that's not me?

PBF11

Yeah.

Lead interviewer

Could you feel it as ineffective if they actually spoke about performance and you know that you've done an awful lot of work there –

PBF11

That it's not good enough?

Lead interviewer

Yes. Would you feel that as ineffective or would it still be effective because you feel that there might be a gap between expectations and - it's still effective?

PBF11

Yes, I would feel that way. Because it can – yeah, then not communicating what is the expectations and the differences in expectations, that's not ineffective feedback, that's effective feedback, because you clearly had some communication issues. So it needs to be like, you know you don't – you're not nice to people, I'd be like, how can you say that, that's not true, so that's not effective at all, or true. But then again if they say that, then that's how the other person sees you, and sees you behave, so... I don't know. That's effective as well, I don't know. Sorry.

## **Q12: Subjective perception of similarity of effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

I can hear exactly where you're coming from, because I do actually agree with most of what you've said from my perspective as well, that there would be something that I would have to sort of feel was clearly incorrect, even if it was the kind of perspective of the other person, it could be effective that I think about that, but then again, you can't change yourself if you feel that it's something that's completely incorrect, it's just the perspective of this one person. So I think that I can get that, absolutely. When you look at the effective feedback that you got, if you thought just intuitively as of to how similar or dissimilar you are to the person giving that feedback, where 1 is totally dissimilar, and 10 is completely similar, where would you rate that person?

PBF11

8, similar.

## **Q14: Basis on subjective rating**

Lead interviewer

8. And what was your thought process behind that number, what did you base that number on?

PBF11

Just because you know the other person quite well and you know the kind of person they are, their personality, and you can really relate to how they are, how you behave, how you are at the workplace. And it's very much similar, so... Yeah.

Lead interviewer

So you take into account both personality, work structure, how they think about their work, and how they actually perform their work in the workplace.

PBF11

Yes, so quite similar. I wouldn't say – more than 5, but not 10, so in-between. Similar. 6-7-8, yeah. And that's also, you had this other question, do you know the person well – was that the question?

Lead interviewer

Yes.

PBF11

So I would say yes. Like you know the other person, and kind of are similar persons or personalities.

Lead interviewer

And does that help you in your appraisals, to also feel comfortable enough to also give them feedback about their supervising role.

PBF11

Yes, I think so.

### **Q15: General comments on feedback**

Lead interviewer

So you actively will go in with ideas, or do you prepare – come in with ideas of how they can be a better supervisor?

PBF11

So you kind of prepare, but I would feel much more comfortable to say something to my supervisor that's more similar to me than to another supervisor that I feel is not as similar. I would feel much more scared, or afraid, and probably would also feel a little bit reluctant to give that feedback. And I have two examples, I feel that there is always one supervisor that I can always go back and give feedback back to. But not to this other person that I feel is more different.

Lead interviewer

And it's not just because one is more open and saying that, do you have anything? It's actually that feeling of –

PBF11

Yes I think so. But maybe the other person is also not as open, I haven't really felt that the person have asked that question, do you have feedback for me? Maybe if that person did that, I would feel differently, but... I don't know.

Note taker

This person who gave you the effective feedback, is that your line manager?

PBF11

So it's not my line manager now.

Note taker

But it was at the time?

PBF11

Yes.

Note taker

Okay. And did you work closely with him?

PBF11

Yes, at that time, yeah.

Note taker

Because right now, you're engaged in a project, right?

PBF11

So I'm both.

Note taker

Okay. Because we've gotten the impression that when you're employed in a project you have a project manager that's not necessarily communicating that well with your line manager, who is the one that gives you the feedback, is that right?

PBF11

No, did you get that impression?

Note taker

No, not from you, but from previous people we've spoken to.

PBF11

Oh, yeah, no that's – that may be true, but I have very – since I'm not 100% in a project, I always have a lot to do with my line manager, from day to day, so the feedback came from the line manager, on a daily basis, working with this line manager. So maybe different from the other persons being on a project and your line manager not being by you on a daily basis, but... It was like that for me.

Lead interviewer

And the rating scale as well [PA], how do you feel about the 1-5 rating scale, do you feel that that is also effective for you?

PBF11

Yes, I think that when you work closely with the person that is giving you the feedback, that would – I would feel that it's more effective than a person that you just see every few months or so who come and give you a lot of feedback, and you're like, where is this coming from? I think the feedback should come from a person that works with you on a daily basis.

Lead interviewer

So that interaction is very important to you in order for you to feel that it's a good system?

PBF11

Yes.

Lead interviewer

Yeah, that's what we've heard from others as well.

Note taker

I'm hearing that there needs to be a level of trust, that there needs to be some trust in order for you to really take in the feedback that this person is giving you for you to receive it as meaningful. Would you say that personal chemistry, which is not necessarily the same as trust but just your personal – how well you click, would you say that has something to do with it as well?

PBF11

No, not really. Not as much.

Note taker

So it's more of how well you know each other, or –

PBF11

Yeah, so if you do it the same way from 1-10 and 1 is very dissimilar and 10 is similar, I think I had 8 for how well I know the person, but I would have a bit lower, maybe 5, on how well we click together. A little bit of the opposite.

Lead interviewer

Yeah, no we've had people say both, really, and whether one is that this trust – we've had both sides of the fence as of to when you have that trust, and that similarity, is it easier for you to then give negative feedback to the person. Because we have had some people who say that because they know that person so well, that the feedback might be detrimental to their relationship, and there are others that say that trust is enough to actually give the negative feedback. Where do you feel that you fit in?

PBF11

I could definitely feel both, I think for me to give feedback to – so here, it's very hierarchical, so I think I would be more comfortable giving feedback to – let's say you have two persons that are equal on trust or click or personality, and one of them is working with you on the same level. I would feel more reluctant and more afraid of destroying that relationship by giving negative feedback, compared to the person being your supervisor.

Lead interviewer

So you would give –

PBF11

- negative feedback to my supervisor.

Lead interviewer

Quicker than a peer?

PBF11

Yes.

Lead interviewer

But then if you're peer, and you're working very closely together, would that be something that you'd voluntarily do?

PBF11

No. I wouldn't.

Lead interviewer

So someone would have to seek it from you? If we work together, and I gave a presentation that really sucked, would you say...

PBF11

I don't think so. If I don't – if I didn't have to.

Lead interviewer

But if I then came to you and asked how it was?

PBF11

Yes. I would probably say something, but I think I would be more direct towards the supervisor. I think I would be - yeah, feel that the relationship to your peer is more important than to your boss. Yes, I think so. I think I will stay on that. You could say that you need to respect your boss more than your peer, but to work, you need to – so these are two people that you trust and you like and you like working together with both of them. So that's important to take into consideration, if it's a peer you don't feel that cooperation is not very good, that your working together is not the best and you don't get along, I think it would be, probably, it's easier to give negative feedback to that person that you don't get along so well with. But I'm thinking about a colleague that you also kind of think of as a friend, I think I would hesitate more to give feedback to that person, since I would be more afraid of destroying that friendship or relationship.

Lead interviewer

Because there is also a point where, in my experience, there is a tipping point where I feel that I am a friend and a colleague where I would want to give that negative feedback because I would like them to improve themselves. But I would probably, by that time, feel that the relationship is in danger, because I would feel confident enough that she wants to know this, this is something that's going to help in the future, so I feel that there's a little bit about that as well, that it could go both ways.

PBF11

Yeah, maybe. I don't think I would say it without them asking. No.

Note taker

Have you studied or worked abroad before?

PBF11

Yes.

Note taker

Do you mind if I ask where you studied?

PBF11

So I've studied in both England and Capetown, and I work 50% in Germany now.

Note taker

You work 50% in Germany now? Okay. Brilliant. Would you say that there is a difference in the culture of giving feedback between those countries?

PBF11

Yes.

Note taker

Can you describe that in a little bit of detail for us please? Or just some key words and key concepts that come to mind.

PBF11

No, but like, Germans and Norwegians have different ways of working, and different ways of giving feedback. Germans that I work with, they are much more direct, they don't leave anything hidden in their sentences or in their meaning. They don't go around talking about it, but they talk about it directly, to the core of the point. But I feel that maybe Norwegians, they tend to be more... Try to tell you something not directly, but they try to lure it out... They don't say it directly, they say it in a story or in a different way. So quite often, I need to ask the Germans like, is this direct, is this enough – or maybe they ask me what I'm trying to say now, is this direct or is this – what are you trying to say

now? And I need to change how I'm saying it in order to give them that direct feedback they want. If they want – if I'm saying something to you now, you will feel it very direct, because it comes from a.... I mean, I feel like they know that I am a Norwegian and they know that I take that into consideration, so they might give me a heads up before the direct feedback comes.

Note taker

So there is a level of consideration, there is... If you say that we Norwegians beat around the bush a little bit, don't directly say hey, this was bad, but in Germany, they would say, this is bad, and they wouldn't mean anything different with it, it's just said in a different way, and that's how the culture functions?

PBF11

Yes.

Lead interviewer

And then when you spoke about the time in the UK...?

PBF11

So... Oh, I don't remember. I think Germany would be the best example, because that's very close to me, they give a lot of feedback. But I think in England too, they also give a lot of feedback. I think Norwegians tend to wrap it in a little bit, they don't want to hurt you, they want to tell it to you in such a pleasant way.

Lead interviewer

And Capetown, do you have any memories of feedback from there?

PBF11

Uhm... No. I don't. Sorry.

Note taker

This effective feedback you got from this manager, he was a German as well. Did you feel like that impacted the way he delivered the feedback to you at all?

PBF11

Yeah, I think so. Of course, they are straight to the core.

Note taker

So he wasn't very acclimatized to Norway, wrapping it up like the locals would?

PBF11

No.

Note taker

Do you think that helped the way you received it?

PBF11

Yeah, I think so.

Lead interviewer

Although you saw that as an advantage in your position, would you consider being more direct to other Norwegians as a result, or would you reserve that for your German colleagues?

PBF11

No, I wouldn't do it like that.

Lead interviewer

Even if you felt that it was extremely effective - ?

PBF11

Yeah, I don't want them to be – I know you can easily be looked at wrongly if you do that to a Norwegian, so I wouldn't want to go there. I would still wrap it up. I haven't been more direct with the Norwegians, no.

Lead interviewer

But you are with your German colleagues?

PBF11

I try to be, yes. Even if they still have to give me a heads up.

Lead interviewer

I think that's a really interesting side of feedback, and how you have to learned to adapt.

PBF11

Yes, and I think like, when I started there, that's also - that's a thing you need to talk about, like when we spoke about this level of how well you do, like your performance, like what you do is not good enough and you have certain expectations, that is one of the biggest things we talk about when you have a big team of different personalities, nationalities, and different ways of working, we spend a lot of time discussing or talking about how do I give feedback? What is my way to give it? And you kind of talked about, this is how the Norwegians do it, this is what I'm used to, so if I do that, it's more – they know that maybe I'm not so direct and I'm trying to go around it, but they said that they are more direct, and as you said, they don't – they kind of stated that we still like you even though you might feel this very direct way is not like personal... So we spent a lot of time talking about that, and I think that helped.

Lead interviewer

Okay, so that's within your team, that's not a COMPANY B thing?

PBF11

I don't think so, no.

Lead interviewer

So it's your team that's taken this into consideration and discussed it?

PBF11

Yes, and I think that was very good when you work with different nationalities.

Note taker

Was that a meeting you had or something that came up around the lunch table?

PBF11

A meeting. A workshop.

Note taker

So it was specifically designated to discuss this?

PBF11

Yes.

Note taker

Were you the only Norwegian in the team?

PBF11

No, we were two at that time.

Note taker

Are the rest mostly German, or are they a conglomeration of nationalities?

PBF11

German and one.... Belgian, maybe? He speaks French, so. And I think that was very good, and also helped our everyday.

Note taker

Was that in the beginning when you first started working together, or was it after a period of time had passed and you'd seen tension?

PBF11

No, it was quite in the beginning.

Note taker

So it wasn't triggered by a conflict situation or anything like that.

PBF11

No, it wasn't. Or at least I didn't see, maybe it happened before I came to Germany.

Lead interviewer

Do you know if there is cultural training at all throughout this company, because it's very international, isn't it?

PBF11

No, I don't think so. You get this – I think it could have been more. Absolutely. But you get kind of this... If you move to another country, you get this package, with like culture... Something about the culture in order to get you more prepared and stuff.

Lead interviewer

But that's only if you've actually moved?

PBF11

Like an expat, yeah.

Lead interviewer

But you're only working 50% abroad, so you wouldn't be considered for that? But there are lot of people who do that similar things to you, with lots of interaction with international people anyway?

PBF11

Yes. Maybe it would be a good thing for more people.

Lead interviewer

If you had to choose between, talking about methods that you prefer, not necessarily that you take on board but that you prefer yourself, would you prefer the wrapped up feedback or the direct one? I know you spoke about the direct being very effective, but regarding just your preference, would you rather have it packaged in?



PBF11

That's a hard question, because you kind of want to – so there's one thing you're very familiar with and sort of in your core, so it's kind of hard to say no, that's not the way, but... I think I would stick to the Norwegian way. Because getting hard on and direct feedback so often, if you get it very often, I think that might also be... Not so effective.

Lead interviewer

You might find it soul-destroying eventually...

PBF11

Yeah. I would kind of feel like I'm not doing anything good, or that you can like... Feel not so well. So I think I would stick to the Norwegian way if that's – if it's either or, direct or packaged in.

Lead interviewer

Do you find that you do a lot of informal feedback to your colleagues yourself?

PBF11

Yeah, we do so. We have some... Yeah, we do. Where we, kind of as peers, we try to – we look at each other's work, without the supervisor as well, your performance or presentations, and... Yeah, we do. And I feel that when we do that, we kind of have feedback to each other, and we do it quite often, it's actually very good, and I kind of feel like, that's where I have this feeling that I... That's where, like I said, when I have these peers that I like more than others, and feel like I've worked with them very closely, I have harder time giving them feedback than with others that I don't work so well with. So that's where that's coming from, from those sessions.

Lead interviewer

Okay. So don't get on the wrong side of her. Sounds good.

Note taker

I have a question, going back to this whole direct vs indirect criticism... Maintaining relationships and such. If I say a compliment for a critique... Would you think that's sort of like a fair trade, if you say one good thing and one bad thing –

PBF11

No.

Note taker

That's not a fair trade?

PBF11

No, I don't think so.

Note taker

What would that relationship be, five compliments and one critique, or...?

PBF11

I don't think there is a comparison. A critique can be so hard and you can never have too many compliments in order to have that criticism balanced out.

Note taker

Yeah, no, that makes sense.

PBF11

You can give a critique to a person and then it's so harsh and you can never take it back, you know, when something is said, so no, I don't think so. There is no one to one.

Lead interviewer

The literature sort of suggest that you need five compliments to one critique. The sort of – when they've done the small experiments and stuff.

PBF11

Yeah, maybe.

Note taker

But this is in the US.

PBF11

Yeah, I'm just thinking like, when... If a person, and also a friend, gives you a critique, you will remember that for so long, and it will kind of... And I'm thinking maybe your relationship with your partner as well, if they give you criticism, you don't remember how many times they say I love you, or something like that, you will only remember one critique that happened weeks ago. So I think that kind of.... I would take that into my work style as well.

Note taker

That's a good answer I think, it's interesting and reflected. But I don't have any further questions.

Lead interviewer

No, I don't either.

[END]

Interview PAM13 on 19 June 2018 at Company A.

### **Q1: Supervisor**

Lead interviewer

Are you a supervisor?

PAM13

I am a principal geophysicist and these days I act as a manager for the geophysical operation group.

Lead interviewer

So you give feedback on a regular basis?

PAM13

Yes.

### **Q4: Ineffective Feedback**

Lead interviewer

So I'd like to ask you, can you recall a time – now this is a difficult question, so it might take you some time to think about it, but can you recall a time when you gave ineffective feedback? And describe that in as much detail as possible.

PAM13

Okay, ineffective feedback... Would be feedback where you're not prepared, and typically you start with fingerpointing or... There is always a bigger picture, and you forget the bigger picture, and you forget your project. That's the kind of feedback that doesn't work, and is easily misunderstood... You're not checking on a regular basis that the person is following the feedback you're giving, right? So there's the going unprepared into things, there is no closed-up loop...

Lead interviewer

So have you ever experienced this yourself?

PAM13

Oh yeah, I've done that in the past.

Lead interviewer

Can you describe the actual situation, the context, was it a formal meeting for example, an appraisal, or was it just you were caught on the hop, and someone said oh PAM13, can you please tell me...?

PAM13

Caught on the hop, please tell me. How is it? Typically, no, that was something that was not being delivered. So there was a complaint from the client, and then you think, okay, you have to give feedback to the person, and that's how you bring the negative feedback... And then you're human, you try to sugar-coat it, you sugar-coat it too much, that basically the message has not gone through.

### **Q5: Why ineffective**

Lead interviewer

So you felt that maybe that was inexperienced?

PAM13

That was completely inexperienced, being the last one in the group, I was back then 30, the rest of the group was in their 40s, I was the youngest and the last one on the team. And the foreigner.

Lead interviewer

You checked all the boxes.

PAM13

I checked all the boxes!

Lead interviewer

And when you gave that feedback, it was not taken onboard?

PAM13

It was not understood. Not even experienced as negative feedback. Then you missed the point...

Lead interviewer

And how did you discover that it wasn't understood, did that person just continue?

PAM13

Yeah, they just continued with the same attitude, that was people from the top of it. Not being racist, but it was people from the Indonesian office, different cultures, all along they just said yes sir yes sir, and not being aware of the cultural aspect that they will anyway say yes sir, and then I discovered it wasn't taken onboard when I visited the office and saw the exact same behaviour and way of working, and that gave.... It was obvious it was there, but it wasn't taken care of. So that time I had time to prepare, so we took another round, and mostly explaining how culturally we would in Norway, how they would work on their side, and at some point we had to mix that up and... But that was prepared. And there was an introduction, an explanation of the problem, full route, etc.

## **Q8: Goal of ineffective feedback**

Lead interviewer

And the goal of the feedback, did you say it was to change attitude, or was it actually deliverables, or?

PAM13

It was basically on the open communication and delivery times that you will always tell the client that you will deliver on time even when you feel that it's starting to go into be delayed, and you're not really warning, and you're not really communicating the negatives, because you always want to communicate the positive, that yes yes, we understand, we will be on time, the boat will be there... And then at one point you have to come clean, and you come clean way too late, when the problem is there and you cannot do anything else, instead of coming clean during the way, basically dealing with stakeholder management. But the feedback was that, basically implement stakeholder management.

## **Q4: Ineffective Feedback**

Lead interviewer

And how long ago was this, approximately?

PAM13

That was like... That was seven years ago.

Note taker

Was this one person you had to take the feedback to, or was it an entire group?

PAM13

It started with one person, I ended up with a group, because I figured out when I was then visiting the office that the entire group was like that, it was not just one person.

Note taker

So when you addressed this situation, did you take them all out one by one, or did you have a team meeting saying, hey team, here is a problem?

PAM13

I took the team. First feedback was on the one to one, and then when I worked out and understood the whole problem, then I approached the team. There were seven at that level.

Lead interviewer

And did I understand you correctly that you felt it was a culture thing?

PAM13

Yeah. For me it was really the culture aspect of not being allowed to fail. Like the hierarchy would look at that, and it's not like in Norway, with safety of work and work control, so that's – like, you're out on the day, so you have much more stress in covering things.

## Q2: Effective feedback

Lead interviewer

And we'll get back to that incident afterwards, but before that, we would like you to think about a time when you gave effective feedback and describe that situation for us.

PAM13

I was good yesterday! I'm ten years older. Effective feedback, well what I experience as effective feedback, because maybe it's completely misunderstood as well... It starts, for me, by painting the bigger picture of what we do, it's basically – right now I'm stealing people from the neighbouring division because we have too much to do, at one point you need to give feedback to the newcomers. It's not necessarily easy, because they come to us on a voluntary basis, basically the friend with the coffee cup stepping in to help out, right. But it's always – for me, starting by painting the big picture of what we're trying to achieve, as an acquisition group, we deliver vessels in the Norwegian sea, and reminding them is that the bigger picture is to require data so that we can have fields in production. It's not necessarily your tiny project. It's way bigger things. And trying to explain, based on that, going down to the problem. But putting things into perspective, that was that. And then it's what I call the sugar-coating, you know, you start with the positive, and then you start on how to improve on something. You don't start with the negative, you know – the don't do that. There are things we can do better.

Lead interviewer

And do you have an incident you can bring to mind at the moment where a similar situation was, that you described now?

PAM13

Yeah, a guy was starting to take too many responsibilities and gathering approval of data, when it's not his role, but meaning well, because we had explained to him that we needed an approval very shortly, and he was like, well I'm here, I can do it, and I do it right away. And then overstepping boundaries and starting to go to fields when it's not steady, and then okay, trying to limit that by saying okay, your boundary is there, your limit is there, the other one starts here, if you want to learn what the other one does, fine, sit with him, learn, but do not take the decision.

## Q7: Goal of effective feedback

Lead interviewer

So was that more role clarification and the goal there was to make sure that he understood his role and where it stopped?

PAM13

Where it stopped, what you can do, how to improve, communication, that was a topic there, because typically, that was someone sending emails right away and not confirming with the rest of the team... We are very team-based, we're dealing with boats, and they're all in the same boat, really, and we work the same way, and the guy was much more individual. So bringing back the – okay, we take the decision, and we take it, and it's several people being involved in that decision, it's not only one.

Lead interviewer

And was this – the way that this guy worked, was it brought up by the other person where he was starting to step on toes, or was it something you noticed?

PAM13

I noticed, and I knew it would come, and then it came also from - I could see the trend from far away and then one of the team came to me and said okay, right now... It's my boundary, you know. And then I acted on it like ten minutes after.

Lead interviewer

So for this one you didn't have much time for preparation either, by the sounds of things –

PAM13

No but then I had ten years more experience. So then it was easier.

Lead interviewer

So you felt more prepared –

PAM13

Yeah.

Lead interviewer

So the preparation wasn't so necessary?

PAM13

Preparations isn't so necessary anymore when you can figure out, and I'm also much more culturally aware, we had, in that case – old England vs Asia, wanting to produce right away and quick and overdeliver. And England being much more on the hierarchy base thing.

## **Q2: Effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

And this was a recent event, then?

PAM13

11? To 11:30?

Lead interviewer

Okay, so very recent. But if you say it's effective and it's so recent, how do you know that it is effective?

PAM13

Now they are taking decisions on a collegial base, where they have, during the day they have three times half an hour meetings, where this is where they take the decisions, so it's where the data arrived, we sit together on skype or in the same room, and out of that comes the decisions. They've been able to implement already, that we see the meeting and I'm able to call up after the meeting or the day after to give feedback without micromanaging too much. It's always how you navigate that

one. They've taken the steps already of taking decisions as a team, and having the saving – during the day, they are also saving half an hour for learning. So you show me what you do, explain to me on which base you take your acceptance decisions or not. So it was part of the deal.

Lead interviewer

And then when you also spoke about, you got the message from someone and within ten minutes you took the conversation. You mentioned that you had also seen it coming. The trigger was the third party?

PAM13

Yeah, the trigger was the third party. I'm not following that daily, so I need to have an alert. When I have a meeting, each time we have a department meeting, they know that they have to raise their voice, I cannot guess everything, so you have to be open in your communication and tell me, and then I can fix. But I cannot guess at some things need to be fixed, but the level for contact in our group is very low.

Note taker

And that's something you have clarified in your group quite early on?

PAM13

Every time. Always. And with the group – part of my group is here in Oslo, and part of it is in Stavanger, so I try to be in Stavanger half of the time, and then I have – if not, I manage to have coffee with somebody, and it's a skype coffee, half an hour, to ensure a low level for communication and that's where you fish up the frustrations.

Note taker

You say when you have 50/50 in Oslo/Stavanger, but when you are in the Stavanger or Oslo offices, do you sit like physically nearby your teammates? So you are in the same landscape as them when you are in the same city?

PAM13

Completely, yeah. It's very low level, basic as Norwegian as we can be. We do the big vessels in the Northern Sea, we're not the fancy guys at all, so you have something to say you say it, and yeah.

Lead interviewer

How long have you been in Norway now?

PAM13

20 years.

Lead interviewer

You've got that Norwegian accent down to a T.

PAM13

Married to a Norwegian, you will speak the damn language!

### **Q3: Why effective**

Note taker

You've mastered the art of Norwenglish, at least. Okay, so you said this was a couple of hours ago, I guess, and you said quite early on, maybe jokingly, that you felt it was effective, but since it happened only quite recently, you don't know how he experienced it, but what could you see on them at the time, did they react well to it, did they think about it, do you think they understood it? Or did they just sort of sit there with a blank face?

PAM13

Yeah, because I went for the approach where – how would you experience it if. So put yourself in the shoes of the other one, which usually works. Like what would you think if I barged in on your meeting, taking your decisions? How would you – and then I get oh no I wouldn't do that. Like typically it's something people can relate to, and yeah what would you do in those shoes, and in this case this worked, but if not I also do the, what message are you communicating. So in my group we almost all have PhD's and postdocs, and then we communicating to vessel guys, where they don't have the PhD and the postdoc, so the big question is always, what are you giving out? How do you think people are perceiving you? That's also an approach that works very well.

Note taker

So you found sort of like a process or a method that generally works for you?

PAM13

Yeah. Which is, how would you experience it. So you got a full understanding from the recipient of the feedback of oh yeah, that wouldn't be good. That's my field, not yours... then that's easier to relate to for all of them.

## **Q9: Demographics of participant**

Lead interviewer

We'd like to ask some details about you, if you don't want to answer just say move on and we shall do that.

PAM13

Jesus, you're so politically correct, Lead interviewer.

Lead interviewer

Not something I'm accused of often.

PAM13

Yeah, but you are now!

Lead interviewer

Exactly, I'm obviously playing well. Your nationality is obviously French –

PAM13

Nnnnnoo it's on paper Norwegian, but born in France.

Lead interviewer

Oh so you - ?

PAM13

Yeah, I switched at some point.

Lead interviewer

So you're actually Norwegian!

PAM13

I'm a good citizen of the kingdom.

Lead interviewer

And your age?



PAM13

42.

Lead interviewer

And you've got a PhD in...?

PAM13

Geophysics.

### **Q11: Demographics of ineffective feedback**

Lead interviewer

When we think about the first one, the ineffective feedback, that was a male?

PAM13

That was a male.

Lead interviewer

And the nationality?

PAM13

Indonesian, male Indonesian.

Lead interviewer

And age group?

PAM13

He was about then, 27, and I was 32.

Lead interviewer

Had he held that position for a long time?

PAM13

No, starting like two years experience.

Lead interviewer

And likewise for you?

PAM13

Likewise for me the position, yes.

Note taker

What was his education?

PAM13

Master in Geophysics from (?).

Lead interviewer

And had you worked long together, had you worked together for those two-three years...?

PAM13

Two to three years, yes.

## **Q10: Demographics of effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

And then if we move on to the time with the effective feedback, can you –

PAM13

Oh that's easy, 42, Pakistani, we've been working together for the last five years on a regular basis, under stress, helping out each other, so that's also the easy one as well, right, how the guy will react. Yeah. Ended up in some crappy countries like Nicaragua and Myanmar, and you tie a bond. It's also much easier to give effective feedback then.

Lead interviewer

So you think the culture had a big play in that one as well?

PAM13

Yeah, the most – the guy is an overperformer as well. Long experience with Chinese contractors. And – yeah. That plays a role as well. Big contractor – you know the contractors? Big contractors (?) so they format to deliver, and deliver fast.

Lead interviewer

And do you know, was his education the same as well?

PAM13

Master in geophysics. Age 42.

## **Q12: Subjective perception of similarity of effective/ineffective feedback**

Lead interviewer

So then I am going to ask you something here that can be a bit confusing as well, but if you try and think about how similar or dissimilar you are to the person with the ineffective feedback on a scale where 1 is very dissimilar, and 10 is very similar, could you put yourself in this...?

PAM13

Oh like that! That would be a 5? And I have to rate the other guy after, yeah? Then it would be a 5 and an 8.

## **Q14: Basis on subjective rating**

Lead interviewer

And then when you did that, what did you think, what factors did you bring when you sort of did that intuition of...?

PAM13

Age, cultural background, attitude, generally speaking, attitude to work and general social life, yeah.

Lead interviewer

Personality?

PAM13

Yeah.

Note taker

All the boxes.

PAM13

All the boxes!

## Q15: General comments on feedback

Lead interviewer

Did you also think about how you handled the situation, how they received the situation etc, did you also think about that or did that not really come into it?

PAM13

It came into it this time. First time no. at 32 I was no manager and I had no education and there was no BI course or anything, but this time yeah, feedback, correcting misbehaviour in a sense, but you also need to have good /mood [stemming]/ in the group, you want the group and the team to function right, so you need to prepare your future, you need to not only correcting something you should not shoot yourself in the foot.

Lead interviewer

So did you receive training after that incident? Not as a consequence, just...?

PAM13

Oh yes, we had the full management training in PGS, I had my previously life in PGS, and we had the full management training at the University of South Carolina. We had like six-seven months of intensive MBA thing. That was when there was money in the system.

Lead interviewer

And did you have anything else after that? You know as a regular fill-up...

PAM13

No no no, no regular fill-up, nothing. Then I had some courses at BI for management of innovation, management of technologies. But that was more for my business than for my job, I would say.

Lead interviewer

So you'd already had the training when you had the ineffective...?

PAM13

No, no. That came after. Ineffective, I had been hired for six months, promoted two months, and trying to figure out how and what, I was fresh from PhD, basically.

Lead interviewer

So the training you received from PGS was basically what helped, you feel?

PAM13

Yeah. In that accepting that people are not like you, we were at one point put on the line for the – what do you call that, the emotional, intuitive, bla, bla, bla, INTBJGS something...

Note taker

Oh yeah, the Myers-Briggs personality test.

PAM13

Yeah, that one, we did that one. They just put you on the line at some point, so I was in the completely calculating, hardcore grade. And you had people on the hardcore creative grade, and then you had an exercise of planning a party, and they came to the same conclusion that we did, just much longer, but okay, they came to the same point, and that was very important to me. At that point I understood that okay, you don't have to be as stressed or to be angry at them, they deliver, in another way. And that works anyway. And I was much more tolerant to their way of doing things then. Following the procedure.

Note taker

I didn't quite catch your quote, but you said something along the lines of since – in relation to this guy you'd given effective feedback to this morning, you said that you guys had been in some tough spots together like shitty places and whatever, and you said that it's easier to give negative feedback to him because of that, so do you mean that the closer you are as people, as friends, then it's easier to give negative feedback?

PAM13

Yeah, because then they know that you are not a bad person by essence. We have a relationship, I'd pick you up, you pick me up, basically we have a relationship, it's then easier to give corrective – it's not necessarily only the evil, and then they know it is also a trust relation built in, then it's much easier to have a corrective feedback.

Note taker

So you're not afraid of hurting his feelings or anything?

PAM13

Yeah, well still that, but you know where to push. And at the bottom, the other person knows you're not there to be the evil, to build them in, you're there to help.

Note taker

Mhm. Because we've had some people say it's harder to give negative feedback to your friends because you're afraid of putting a strain on your friendship. But you don't experience that?

PAM13

No, because that wouldn't then be based on honesty.

Note taker

So do you feel that personal chemistry is a central part of this whole feedback giving process?

PAM13

Not necessarily, but the base of confidence, being trust, that okay I'm here to help, you're here to help, and we have a job to do to make something work better or to correct something. But that might also come back, this thing of confidence and open communication, that it will not have any consequences, it's not reported it's not – we're just correcting something, and that's fine. So I think the confidence is and the trust is the key for me.

Note taker

So your feedback sessions, are they usually formal or informal in style? Do you take them by coffee machine, do you book a meeting and set up a room, or...?

PAM13

No no, okay so we have the people at Company A and the five steps you need to have during the year, this we take in a real room and I write – the most effective feedback is the one around the coffee machine, or the fifteen minutes or whatever, not necessarily at the coffee machine which is an open area and you cannot necessarily say... But okay, let's come grab a coffee, let's sit in there, and it's much easier that works, you don't have to wait six months to correct it, say it right away, that's much easier.

Note taker

So the ad hoc sessions where you sort of address the problem as it arrives in a comfortable way?

PAM13

Yeah, that's the most effective ones for me, always trying to also ensure that there is a possibility to give feedback the other way.

Note taker

So he giving feedback to you?

PAM13

Yes, that would be fair.

Lead interviewer

So you open up for that?

PAM13

Yes, that would be fair. It's not a lecture, it shouldn't be just pointing, that's too easy.

Lead interviewer

And how do you experience it from your superior?

PAM13

The feedback from my superior?

Lead interviewer

Yeah do you find that's often the way also from your superior, that when you're given feedback it opens up as well?

PAM13

Always, that's the culture of the group. It's not like that in all of the groups at Company A. We are a marine group, an agency group based on and completely focused on agency. And then we are dependent on open feedback. If you take a boat, the one in the lowest level of the engine room should be able to raise his voice and feel that he has something to say and that he is entitled to say it. That's something that should be pushed to all the vessels, and those are the values we live by as well. So we get the feedback that goes both ways. Always.

Lead interviewer

Do you get a lot of feedback from your superior?

PAM13

Yeah.

Lead interviewer

Do you also seek it out?

PAM13

Yes. Especially now when I have this job of managing the group. I ask the guys, so far, how is it? Do you feel you can trust, are you hurt, etc. I have been doing that every time I've been in Stavanger for example, I take the group around. How is it? Frustration moments? The things you really don't want, the things you like, that type of thing. Not necessarily formalized, but.

Lead interviewer

I was actually going to ask about the formalized side of it, because I know that that has been a critic from a number of people in the company before, that things are not reported formally in synergy for example, is that still an issue?

PAM13

We have synergy, we live in synergy, but it's my group. It's because we're an operational group. It's not necessarily like that for all the groups.

Lead interviewer

So for you, synergy is not a fear factor?

PAM13

Oh no.

Lead interviewer

You live with it, it's your brother, it's your sister...?

PAM13

That's a big debate when you pick up things, but yeah.

Lead interviewer

So that's definitely something you experience that there's a sort of boundary to it, like ugh....

PAM13

Reporting things to synergy, no. Absolutely not. But that's based on the culture of the group.

Lead interviewer

Do you have any final comments about your general feeling for feedback, whether its effective or ineffective, you've given us some good guidelines as to what your thoughts are from the beginning etc, are there any other thoughts you'd like to share?

PAM13

The follow-up. There is no point – you have kids, right? I have a husband. There is no point in giving feedback if you don't follow it up, it doesn't work. So it's just like checking next time, okay, how are you doing? Because – okay, getting the feedback here and now, and then the guy has to think about it, and checking in a couple of days later, okay, are we still – was it good, did it make sense, are we fine... And then checking the implementation after. That can take a couple of weeks or something.

Lead interviewer

As far as family goes, I would agree with the children, totally disagree with the husband. You throw it out there once and then you just bury your head.

PAM13

What? Positive reinforcement. You picked up the trash!! Good!!

Lead interviewer

I shall try to take that onboard.

PAM13

I would say follow-up, being a bit prepared, checking out the culture of the guy that's coming in, or the girl... I'm sorry I'm only doing this with guys, I'm 100% male group. The group is basically age 55+. I'm the youngest.

Lead interviewer

One last question, just because it's been brought up before, is this – the people at Company A, do you feel that it's an effective system?

PAM13

Nah.

Note taker

I was going to say, you took so long to answer that it obviously isn't an overwhelming yes.

PAM13

No, that was like uuuugh, what do you mean by effective?

Lead interviewer

Do you feel it functions?

PAM13

Define function.

Note taker

Are you happy with it?

Lead interviewer

Does it get to the point it's supposed to? This idea that it's giving you developmental feedback, does it give you KPIs, or at least goals, you've got the follow-up, because everything is kind of put in place for you to do that.

PAM13

You have KPIs, and you're ticking them off, right, that's the thing, the feedback is not captured by the data base. We will now be able to seek feedback from others, I'm a bit afraid we'll end up at Steinerskolen. Yes, you're doing good because you're my colleague and I'm your colleague, but if I give you a bad one, we'll meet again right, it's a small community. So I'm in doubt there, I have to say. You will not replace the social aspect of feedback with the database.

Lead interviewer

So I don't understand, this database and I ask then – do I know it's from Note taker? And I ask her for feedback and –

PAM13

Yes, as an employee you can ask for feedback from Note taker.

Lead interviewer

Okay, because before you would have feedback from five people but you wouldn't know who was giving the feedback.

PAM13

Oh no now you know. 360s finished, been finished for three or four years, that one. So then you – my boss was asking us to get feedback from the people we worked with, but that was by mail, so it was completely not anonymous. And of course you go pick the ones you know, or the ones you... Yeah. So basically nothing bad comes back.

Note taker

So when you say you pick out people and it goes by email, it's not anonymous – because you said earlier that when you're closer it's easier to give feedback because there is a level of trust and confidence, but once you – for this system, when you request – okay, so Lead interviewer is giving me feedback, does it then go through a system, it's recorded in some sort of system, so that's – do you think that's sort of like a wall, so that if Lead interviewer were to say something to me face to

face, she might say that oh you need to work on so and so, but if that has to go through the email and the system, maybe she wouldn't say that? Because then it's documented?

PAM13

Yeah. And it's on email. You will not replace a physical communication with an email which always comes stronger out than an explanation of body language and expressions etc. Like my bet is that the positive feedback would be recorded into the system, and the negative or the point of improvement will be taken physically.

Lead interviewer

Someone mentioned that in both points – or I think that was actually in the other company, but there was sort of, you were asked to give both a positive and a negative, but that's not the case here?

PAM13

Nope, it's completely open, it's a text field which gives you feedback.

Lead interviewer

And you could do that – or you're encouraged to do that on a regular basis, or is it just however you like?

PAM13

So far we're trying to figure it out. So for example our group, we do a lot of project work during the summer, because it's acquisition season. And I've challenged my guys to seek feedback when the project is done, so when the project is mobilized, leaving the field, ask for feedback from your clients.

Lead interviewer

So this is open to the clients too?

PAM13

No your internal clients, we're delivering data, so we consider them as a client. That has been my guideline.

Lead interviewer

And that has been implemented now?

PAM13

Yeah yeah. Yeah, it's just been released, so I haven't... Yeah we had that last year maybe, last winter? So the first time I actually sent that mail, sending to ask for feedback. For that I had to lower the threshold, because they didn't want to do it. So I had to – I made a video of how, where to press the buttons to ask for feedback. Because if not, it's too easy to just aah it's too complicated, I don't want to.

Lead interviewer

And you will do likewise?

PAM13

I will, yeah yeah yeah! Definitely. Because again, in that group, I am the youngest, the latest, the queer. Might be nice to have a feedback there.

Lead interviewer

But then you would have to get feedback from your subordinates, so then as well as from above - ?



PAM13

Yes yes. I would do the whole thing. We're a very weird group, very dependent on the team, really dependent on the team, you have no chance alone, to get it done completely, because we don't have complete knowledge. It's about fisheries, politics, geophysics... You don't have a chance alone. So if you don't work with the team – and it's very different people, I mean you have to seek from everybody.

[END]

Interview PAM8 on 11 June 2018 at Company A.

Lead interviewer

Do you have any questions before we start?

PAM8

No, I think you'll know what you need out of this.

Lead interviewer

Well we don't actually, that's one of the things that's – we're doing an inductive study, so we don't actually really know. We're just going to see what comes out of it, a little bit of a different way, so there's no sort of right and wrong answer, because we don't really know what we're looking for right now, we're just trying to find out more about feedback. And see if there's something that emerges. So it can feel a little bit like here and there because we're not really sure what we're trying to grasp at.

PAM8

No, very good. Not knowing the answer can give you a very good one, actually.

### **Q1: Supervisor**

Lead interviewer

Yes, well that's what we're hoping. Are you a supervisor?

PAM8

Yeah.

### **Q4: Ineffective Feedback**

Lead interviewer

So I'd like for you to think about a time that you gave ineffective feedback to someone, and describe in as much detail as possible about that incident.

PAM8

How do you define ineffective? Do you define ineffective as being in, not the right way to communicate feedback, or do you define it as being not valuable feedback, if you see the difference?

Lead interviewer

I do see the difference, and that's something that we're actually trying to look into, what do people consider ineffective? So it's really your perspective about how that was, why, and so on.

PAM8

Okay. Effective for me, I define it as getting the result I want, in a way, or making the progress I need. So... This was not in my current role, but I came into a position where this person who was working for me had this role in an earlier job. So how happy this person was that I was leading the team I'm not sure, this person was a lot more senior at least. And this person was extremely passionate about their work, a workhorse, nothing to say on the engagement etc, but the way that person did their work, and the way that work could be done in a different technological setting etc, there was a gap there. So we sat down to try and understand – to try and... The feedback was – or maybe it was more instructional, but the feedback was about how should we get the best about these deliveries now that the setting is changing and the technological enablers are in another place than they were over the last ten years, for example. So I think I started with a concrete statement on where I saw that they laid the land, in a way, and I tried to fix – I tried to come with a suggestion, I think, on the fix, and – this was a female, so that's even worse.... A little side joke there... So I think

immediately, I could see that the walls went up, because this person was really performing and engaged and delivering, but not as maybe as effectively and efficiently as value driven as it could have been, and I think technology had a role in there. So I came with a suggestion of a fix, instead of discussing the problem I think, and instead of leading that person to identify the problem rather than me doing it. And then I had a lot of fixing to do afterwards in terms of cooperation and – it really built a wall between us, I think.

### **Q8: Goal of ineffective feedback**

Lead interviewer

So the goal that you set out with initially, was it a change of performance or a change of behaviour?

PAM8

Change of behaviour.

### **Q5: Why ineffective**

Lead interviewer

So that was your goal when you went in? And you felt that it was ineffective because it resulted in no change of behaviour, or...?

PAM8

It resulted in conflict, unfortunately.

Lead interviewer

So the relationship suffered?

PAM8

Yeah, absolutely. And I was quite surprised from my perspective, but looking back and being a little bit older now, we have to treat people according to their personality, and their experience, and who they are, and the situation. One size definitely doesn't fit all, I think we have to – we can't just be a strong leader, or we can't just be a leader that tries to make everyone happy. There is a happy medium and you have to considered the person on the other side of the table, so... Yeah.

Lead interviewer

So you feel that you could have the same approach to someone else and it could actually have functioned?

PAM8

Yeah. And it has. Definitely.

Note taker

Did you have any sort of follow-up meeting with this woman afterwards?

PAM8

Absolutely. This created a lot of work actually, on a personal level. And I still think, from my perspective, that everything was exaggerated, and that something so small shouldn't have generated... Not this level of conflict, this level of problem that I thought... It was just an attempt at feedback, to solve a problem that definitely needed to be solved from a business perspective, but it was not the right way for that person.

Note taker

So it was the delivery of the feedback and not the content of it that was the issue...?

PAM8

Yeah, the approach and delivery, yeah.

Lead interviewer

And you said this was about ten years ago?

PAM8

Between five and ten years ago.

Lead interviewer

And had you worked with this person for a long time?

PAM8

Six months.

Lead interviewer

And you were relatively new in the role as well?

PAM8

Yes.

Lead interviewer

So if you think about it again, do you feel that maybe the relationship wasn't really huge to begin with?

PAM8

Probably not, at least the reaction would cement that, that there was not... Maybe this underlying feeling of... Maybe that person should have gotten the job instead of me, and such.

Q2: Effective feedback

Lead interviewer

Then can I ask you to do a similar sort of thought process for something that you thought was effective feedback? An incident where you can recall something where you thought, that was effective.

PAM8

Yeah. I hadn't the ineffective one coming into this meeting, but the effective ones I had, so it was much easier. Let me just choose.... Okay. Effective feedback, I think... This person is extremely skilled at what they do, but maybe is a bit on the shy side, and doesn't maybe relay their true value. And worked in a part of the organization where everything was based around, if you have knowledge about this discipline, a little bit like exploration actually, if you have knowledge about this discipline, then you have a ballast. Then you really have a platform for respect, and be seen and visible, etc. And this person came in with another, to be in competence. And I think in some organizations where parts of the business is just comprised of one or more discipline, if there is a kind of flock mentality, and if you don't have that background, then I think you struggle. And I think this person struggled with that, when they were given the tasks that really built on their strengths, they were super at it, but in a restricted audience, I think. So we discussed this, and I was very – I knew this person much much better, roughly my own age, have good chemistry with that person, so then it's always very easy of course, we trust each other, and again, it was a... Starting with saying something constructive and then build up to the message that you want to give and not frame that as a weakness, but as a development goal, or a learning goal, or something to improve at or build on. So for that person it was, you know, be visible, trust your competence, spread your shoulders, and that person did that,

and saw that it worked as well. That belief in himself and his competence and that that was something different and something new, and that people began to look up.

### **Q7: Goal of effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

So again, this was a behavioural goal that was the starter? It wasn't the delivery, this was already a high performer, but your goal going into that feedback situation was to actually change a little bit of the behaviour in order to become more visible.

PAM8

Yes. Why aren't you more visible? I see, but why don't other people see you? That's how I approached it.

### **Q3: Why effective**

Lead interviewer

So then when you approached it that way, was it willingly taken onboard? Did that other person recognize themselves in what you introduced?

PAM8

I think they jumped on why it wouldn't, why they didn't do it, why they didn't feel comfortable, etc. But my point was that this person was ambitious, and if you're not getting there with the way that you are delivering now, then what's the failure in trying something new?

Lead interviewer

So then you discussed it and eventually they took it onboard?

PAM8

Yeah.

Lead interviewer

And was it immediate that you saw a response, or do you feel that it was something you worked on slowly but surely until he started thinking, this is working?

PAM8

No, we... We assigned a specific task that we knew this person would be very comfortable with, and that they had a specific competence that this very established domain needed, he would give it to them, and that I was pretty sure he would succeed. But that gave him a springboard.

### **Q6: Comparison of the effective/ineffective**

Lead interviewer

And – sorry, just to quickly go back – you spoke to the lady, did you feel that her willingness to listen was closed?

PAM8

Very early.

Lead interviewer

So those were two completely different thoughts there?

PAM8

Yeah, I think... What I perceived happened, was that she felt that I was attacking her competence and person. Whereas I was focused on just – and this was a person that I actually complimented quite a lot, because she was very important in terms of that competence and delivery and capacity.

So I was careful also to compliment, but then that one sentence that I won't regard as negative, or that one framing of how they wanted to change things was seen as an attack, obviously in hindsight.

Lead interviewer

And how long ago was the effective feedback?

PAM8

Last year.

Note taker

For the first one, the ineffective, you said that you came in with a fix, rather than a discussion, and maybe that was why she put up her walls and all that. But for the second one, the effective one, did you come in for more sort of like an open dialogue, so here we are to discuss your situation and what can be done about it?

PAM8

Not really. I had identified what I really wanted to say to that person... Again, I knew this person at a completely different level than this other person, I told about this earlier how I was going to communicate effective vs ineffective, but I felt that we were very much on the same page. But as I said, I did concentrate on what he was delivering strongly on, but I did come up with a statement along the lines of, you're very visible to me and the nearer circle, but outside of that circle, you're not so visible. Why? You should do something about that.

Lead interviewer

And then you had a task already prepared in your head that could fix it, so if you look at them, in an actual fact, they are very similar, in the way you delivered it, because you had a fix for this guy too?

PAM8

Uh, yeah, but it wasn't just, it wasn't... Yeah. It was something I think he would have worked on anyway, but then he worked, and this by-effect, and... Yeah.

## **Q9: Demographics of participant**

Lead interviewer

Can I ask you some personal details about these times, so if we think of the effective one first of all. Well, your nationality is Irish, obviously, what's your line of education?

PAM8

Geologist first, and then information analysis.

Lead interviewer

And the level of education?

PAM8

Masters.

Lead interviewer

And then if you think of the lady, how old were you at the time?

PAM8

I was about 35.

## **Q11: Demographics of ineffective feedback**

Lead interviewer

And how old was she?

PAM8

Over fifty.

Lead interviewer

And her level of education? You mentioned she was at least senior, was that in age or also because of education?

PAM8

Age and experience. Education, we were.... The same.

Lead interviewer

And was she also educated in the same line?

PAM8

No.

Lead interviewer

But you were going to be doing the same job?

PAM8

Yeah.

Note taker

Was she Norwegian?

PAM8

No.

Note taker

Where was she from?

PAM8

Germany.

Lead interviewer

You already said you'd only held that position for six months. And you'd worked together with her for six months.

PAM8

Yeah, but I knew her from before.

Lead interviewer

And had she been in the company for a long time?

PAM8

Yeah, I guess so, she was established in the company.

## **Q10: Demographics of effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

Then if we go to the ineffective, the male –

PAM8

No that was effective.

Note taker

This was the ineffective, you switched them around.

Lead interviewer

Oh I beg your pardon. Okay, so the effective. The nationality?

PAM8

English.

Lead interviewer

And ethnicity?

PAM8

Native English?

Lead interviewer

Form of education, do you know, was that similar to yourself?

PAM8

Uh, yes, very similar. Not geology, but mathematics. Quantitative sciences.

Lead interviewer

And that was also masters, to your knowledge?

PAM8

Yeah.

Lead interviewer

And how long had he worked for the company?

PAM8

Eight years, probably. Eight-nine years. Between eight and ten years, yeah.

Lead interviewer

And you had been in that position for how long?

PAM8

Six months.

Lead interviewer

So it's the same –

PAM8

Yeah, it's the same, I just realized.

Note taker

What was the age of this guy from the effective feedback?

PAM8

Between 40 and 45.



### **Q13: Subjective perception of similarity of ineffective feedback**

Lead interviewer

If I can ask you to be totally subjective and rate yourself on how similar or dissimilar you are to these people... If you think about the ineffective one, if 1 is totally dissimilar and 10 is totally similar, where would you rate yourself?

PAM8

We are... 2 or 3, definitely.

Lead interviewer

And then with the guy?

PAM8

6-7-8. Yeah. 7.

### Q14: Basis on subjective rating

Lead interviewer

So when I asked you that, what came to mind? What made you think of that, how did you rate that, what basis?

PAM8

Uhm, I think... I think definitely personality, point of view... In terms of how structured you need to be, how black and white things need to be, how relaxed you are, how you approach problems... We're probably very different. How much control you need at one time.

Lead interviewer

So you looked at the full spectrum from personality to how you work, how you handle situations.

PAM8

Definitely, yeah. I didn't look at it then, but when you asked me, I thought about this.

Lead interviewer

It came to mind even if it wasn't sort of thought through?

PAM8

Absolutely, yeah.

Note taker

Did you at all consider the fact that this is a woman from Germany, and this was a guy from England, was that relevant or salient to you at all when you were thinking about these things?

PAM8

Absolutely not, and there is a huge time span, but... With experience, as I mentioned earlier, now I really think about these things much more. And I'm much more occupied with that how you deliver is just as important as how much you deliver. But different ways of communicating for different people while still being you and having your integrity. But I think, to be a good leader or be good in your position or whatever, you have to be you as well, so you know, you shouldn't be too pliable either. I think you are who you are, and you need to use that as a, hopefully, strength. And if it falls out now and again, yeah... So be it, actually, to be honest.

## Q15: General comments on feedback

Lead interviewer

And you yourself, you've obviously received feedback as well, from your supervisor, do you find that you think these thoughts, or do you have a different way of thinking and preparing when you're going into these formal or informal meetings... Do you have the same kind of thoughts when you go in to get feedback from your supervisor?

PAM8

In terms of reflecting on who that person is?

Lead interviewer

Yes.

PAM8

We have very good chemistry actually, so I... Very rarely do I have to think, what does this person mean by that, it's very direct. That's another thing that I have learned in terms of choose your words carefully, in terms of how you describe something in terms of issues where there can be misunderstandings, then use fewer words rather than more words, and I think my leader is very good at that.

Lead interviewer

But you don't really consciously think how you are going to give any information back to your leader, you sort of that – because your chemistry is good, you relax, you don't think it through so much, or...?

PAM8

Uhm... I think I definitely monitor the situation in terms of how intense things are right then, how busy we are, etc etc, what's the most important thing to concentrate on, so we are a bit selective, yeah. In terms of what we need to address and what would be good to address. So I filter like that, yeah.

Lead interviewer

And do you find that it varies between informal and formal? Or do you do that judgement at all times?

PAM8

I don't think about that, but I probably do it subconsciously. Of course, if we're more in disagreement than agreement, the line goes towards the formal side.

Lead interviewer

And when you come to feedback with your subordinates in a general way, do you do both formal and informal, or do you tend to fall towards one...?

PAM8

Definitely depends on the situation. If it's something in terms of... How can we build further on something that's already positive, then it's very easy. Then it's very informal. If it's something that needs to be dealt with, needs to be very clear and it is a problem, then I think it's a bit more formal. I don't know. Continuously late for meetings or not reporting that you're sick and that you're out, that's definitely a situation that is not acceptable, and the person needs to understand that as well, I think. But I think... My style of leadership in general is pretty informal, but there are doses of formality every now and then depending on the situation, I think.

Lead interviewer

So situation-driven?

PAM8

Yeah.

Note taker

You mentioned chemistry a couple of times, you said you had good chemistry with.... This guy, primarily. What role do you think personal chemistry plays in a feedback situation, like whether or not you are giving or receiving feedback, what's the general role of it?

PAM8

It makes things easier. Definitely. You don't have to be as strategic and tactical, things run a bit easier. For people you don't have as good chemistry with, you need to plan and think a little bit more.

Note taker

Is that different from positive and negative feedback, do you reckon?

PAM8

I think positive... Is it different, uhm... It's definitely important in... We don't call it negative feedback, but improvement, and in terms of positive feedback, I think I'm pretty informal in giving positive feedback as well to people that I don't have as good chemistry with, actually, that's my personality then, I feel. So I only need to use – I think I only need to use the formal part when giving negative feedback. That's probably not theoretically correct, etc., but that's me.

Note taker

Yeah there isn't really a lot of theory on it, that's the problem. But when you have a person with whom you have really good chemistry, do you find it easier to give both developmental, constructive feedback and positive feedback compared to someone you have bad chemistry with, or does it become more difficult at some point, if you get very very close?

PAM8

So my first immediate answer is that negative feedback to someone that you don't have as good a relationship with is of course more difficult and potentially more dangerous. But all the same, you need to be careful about giving negative feedback to someone you have good chemistry with, because you don't want to ruin that relationship either, right? So... You know, dealing with people... Even though I use an informal style... And I don't philosophize about this very much, I've probably done more reflective thinking on this over the past minutes than ever, but I think that definitely remembering that people are different and people – you and me, we perceive things very differently, even though we use the same words. I think that's an important thing to take in. We talk about it a lot in the business world, we are doing. I can describe something, and you see that story as very much different from how I see it. How can we best communicate so that we align and arrive at the same story.

Lead interviewer

And do you find that the similarity or dissimilarity to that same person actually helps with that chemistry? If you think about how you are – this doesn't have to be these two situations, but do you find that birds of a feather flock together? Is that your experience in the workplace as well?

PAM8

In terms of what? In terms of...

Lead interviewer

In terms of when you start to feel that the chemistry is good. When speaking about your work group. Do you find that you tend to find a better chemistry with people that are similar to yourself?

PAM8

I'm at least extremely aware that I try to see everybody. Because I think that makes everyone feel more included and that doesn't create kind of... Oh, he's always here. Because if that picture is shown, then negativity is very easy to construct here, so I try to see everybody. So I, no, I don't think I do that.

Lead interviewer

So that's an active thing then, it's actually an active behaviour from you as a supervisor, thinking you need to spread your time?

PAM8

Yeah, and I've got a feedback that people see that as well, so that's good. One on one of course, talking to that person, where the non-chemistry or less chemistry to this person and there's a completely different interaction, yeah.

Note taker

I have one final question, because it sounds like you put a lot of time and effort into your feedback sessions with your supervisees. Do you feel that you get the same kind of attention from your supervisor when you are getting feedback?

PAM8

No, because we're too busy.

Lead interviewer

So just based on the workload – and is that also because your expectations are lower, because you understand the workload is heavy?

PAM8

Yes, and I think... I think I've never had a lot of feedback from my supervisors, independent of what company I've worked for, actually. And that's something I would have liked a lot more of, but on the other side, then I think I'm seen as a very independent person as well.

Lead interviewer

But do you ever seek feedback?

PAM8

Not enough.

Lead interviewer

So it probably goes together.

PAM8

Absolutely. Definitely.

Lead interviewer

If you're seen as independent and don't actively seek it, then...

PAM8

Yeah, I mean, I have – and when I ask, I get it, absolutely... But again, me and my current leader for example, we have good chemistry, good understanding, we're very clear on when we misunderstand each other as well.

Lead interviewer

But then do you also ask your subordinates for feedback?

PAM8

Yes. I was just thinking, in what regard, because I can't... Yes, I do, actually, very much so, because I really ask them for feedback in terms of... Today, we were conducting an interview with a third party, and I try to involve my team in those interviews, so they learn and can give a different perspective than me. So I asked them, how did we do in that interview, what did you see from it. And I think that's a very good thing, I see that they like that. Gives them ownership of what we're doing. But during people at Company A, at the end of people at Company A, I always ask if there's anything that I need to do differently.

Lead interviewer

But do you do it from a point of trying to make it inclusive, or do you do it for something that you wish to improve –

PAM8

Definitely do it for both.

[Pre-emptive conclusive statement...]

PAM8

This scoring [people at Company A] I think was ineffective, it was too subjective anyway, no one uses it to change much, anyway. There's probably other measures, but it's not going to be perfect anyway.

[END]

The participant requested not to be taped. The following information is from hand-written notes only. Quotes are marked with "" . **Only direct quotes to be used in thesis.**

### Ineffective

- He gives feedback all the time, and it changes depending on the person
- Simple, concrete feedback is the best
- He takes into consideration the:
  - o Time
  - o Place
  - o What
- It should be as short as possible
- Should be able to generalize
- But only keep it to essential information. Excessive means cluttering means unclear means bad.
- He also mentions the communication hurdle between technical vs people oriented individuals, the issue of emails not being face to face
- He pulled up an email on his computer to illustrate his example of people having different mindsets having difficulties in communicating
- Ineffective feedback when communication is ineffective
- The concrete example:
  - o He wasn't sure if the consultant was strategic or just stupid – if she was attempting to take information onboard and use it in her next job, or if she really didn't understand what was going on
  - o Her feedback was received badly
  - o After the completion of the project, the managers asked for a summary
    - She provided a 100-page summary
    - Jie said he didn't need that much, sent her a template and said fill it, and she got back to him saying she needed two days, which he thought was way too much, she should be able to do it in a couple of hours
  - o "We're not friends \*puking noise\*"
  - o This was last year.
  - o She was assigned to the same project as him. Project managers are assigned just like everyone else, and do not pick their own project teams, hence her inclusion. He would not have included her.
  - o Her supervisor was surprised by this negative feedback, she had always gotten good feedback before
  - o Communication was an issue, something about a phone?
  - o The way she behaved in general was not to Jie's liking, he felt like she did not work effectively and according to instructions

### Effective feedback

- The example happened after the merger
- The situation:

- A complex case
- 100s of emails
- Stress
- So it was very important that the feedback was receivable
- Keep it short and simple
- “think about the other end” meaning the other person... receiver or giver
  - Who are they
  - What do they think
- “People know me”
  - In relation to him being brief and maybe harsh
  - “I might be perceived as impolite, but I think it’s good.”
  - He rationalized that he has a grasp of his own identity and who he is, and that his way of giving feedback reflects that rather than compromising his own integrity
- Collectivist socio-economic background does not seem to matter much to him? Although he kept talking about the impact on the group and the organization
- Colleagues applauded him for his manager work

#### Demographics

- 49
- Male
- China, Shanghai
- Civil engineer (NTH), MSc Management
- The consultant lady:
  - Norwegian, woman, same age
  - Engineer
  - Had worked in GSS IT (a branch of COMPANY B) for 1.5-2 yrs
  - “I was so pissed I saw the money wasted”
  - Not an effective person
  - The participant had strong feelings about this
  - “I tried not to be emotional... I don’t do that, I try to state facts”
  - He had a sense of responsibility in this situation
  - “for the sake of the company, it’s not right that she was there”
- Effective feedback
  - Norwegian male, older than him
  - Civil engineer
  - Worked in COMPANY B since early 90s

#### Ratings

- Woman: 0
  - “in fact, minus”
  - This answer came very quickly and almost with disgust
- Man: 5
  - Prior to giving this rating, he insisted on knowing what the rating should be based on
  - In the end he himself chose:

- Personality
- Interests
- the way we work is not that different
- Maybe a bit of a 4/5, he says. Personality and interests would be 3. Work style would be 7-8. Personality maybe 2-3 yeah.

#### Talking about Accenture and the woman

- Was her stupidity on purpose?
- He feels her inclusion was unnecessary, they could have gotten someone else to do the same job
- It is perceived that they were lacking internal resource/capacity
  - But in fact, he says, management do not always understand the competence of workers, and trust external consultants more than internal employees
- The structure is a bit special; there is a “sponsor” to the program, managers hire project managers for the projects, then hire workers

#### Patterns of communication again

- Engineers tend to be nitty gritty and forget about the whole picture
- Fact based, all you need to know basis
- Norwegian communication
  - “not in this company but in general”
  - Straightforward in most cases
  - Could be seen as impolite
  - Do not beat around the bush
  - Norwegian culture suits him better than the Chinese
  - “what you hear is who I am”

#### No one else brought up the woman’s bad performance?

- Would it be against the direct approach of Norwegians?
- Conflict avoidance though
- They encouraged him to address the issue

#### He got feedback from his line manager

- A Norwegian male
- Facts
- Packed in a nice way
- “time flies”
- “it’s impossible to move on”
- “just do it”



Now he has a female line leader

- They can be open with him and know it
- "I am very open with my line manager"
- Built up a relationship
- Charge of implementation
- Middle managers (often engineers)
  - o "good at the business, but bad at managing the business"

PA

- PA could be good if used as it was designed to be used. Now, it happens, and then is forgotten. Could be better. Including his own performance of the PA.
  - o "I prepare" but things happen in a hurry
- Same with "lessons learned" after a project
- Looking at similar projects from before to fix instead of looking up lessons learned, instead of going through meetings immediately

His opinions on the rating? Grade?

- Criteria should be the ideal
- Who to compare with? Other sections? Internally?
- Not fair

Chemistry?

- Good chemistry helps a lot
- You can say more things more straightforward, more to the point
- Bad chemistry means that things go slower
- Participant acknowledges that negative feedback could be difficult in a close relationship
- He dares to bring up problems, but still emphasizes that you need to be careful when communicating
- Whatever you want to communicate, what is your goal, what is it you want to achieve. Keep that in mind
- If there is a conflict:
  - o What is the intention
    - Improve their performance?
    - Take them off the project?
    - Committee members goal of communicating to him: reinforcing behaviour
  - o Endgame
  - o Put out fire not add fuel

Concluding thoughts:

A pat on the back is worth more than a raise, and it doesn't cost as much

Interview PAF5 on 11 June 2018 at Company A.

## **Q1: Supervisor**

Lead interviewer

Are you a supervisor?

PAF5

yeah, I'm a manager at least.

Lead interviewer

So you have people reporting to you?

PAF5

Yes.

## **Q2: Effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

So thinking of a time when you gave effective feedback, can you describe that incident to us?

PAF5

Yeah, I can do that, I have one in my team that there's been a lot of discussion about, some people think he's doing a good job, and some people think he's not doing a good job at all. So in order to have a good feedback session I did a lot of preparation first, trying to see things from his perspective, from my perspective, from the perspective of those who didn't like him. And then I also spent a lot of time discussing with and getting to know him first, so I wouldn't jump to conclusions, so I spent – before getting to the feedback session, or getting to the feedback I wanted to give, I let him have a lot of say in where he came from, how he ended up in that position, from his perspective how things are going, and then that shaped the way I gave the feedback after. But then I felt it was extremely effective, because it wasn't just cold feedback based on rumours, I think for both of us it felt real, and that was the most effective feedback, because it changed the way I looked at him, and it also changed the way he performed tasks. Because he could just change a few things, and then things were much better after.

## **Q7: Goal of effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

So what was the goal of the feedback? Was it to change his behaviour, change his perception and understanding, or...?

PAF5

I think it was most to change his behaviour. And take away some things he did that were perceived as negative by others. So it was to change his behaviour more than anything, yeah.

Lead interviewer

And how long ago was this?

PAF5

I think it was about a year and a half ago. Because I took over this position about two years ago, and that was the biggest problem or challenge I had starting up, because I didn't know him very well, but I knew there was some controversy around his work and his persona, in fact, and he changed position at the same time, from some sort of leading position to just being a normal team member.

Lead interviewer

And do you think that played an element in the actual problems that people experience?

PAF5

Yeah, because we have this – in Company A now, we have this position called leading advisor, and it's extremely poorly defined, so no one really knows what the person is supposed to do except he's some sort of leading professional, and we have all – my team all have PhDs, and then suddenly you have this person who has this mysterious position of leading advisor. And we even have specialists in the group, that are named as specialists in their fields, and then you have this leading advisor, which is... Just a very – I've never seen a definition of what this person is supposed to do. Actually, they're supposed to shape the role and bla bla bla, and then everyone is unhappy, usually, because they – yeah.

Lead interviewer

So was role clarification an actual part of the conversation?

PAF5

Yeah, because then he went out of that role with a very bad remark from his previous boss, and his previous boss's boss, which was then my boss, and they were all very negative to his performance in that role. And he was then going back to his previous position, and at the same time there was a discussion about whether or not to promote him to specialists, because that was the standard route, first you are a leading advisor and then you're a specialist, regardless of how he performed. But then we have some cultural differences here, and the Norwegian culture is to do it after – if you've been here some time then oh yes, you get the promotion. But if you're from England or the US then you get the promotion when you deserve it, so then you had all these conflicting... Yeah...

Lead interviewer

And the feedback, was it a formal setting, was it the sort of annual review setting?

PAF5

Yeah. It was, but it was – I did extra steps with him, so I had planned lots of time, two hours instead of half an hour or an hour, so we had plenty of time, and then I also said that we should have an every week talk instead of every three months, so I made sure that we talk every week about things, and of course he had feedback to me as well, which I tried to listen to, or... My role, what he expected, so it was sort of a dual thing, and then we had feedback meetings every week, which I didn't have with any of the others, and that helped a lot.

### **Q3: Why effective**

Lead interviewer

So the reason you say it was effective is because you saw a change of behaviour and a change of perspective?

PAF5

Yeah. We had to make sure that we had a plan, because it's been... I think he was in that previous position for four years, and then for three and a half of those there had been, I would call it a conflict. So then – and then a year ago, because of the changes in the company, they didn't do the promotions two years ago, so he was still in the leading waiting for the nomination for the specialist, which was then extremely important for him, and I know for a lot of people this specialist title is extremely important, and then again it came up that my boss didn't want to promote him, and then I had a lot evidence of how he had done, a lot of feedback, and the people at Company A too, a lot of feedback from others, so it was then difficult for my boss to stop it. I thought it was highly inappropriate not to do it. I spent so many weeks writing down and thinking, how would it look like

in a court case, I think that's what he wanted to – or what he could have done, because... I mean, if you stepped back and were on the outside, I think Company A would have lost.

Lead interviewer

And that's what you tried to do, actually step back and look at it from all sides?

PAF5

Yeah, and then try to improve those things that I thought could be improved with help, but it was – it takes a lot of time to give proper feedback, especially when it's negative feedback, or feedback to change someone's behaviour, and more or less personality in a way. That's the toughest one I had but where I felt that we're in a good position now.

Lead interviewer

And do you feel that the feedback was taken well, because it was obviously something that people don't necessarily like to listen to – or, you don't want to hear that your behaviour needs to change, your personality needs to change, especially...

PAF5

No, it was taken well, I know that, it was... When we had feedback sessions lately, he said that he appreciated that I had taken time to understand his position and his – yeah, so that I know for sure. It's very – he's very ambitious, so he wants to move up, and he's impatient, but we're getting a new boss now, so that will be interesting for him I think, or for everyone, but I think he wants to see where to go now.

Note taker

Do you feel that his position in – because you said some of his colleagues as well, they had a little bit of an issue with his behaviour, do you feel that they have seen an improvement, that they take better to him now?

PAF5

Yeah. So I have a team of eight PhD with 10, 15, 20 years of experience, and they all have very strong views and positions, and also my previous boss was also a specialist in the same field as the others, and it was, almost like a fear-like feeling, that they could be shot down in harsh words, if the boss thought it was not right what they said, technically, so everyone was a little bit high shoulders and afraid. There was actually one that moved to Stavanger, so that helped a bit, but it was at least four or five that were fighting with each other, some teamed up, and it was a lot of conflict. We also had a consultant in the team, and he was the youngest, he was just 30, I'm the youngest now and I'm 40, and he was sort of the favourite of the boss, the previous boss and boss's boss, that was very clear. And he was instructed to teach these specialists how to do their job, so this didn't really flow very well.

Lead interviewer

Sounds like dynamics from hell.

PAF5

It was a bit dynamics from hell, and then this guy's very positive and – this guy I was talking about – and he doesn't always take care of the details, but then we have some that are very very good at taking care of the details, and I said to him, try to use the people that are good at details, because you are not, and you know that, so ask the guy who's a detail freak, who will see issues right away, and use that, instead of being afraid and... Yeah. It's a challenging group, and half of us were working for contractors before, so we were not brought up in Company A, and half of us were brought up in Company A. So you have that also running in parallel, plus that there are also a lot of different nationalities.

Lead interviewer

How many different nationalities do you have in your team?

PAF5

I have – must be five, I think.

Lead interviewer

And you see that as a challenge?

PAF5

Actually, if I am to speak open, I think UK, US – that's the challenge for all of us, because that's very different, and I have Middle-East, that's much easier than the UK... Maybe you're from the UK?

Lead interviewer

I'm from the UK, I know what you mean, it's very individual.

Note taker

You're from Scotland.

PAF5

At least closer, yeah. But it's very individual, and then... Company A and the Norwegian culture is very team-delivery based, and then you come from a contractor, you want money, so you do what's the most appropriate to be most efficient and make the most money, so that's also very different. But being brought up in Company A R&D, you're bit spoiled, I think. I mean you have a lot of power from a young age, and you never – very rarely been challenged. Other people say Company A is the world-leading, but we from the contractors know that that's not true, so there's been a lot of clean-ups for these cultures for the last four years, I think. So that's good actually, you should shake it up a bit, to deliver. But that individual culture that I see from the UK and US, probably other places as well, it's very different from European and Middle-East.

Lead interviewer

And I think it is from school-time and onwards, it's just ingrained in you, whereas in Norway from school-time onwards, it's the opposite, so I can definitely see that as well.

PAF5

So I think that, UK or US and being in Company A all your life or with contractors, that's the biggest differences, yeah.

#### **Q4: Ineffective Feedback**

Lead interviewer

Can I ask you to think of a time when you gave ineffective feedback?

PAF5

Yeah, one thing I always think about a - a few things in my life that I never forget! First time I was a leader I had this, also a team, and there was one person in my team who was also very ambitious, but not, in my opinion, as clever as he thought, and then I tried to give him feedback that he should double-check the work he was doing, trying to give it some more thought, and he was always overselling, you know some people are overselling like, this is the greatest coffee in the world! But the Norwegian way is more like, yeah, it's coffee, and it's then the world's greatest coffee. I don't know if you've come across people who go like yeah I've done a bit of skiing, and then they're ski champions, yeah. And then I was a bit – I was probably not poorly prepared, but not as good as I could have been, in trying to find the right words, and then I was a bit stressed, and I was... I had hurt my back I think, so I was not in the best way. And then I managed to say to him that it was not

very Norwegian to do it that way, and that was like the worst thing to say, because he is Norwegian, he is born in Norway, but with Pakistani parents, so I sort of stabbed him in a very – yeah, he was furious. I actually think of him as Norwegian, so I was just – the behaviour, and then it was unclear, and yeah, I stepped on toes. I felt bad for a long time, but we're good friends now, so it's not a problem, but he received it poorly. And then we started with the grades – we started with the grades in 2007, I think, where I worked before, so I'm looking forward to getting rid of them, because it's very bad for giving feedback, because you have to give someone – and maybe you have to give someone... You have to give the average of the middle grade, meaning that if you want to give someone a good grade you need to give someone a bad. And that's not very helpful feedback; you're a 2. And then they ask why, and you....

Lead interviewer

Well, because he's a 5.

PAF5

Yeah.

Note taker

So it is sort of like a ranking system, someone has to be at the top and someone has to be at the bottom, sort of?

PAF5

Yeah. We had – the way we did it then, was that we have 1 – I think it was described then actually as grossly insufficient, so then, that was sort of, okay, you're out. If you got 2 and you're new in the position, that's fine, you should sort of start by default on a 2. 3, you're doing as you should. 4, you should be promoted soon, 5 is also a bad grade, because then it is questioned, why are you still in that position. So that's how they used the grade. But it becomes a focus, because your bonus is then linked to your grade, and it becomes important for people what they get, I mean they get – in our case, if you got a good grade, you got 14% of your salary in a bonus, and if got a poor you get 7%. So it's a good chunk of money. This time I was promoted to head of team, and suddenly your friends become – and then we were working in project teams, so I had limited sort of – last time I didn't hire people... Actually I got one fired but that's a long story, but really, you were just working in projects and on the side, you were doing a bit coaching or... The only thing you were doing was giving them grades, and that was – with no training. And also you had UK leaders were much tougher than the Norwegian leaders, who were like, ah you're a good guy.... 4! And then we had alignment meetings for weeks trying to figure this out, because you had – I hate the grades.

Lead interviewer

So that was a process that you felt did not support a good feedback session, really?

PAF5

I don't think – at least now, do you know the feedback system we have now here?

Lead interviewer

I just know you're getting rid of the grades.

PAF5

So now almost everyone gets a 2, like the middle grade, and only if they are about to get fired they get a 1, and then if you're extraordinary, you can get a 3.

Lead interviewer

Okay, so they haven't gotten rid of it, they've just made it clearer, and so that pretty much everyone is on the same ground, and...? Yeah.

PAF5

Yeah, I don't think they call them grades, but since we are mathematicians, we quickly call them 1-2-3. But in summary, there is no real grades, yeah. And it upsets all the US-UK people.

Lead interviewer

They like grades.

PAF5

They like grades, yeah! And everyone else are like ah yes, now we can focus on work and not the grades.

## **Q8: Goal of ineffective feedback**

Lead interviewer

And what was the goal you had in your meeting with the Norwegian who – where you got the wording wrong?

PAF5

That was – more or less the procedure, that you had to give them the feedback, you had to give the grade –

Lead interviewer

So it was a feedback sessions?

PAF5

Yes. And actually, I think he was transitioning from one team to another, so I think he had two leaders, and ambitions that were a little bit more than his performance, and it was poorly coordinated. Like, something we didn't spend time on, we just hated oh no, we have to do this feedback stuff, aah, no no no... But now I appreciate that I need to prepare, and that's – because I have a bigger group now, it's not just a project group, now I properly have a team that I manage, so now I'm more prepared for the feedback. Spend a bit more time on it.

## **Q5: Why ineffective**

Lead interviewer

And then when you felt that this was ineffective, did you feel that you had sort of hurt his feelings at that time? He felt a personal attack even if it wasn't intended to be...

PAF5

Yeah, but I can very easily see why he felt like that, because you have this... Second generation coming in and then not being called Norwegian, that's... I mean I take total blame for that. But then you try to explain these things and it's impossible from a theoretical point of view, and you just have to – I'm sorry I hurt you and then try to take it from there. And I have the same now with my team, that some of them are difficult to give feedback. That you're like ten years their junior, they have very strong opinions, they have very high demands of what they expect from an organization... But then I try to say less and then ask more questions, and ask more of them, okay if you're not happy with your current position, what is the position you would like to have, you need to put in your development plan, what are the steps you want to take, just think.... Because they sometimes compare with their peers from university, ah this guy is in the CEC and this guy is here.... Okay, but what do you want? And turn it on them a bit. You can of course say, you've been a bit lazy, but then you've lost!

Lead interviewer

How long ago was the ineffective feedback?

PAF5

That must have been.... Could have been eight years ago, I think.

Lead interviewer

And was that your first leadership position?

PAF5

Yes.

Lead interviewer

So do you feel that there might have been a little bit inexperienced in feedback giving, did you get any training?

PAF5

No.

Lead interviewer

But you've had training now..?

PAF5

Now, yeah. We've had training. I went to this leadership course that they have in Company A, the one that runs over half a year, I can't remember what it's called, but then you have a lot of... And of course, then you get older yourself, and you pay a bit more attention. I've never – because to me, grades are not important. That's a thing I realized that these grades are extremely important to someone. It's... Yeah. But then you have to make that connection first, yeah doesn't matter to me if it's three or four... But when it was connected to the bonus, then we were a bit more important.

Lead interviewer

But now that you don't get grades, is it sort – the wording now is satisfactory, for example, or... If I'm your employee, how do I know if I'm a one, two or three if it's not actually called that now?

PAF5

That's a good question, it's just a new system, so I don't know if they even see it. I think it's just for the leaders, in fact, to do this. But what we do is to – because you know this is continuous feedback, so we try to have some goals and then you can give some feedback in the tools as goals. But I don't think – I mean, if they're a one, they should tell, that's sort of a case. But if they're overachieving then you might... Actually, still, back to this specialist position, which in the past you would have – I think you would have a certain number amount of specialists in the organization, but as the organization is getting older and older and they sort of pile up with specialists. So now they're in a situation where my team and the greater team with the same competence where the specialists were nominated and appointed ten years ago, and then you have new people who are at the same level, technically... And I mean, they're better than the specialist, but you sort of... I mean, you have to remove one to get one in, so it's a very poisonous system, because people get upset because they are not recognized as... Yeah, performing at the level they are. So I have very little room. Maybe I have two in my team that could be a specialist, but...

Lead interviewer

There is no position for them to go to.

PAF5

No, and then it's very unclear how to get there, because before it was a nomination. Now they said that you have to apply for it, but you can never lose it, and there has not been a job ad for this out, so again, back to this very unclear roles and responsibilities, and the leading advisor is something you can apply for. But also the process is seen as very dirty and unclear. It's... The one that got it the



last time was a surprise to everyone, so they... But it comes back, I mean if it's unclear what kind of expectations and you don't agree on the expectations, then of course the feedback is difficult.

Lead interviewer

Yes, I can see that. If the process is poor it makes your job very difficult.

PAF5

Yes. But what most of them actually want is to have tasks to work on that are interesting, projects that are interesting. And then you forget about all this, I think, in general, and everyone who that has good projects that is a bit cross-disciplinary which you can see the end-

goal, they don't care about the food in the canteen, they don't care about this thing, they are just happy to do interesting work and feel that they contribute. But when they don't, then they start to get annoyed about the lunch and everything else.

Lead interviewer

So it has a lot to do with motivation and what is actually there.

PAF5

Yeah, it's like a downward spiral. If you go to work and don't enjoy your task or don't feel that you're meaningful with your competence, then...

Lead interviewer

Yeah. Can we ask a few personal details about the two areas?

PAF5

Yeah.

## **Q10: Demographics of effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

The one with the effective feedback, if you think about that time... The person that you gave the feedback to, that was a male?

PAF5

Yes.

Lead interviewer

And did you say nationality?

PAF5

He was also Norwegian, actually.

Lead interviewer

Also Norwegian. And what were the other demographics... You said they were all PhD's?

PAF5

Yeah, well not the one I gave ineffective feedback to.

Lead interviewer

Okay, and you yourself, do you also have a PhD?

PAF5

No, I have a master, only.

### Lead interviewer

And you feel that that ever comes into – that they have PhD's and you - ?

### PAF5

That's a good question. Actually, I'm the youngest, I'm the only woman and I'm the only one without a PhD, but I think it makes them feel less threatened, and they also have said that compared to the old boss, I'm better at facilitating. And actually, when I started, I had this feeling that I had to do peer reviews and QCs and that I was sort of – because I am of course responsible for the deliveries of my team, but I see that it is impossible to do any sort of useful QC of their work. The project takes nine months, it's all about calculating things on high-performance computers... I mean I can assist and guide and help them, but I think they felt relieved that I stopped this attempt at doing all QCs, because it's second-guessing and it's been very negative, and I'm trying to help out and see all the – because we take so many choices during a project and they're all based... The theory is very very hard, but it's almost like you have to do a feelings based decision, because it's so difficult to – you cannot try all possibilities, you just have to – you just need to trust them, so I think that... But when you have a PhD, as a leader, not really understanding the geographical areas they were working in, then it was more difficult because it was very negative, I think, a lot of negative feedback. Or only negative feedback, except for the favourites, I was one of the favourites, I got only positive feedback, and the consultant got only positive feedback, and the one that is negative and has attention to details he got, so we were three maybe that got positive feedback. And then the rest got negative feedback. So I think it was a relief.

### Lead interviewer

And how long had you worked in that position when you were doing the effective feedback?

### PAF5

That started immediately, because I saw that as the challenge, that started at day one almost. I saw that as the biggest challenge to handle in the team...

### Lead interviewer

Was he new to the team as well?

### PAF5

No, he had had this leading advisor position, so he had a foot out of the team. But it was unclear, actually, where he reported to. That was one of the challenges, but he'd been – prior to that, he had been in the team for four years, I think, yeah. That was actually a part of trying to figure out how he ended up there. So we were both new in our positions at the same time, yes.

### Lead interviewer

Were you also new to the company?

### PAF5

No, I had worked in a team for four years before.

### Q11: Demographics of ineffective feedback

#### Lead interviewer

And then if we go to the ineffective feedback and think about the same sort of thing, that was also a male?

### PAF5

Yes.

Lead interviewer

And Norwegian?

PAF5

Yeah.

Lead interviewer

Do you know the age group?

PAF5

Yeah, I think we're all born in the same year, accidentally.

Lead interviewer

So all in your team are very similar ages?

PAF5

Right now? Yeah.

Lead interviewer

No, sorry at that time of the ineffective feedback.

PAF5

Yeah that was the same, we were almost the same age as well.

Note taker

Can I ask what year that is – how old were you....?

PAF5

Then we were 30, I guess, and now we're 40. About 10 years ago, yeah.

Lead interviewer

And also, did he also have a PhD?

PAF5

No, he had a masters.

Note taker

Are you all – you keep mentioning mathematics and geographical areas, what specifically is the area of education?

PAF5

Geophysics. There are some varieties where some have done mathematics and some – but it's geophysics.

### **Q13: Subjective perception of similarity of ineffective feedback**

Lead interviewer

And if you think totally subjectively, if you were to try and rate yourself as similar or dissimilar to these two people, where similar is ten and dissimilar is one. How would you rate the effective feedback person to yourself?

PAF5

In terms of pure personality?

Lead interviewer

It's up to – what you think as....

PAF5

I think... It's a bit difficult to say, I mean... For the ineffective, I think... yeah, maybe a five I would say...

## **Q12: Subjective perception of similarity of effective feedback**

Lead interviewer

And for the effective?

PAF5

Ah maybe... They're a bit the same, maybe a bit similar actually. So I think I would say five as well.

## **Q14: Basis on subjective rating**

Lead interviewer

And what did you base that on? You asked, pure personality, was that where you went? Did you think about personality or did you think about the way they work, or...?

PAF5

I was thinking about personality.

Lead interviewer

More of a how you see them as a person, not how they do their work, behave professionally, you didn't look at that?

PAF5

I think... Because we are so theory-based, then we have the same theory in the bottom and then the differences must then come from personality. But then some are of course... I think in terms of technical skills, I would rate myself in the middle, and the one with the ineffective, he was poorer than me and the one that I gave effective was better than me. Not only because of his PhD but I think his level of understanding is one.

Lead interviewer

So you also thought about their sort of technical background, how they – how you rate yourself was also a little bit about... You rated yourself first, and then you thought okay so they are there, and I am... So it wasn't just sort of okay, that one's really stressful and I'm more relaxed, or this one is more individual and I'm more team... Was it all those tactics as well?

PAF5

Yeah I think both of them are very... I don't – we did this personality test in CCG when I worked there, and you had if you were an introvert or extrovert, and then feeling based or theory based, and most geophysicists are introverts and theory based. But I am introvert and feeling based, which is rare but I think both of them are more extroverts. The ones that I, both the feedbacks were... So they're in the opposite corner than me since I am introvert and feeling based they are extrovert and theory based. But that extrovert, the... Having the nerve to say something when you don't have all the theory in place, that's very annoying to me. Because, okay, you have to justify... I try to put them to the blue, sort of what is the theory here. But then they're like ah, you have to be courageous to sell yourself. No no you have to...! That goes against my... And when you're too cautious, you're underselling yourself again, ah it's not that great, and maybe you lose an opportunity, so the truth is always somewhere in the middle. But of course, if you give a person like that inappropriate

feedback, he will explode. And then if you explode yourself... Yeah. That became explosive, when I was more aware of the differences, it was easier to sort of navigate in that feeling space.

#### Q15: General comments on feedback

##### Lead interviewer

So do you take that into consideration during your preparation? When you spoke about your preparations etc, do you think about the person in that sort of factors and think, okay, for this sort of person I have to be really careful with my wording because of his personality...

##### PAF5

Oh yeah. That I've learned through the years. I had one, he probably – I shouldn't diagnose people, but you don't know them anyway, he probably had Asperger's disease or something, because he was very very feeling – oh sorry theory, and sort of I walked in and said hey, how are you doing and he would sort of.... [cave in on himself] And then if I sent an email, can I talk to you in ten minutes about these things? And then he would say yes and I would come in and then we could talk. So doing these sort of, okay, what kind of reaction do I get now, if it's positive or negative, and then see if you can adjust somehow, that helps a lot, I think.

##### Lead interviewer

So there is an adjustment for every person in the team, really?

##### PAF5

Yeah. But most of them are... Same personality, almost.

##### Lead interviewer

Which can be positive or negative in itself.

##### PAF5

Yeah. That's what you have to think about, or... That's why I appreciate these few that are more extrovert and outgoing, because otherwise we are invisible. You have someone just trying to help them to say the right things, or the one thing you want them to say, and help them. But you have some extroverts, it's good. But most are introverts, yeah.

##### Lead interviewer

And then you obviously had your... Feedback from your boss as well, do you think that they work in very similar way that you do?

##### PAF5

No. Hardly any feedback, I think. In the US, and he's US as well, and... Yeah, you hardly hear anything from him. But he's about to move, or quit and retire, so then we will get a new one. But his feedback is very feeling-based. Either you're in or you're out. And then you also have this – I mean the culture there is if you don't like someone you fire them. So I can really see that they don't feel like they have to make an effort. Because in their culture and background they just fire people if they don't like them, so. I think that's even one step harder than the UK, so you have a very very different work culture. Which is very vicious I think, because you can never speak up. If you speak up you get fired, you lose your job, your health insurance, your everything, so....

##### Lead interviewer

But since that isn't the case for you, would you seek feedback, or would you just sort of go... okay, I'm good.

##### PAF5

Yeah. More like okay.

### Lead interviewer

So you just end up saying okay, it's not going to happen, so I'll just carry on.

### PAF5

I like to focus on the things I can change or improve, but it's very focused on reporting the positives. So you have all these silos in the company, everyone reporting that everything is going great, and... Yeah I hope someone will change this at some point. Because everyone is just reporting in their silo how great everything is, and then I try to cross over and then that's... Yeah, that's more challenging. But I don't care too much about feedback, so if someone is upset with me I hope they see that point two years down the road, that's fine, but if you're more ambitious in terms of your own being promoted or something, then you should only give positive feedback. Up your silo.

### Lead interviewer

But then when you – do you depend on feedback from peers etc to think about how you yourself can improve?

### PAF5

Yeah, I try but I should be better at it, but I think it's difficult to ask for feedback. But last time I managed. I think I remembered to ask everyone except one or something, any feedback for me? Because you have to seek it as you say, it doesn't always come – or if it comes, then it's usually because someone is really upset at times and it's too late. But I have to be better. But of course you want feedback but it can be difficult as well. But it's – I have one colleague in – who has a similar team as mine, and we work very closely together, and I ask him for feedback all the time. Especially sort of, what do you think about this email, is the wording okay... Because I can be a bit blunt, or... Don't think about the details and words, and then he can help me. Okay, this can be perceived as very negative, but did you mean it this negative?

### Lead interviewer

I have no problem with you being negative as long as that was your meaning.

### PAF5

So that's good I think, you take away some potential challenges there.

### Lead interviewer

And your colleague, is he also Norwegian?

### PAF5

Yeah.

### Lead interviewer

But you just have different forms of how you – yeah.

### PAF5

Because I have – he's more calm, and I usually have a lot of ideas, too much at once, so it's like ah maybe three things is enough... And he's 20 years senior of me so he has a bit more experience as well. So it's good to lean on that as well.

### Lead interviewer

I think there possibly is a bit of a difference in culture there as well. In Britain, we tend to be a bit more flowery with our words, and pack things in slightly, whereas in Norway, I feel that it's more with – nothing to do with harsh, it's just straightforward.

PAF5

Yeah yeah. Don't have time for all this, yeah. If you don't mind, I would like to spend some time discussing what happened last week – bla bla bla – where you did a poor job. The Norwegian is very straightforward. I worked with someone from Hong Kong, and they were even worse. You picked up – or maybe it was just her, but you'd see that she [...] and just saying what's the numbers, and we're like what, who – at least you would say hi? But I think that's part of the fun, actually, working with different cultures, but it starts notice some trends, yeah.

Lead interviewer

Absolutely. Have you got any...?

Note taker

I have, I just want to clarify something, because I've gotten – I've had two distinct impressions here. Because on one hand, you say that you – this is not a critique by the way, this is just me attempting to clarify... But on the one hand you said that you prepare a lot and you try to understand the people that you give feedback to, what they are doing, where they are coming from, why they are doing as they do. You say it's important that they get good feedback that they can actually use, but at the same time you say that I don't care about feedback. I don't need to seek feedback. Like if I'm not getting feedback, I have to seek it myself, but I don't need to. So based on, sort of, what you have experienced yourself in getting feedback from your supervisors in the past, and what you have... Sort of the results of what your feedback has done to your subordinates, what is your general attitude about feedback? What do you consider the value of feedback?

PAF5

I think it's good that you ask that because I like feedback in itself, but I don't care about the grades. If they give me a two or if they give me a four, that doesn't sort of... Or, of course, if I feel it's unjustified, but I don't... But I like sort, the bulk of the feedback, but it's not what drives me, to get good feedback, in a way. So probably, it's good that you ask that, but I don't need to have good feedback all the time, but feedback is more important than to have good feedback. But I see that when you link feedback and bonus and all this, then people tend to only seek good feedback. Which is a negative thing and I don't care about that. If that makes sense? If I see that there is a tendency to link feedback and some form of reward, and then that messes up the process. A lot. We see that with our vendors as well, we give them feedback on projects, we give them honest feedback, which I think is constructive feedback, and then they call and cry and say that we need better feedback because it's linked to some kind of management system that they need to perform at a high level to get something. So that part of the feedback, when it's sort of contaminated by money or something something, then it takes the value of the feedback down, if you see what I mean.

Lead interviewer

Absolutely. Was that the reason for changing it, do you know? Was that conveyed?

PAF5

Here?

Lead interviewer

Within the company.

PAF5

I don't know why... In my mind it's very blurry, the whole thing. I mean if I look at my team and the salaries, and the levels they've been at, it has no root in reality, it is just some historical strange reason why someone has... And then of course if you start high then you end up being high and if you start low, then it's very difficult to close that gap. Like I have one in my team who came in on a low salary and he's from a country you don't want to return to, so it sort of feels like you can put him

on a lower salary, because he has no chance, or... I mean, not having a Norwegian foot would be horrible for him, so he's always lacking, even if you give – or the last year has been very limited, but if you give him 4% and the other one 3%, still the difference is just growing, because 3% of a high salary is more than 4% of a low, so that part of the whole system is a bit faulty. But of course the only way to fix it is to raise everyone from a low salary to a high, so it's extremely expensive to fix it. So it's probably... But at least you have to try to give... So that's difficult, I think.

Lead interviewer

But you haven't done a session of this new system yet, so that's going to be this year?

PAF5

So we have this continuous feedback, we have started, but then... Actually, we had one session after Christmas, and I felt the change, that it was now how we can get the best out of people, other than focusing at what they were poor at, and... Maybe that's in my group but okay, he needs to learn more about this, he needs to learn more about this, and I was like okay you will never be performing well in those areas anyway, so let's see what we can do with that person. And since the boss is a very extrovert type he wants everybody to be exposed and – but people don't want that, they just want to work on projects, they don't care about if the manager should see them or not. So that's... But they want to work on good projects. And I understand why someone gets some projects and some get others. But the more blurry these processes are, the... I think even now that they received a bonus in my team –

Lead interviewer

You didn't know?

PAF5

No.

Lead interviewer

So it wasn't you who allocated it?

PAF5

No.

Lead interviewer

Oh. That's unusual, isn't it?

PAF5

Yeah, I had to ask, because I thought they – because I am on a different scheme than them, and I got suddenly bonus so I thought... That was also just a random letter appearing, at least it was a letter from my boss, but then I said did you get bonus? And they said yeah, I think we got some extra in March, was it? March? March? Yes, it was in March. So... This part of the feedback system, I think it's not very good. Actually we had that where I worked before, we had so many factors that you would add or actually multiply, and then you suddenly had some factors that could be zero, meaning that you didn't get anything. And it was very sort of fuzzy. And then we all got a letter and looked, and no one said anything, and someone had new clothes on Monday then... And you ended up with the good people wanting the easy projects, because then they would get the best grades, and... Yeah. That's my feelings about that, but...No but it's still quite fussy to me how these processes are done.

Lead interviewer

So there hasn't been conveyed – when they changed it – how this is all going into effect now this reward, they're just separating the scales...?



PAF5

Yeah.

Lead interviewer

And now it's going to be verbal, it's going to be continuous.

PAF5

Yeah.

Lead interviewer

But it's not then conveyed how that's going to affect everyone...?

PAF5

But you will end up with the same results, most likely, it's up to the boss who they like, and they will get, more or less... It was the same before, because the grades were also reflecting what the boss felt about you, so.

Note taker

I have a question about that. What role do you feel that personal chemistry plays in the feedback situation?

PAF5

It has a lot to do with it. If you know the person and they have spent some time, even – I mean, you can have different personalities, but if you have a base of respect, then it's much easier. If you don't have that two-ways, it's very very difficult to give feedback that is useful for anyone. I have one in my team that struggles with that I'm ten years younger, and he's applied for the position, I don't know how many times, and didn't receive it, and then chemistry is a bit difficult. Because you have that in the background. But if you have a good chemistry, then it's extremely easy. Because then you can give negative feedback like that – you should improve this, this – but if you have that lack of chemistry, then you have to think hard how to get there.

Note taker

So you don't feel that if you are – say you have a colleague... A supervisee, that you're very friendly towards, that you consider yourself peers, you go to lunch, you're friends... Would you consider it more difficult to give negative feedback that person because you have so good chemistry and you're close?

PAF5

I will say opposite, it's a bit more difficult to give that person a positive feedback, especially in public, because everyone knows – like one person in my team we worked very closely together before I became a manager, and it's clear to everyone that we enjoy working together, and then I have to be careful not to...

Lead interviewer

To show favouritism, almost.

PAF5

Yeah. And then he's working on my field of expertise, so then that can, I think... And then you have to balance this, because of course he needs positive feedback as well, but to give negative feedback to someone that everyone knows you like and respect, then that's easier than giving at least too much positive.

[END]