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The role of high- quality connections in high- performing teams and creativity

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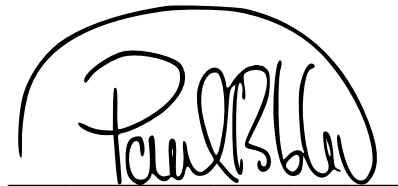Supervisor:

Ph.D. student Joanne Sundet

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Content

Summary

In this thesis, we have explored how elements within the area of high- quality connection may facilitate for creativity in an organizational context. Through in-depth interviews and observations, we have identified five practices which arguably help us to understand the relationship between high- quality connections and creativity. These five practices are: *Having a playful environment, Valuing each member, Closely connecting each member, Enjoying the pressure* and *Giving each member the freedom of no boundaries.* These practices contribute to enabling an environment that is favorable for playfulness, openness, close relations and freedom, elements that in sum is helpful for creativity.

To summarize, we have conducted this research with the objective of contributing to discuss and present different practices of how organizations may use high- quality connections in order to facilitate for creativity.

PART I: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

High- quality connections are "short- term, dyadic positive interactions" that occur between individuals in the workplace (Stephens, Heaphy & Dutton, 2011, p.1). Experiencing positive connections with people at work is arguably beneficial for several reasons, including both professional and social aspects, as they may contribute to improve how a person feels, thinks and behaves. More specifically, the potential positive outcomes include better psychological and physical health, increased learning and thinking capacities, higher commitment and engagement, as well as a higher degree of creativity (Dutton, 2014).

Several theorists (e.g. Cross, Baker & Parker, 2003; Losada & Heaphy, 2004) agree on how high- quality connections facilitate for performance, including on an individual and group level. In other words, these strong connections are beneficial for people within the organization, in addition to the performance of the organization as a whole. Furthermore, Stephens, Heaphy and Dutton (2011) highlight the great importance of connections in the workplace, both in a professional and personal setting. As humans are intrinsically social, and search for relations and belonging at work, high- quality connections may have a great impact on work performance, for instance in terms of positive emotions and actions. Moreover, findings demonstrate the increased feeling of work engagement, competence, and open communication that people experience when finding themselves in a high- quality connection (Dutton, 2003a).

Further, existing research addresses the positive role of creativity within organizations (Woodman, Sawyer & Griffin, 1993), creating increased job fulfillment and satisfaction among employees (Kurtzberg, 2005). Several theorists (e.g. Amabile, Barsade, Mueller & Staw, 2005; Amabile, 1983; Sternberg, 1988; Weisberg, 1988) conceptualize creativity as the process of creating novel ideas and solutions. Dutton (2003b) highlights how people tend to be more creative in their work when they experience positive emotions such as joy and engagement.

However, current research has not addressed the practical role of *how* high-quality connections facilitates for creative work.

Similarly, Carmeli, Brueller and Dutton (2009) investigate how high-quality connections have a direct and indirect effect on learning behaviors, emphasizing the importance of quality relationships in the workplace. Their study highlights important implications for future research, as there is little knowledge regarding *how* high- quality connections are created in the workplace, including how these relationships connect to other relations, as for instance affection, social support and trust.

For this reason, our thesis seeks to investigate how high- quality connections in the workplace may have an impact on how high- performing teams facilitate for creativity. Our thesis is limited to focusing on high- performing teams as we find it intriguing to examine which role these connections may have in teams that are dependent on finding creative solutions under high pace and pressure. To examine the topic, we implement a qualitative research design and take on an abductive approach. We explore a high- performing team within the consumer goods industry, a team we refer to as Planet B, and gather information through the use of interviews and observations of the team, as well as employees at Planet B's parent company, referred to as Product Forum. The team has experienced great, organic growth the last few years, constantly expanding their portfolio of products, and becoming a major force in their industry. The team has on several occasions won awards for their innovations and creativity, which makes the team a highly relevant group of people to examine in terms of high-quality connections and creativity.

1.2 Research question

Based on current research within the field of high- quality connections, we discovered a gap that we argue to be of great relevance to investigate. In accordance with this,

"How do high- quality connections facilitate for creativity in high-performing teams?"

With this, we aim to qualitatively examine the emergence of high- quality connections, as well as the outcomes of these, in regard to creativity. This includes the role of high- quality connections within the team, and to what extent these matter for the team members in terms of creative work.

PART II: Theoretical background

2.1 Introduction

We turn to organizational research in order to get an overview of what already exists on the area, and the dynamics between high- quality connections and creativity. This is helpful for us when conducting our own research and attempting to investigate in what ways high- quality connections may be connected to the creativity of a high- performing team.

During the first part of the chapter we will attempt to provide an understanding of what high- quality connections are, as well as the mechanisms and outcomes that come with them. This includes a thorough understanding of what these are, and how they may be displayed in organizations and teams.

The second part of the chapter concerns the definition of a team, and what needs to be in place in order for a team to be further defined and regarded as a high- performing team. Additionally, a framework of high- performance environment is presented, including factors that impact the performance of individuals within an organization.

In the third part of the chapter we present theoretical contributions within creativity, and argue the importance of understanding creativity within teams, in as well as the role of positive emotions in creativity.

2.2 High- quality connections

Work connections may be viewed as the dynamic, living tissue that exists between two people at work when some interaction occurs that involves mutual awareness. These connections can be viewed either in context of one single occasion, a brief

encounter or as part of an ongoing relationship between two people (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003). As organizations depend on their employees to relate and connect with each other, these connections formed in a work- context have a significant effect on people, and the quality of these connections have implications for organizational functioning (Hochschild, 1997). Moreover, it is important to understand how the quality of connections between people affect the organization. The quality of the connection is therefore defined in terms of whether the mentioned connective tissue is *life- giving* or *life- depleting* (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003). As of this, a brief conversation with a co- worker may perhaps make a great difference in how individuals thrive at work (Hallowell, 1999). Further, Quinn and Dutton (2005) suggest that conversations and coordinated tasks will be affected by the energy people generate, and how much energy they devote to the coordination.

There are several positive outcomes and experiences occurring in a high- quality connection. Dutton (2003a) emphasizes that people feel more competent, more engaged, and more open during this type of connection, which may have significant positive outcomes for both individuals and the organization as a whole. As these high- quality connections can be both brief moments of interaction with acquaintances, or long conversations with individuals who have built a relation over time, the connections can vary from contact such as an e- mail, or a significant eye contact during a meeting (Dutton, 2003a). This highlights the broad and important area of high- quality connections as it occurs in several occasions and contexts in everyday life in organizations.

2.2.1 The mechanisms of high- quality connections

The mechanisms of high- quality connections may provide a deeper understanding of how individuals form positive interactions, in addition to the key relational processes behind these connections. Stephens, Heaphy and Dutton (2011) distinguish between three sets of mechanisms that help to build and strengthen high- quality connections, namely *cognitive*, *emotional* and *behavioral*. The organizational context in which the mechanisms are in will have an impact on how they are shaped, further providing an understanding of how they enable and

build strong connections. This is further demonstrated in Stephens, Heaphy and Dutton's (2011, p. 388) processual model:

Figure I: Mechanisms for building high-quality connections
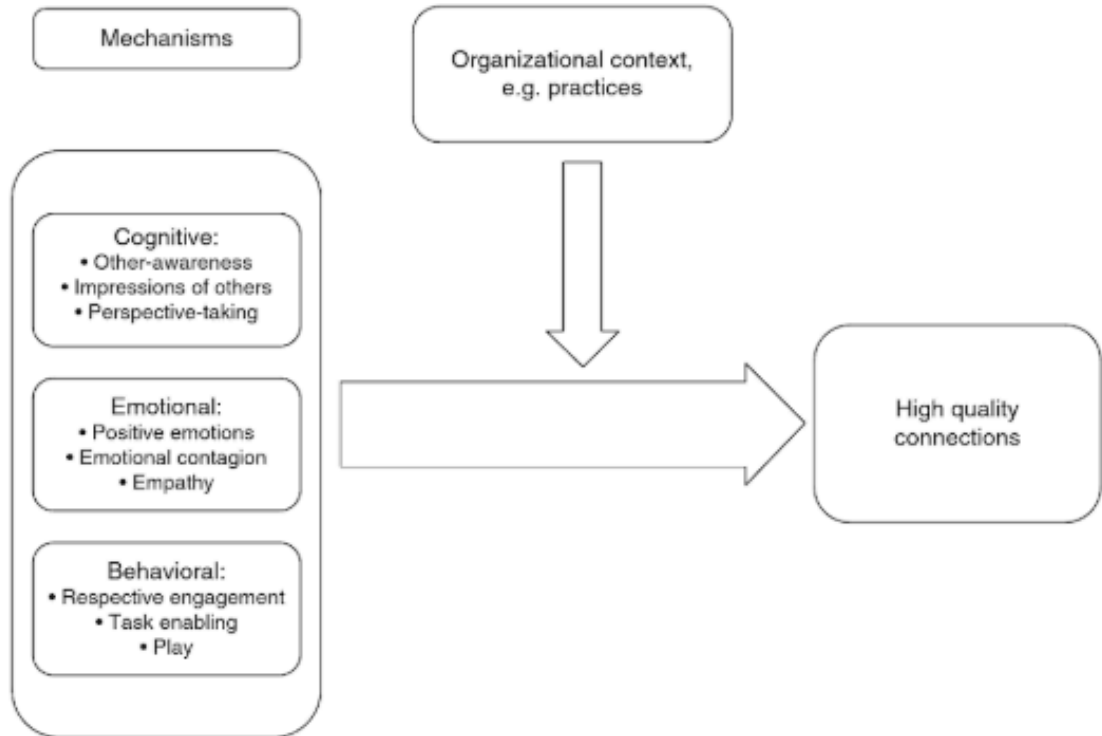
Fig. 29.1 Conceptual model of the mechanisms for building high-quality connections.

2.2.1.1 The cognitive mechanisms

The cognitive mechanisms concern the mental processing of information about others. It is built on three elements: Other- awareness concerns, impressions of others and perspective- taking. The cognitive mechanisms include predispositions of building high- quality connections, and the conscious and unconscious thought processes regarding these predispositions (Stephens, Heaphy & Dutton, 2011).

The mental process of other- awareness refers to being aware of others at work, and the ability to differentiate between oneself and others' emotions, behavior, and cognitions (Stephens, Heaphy & Dutton, 2011; Asendorpf & Baudonnière, 1993; Asendorpf, Warkentin & Baudonnière, 1996). Stephens, Heaphy and Dutton (2011) suggest that other- awareness promotes the formation

of high- quality connections, as being aware of what others are doing provides an important understanding for one's own actions in the workplace. This allows individuals to coordinate their actions in a more efficient manner, creating a stronger basis for building high- quality connections.

Impression of others refers to how connections are developed, with an emphasis on the rapid impressions we form about other individuals (Stephens, Heaphy & Dutton, 2011). This includes how people tend to make judgements of other people based on their facial expressions and body gestures (Ambady, Bernieri & Richeson, 2000). If for instance a person is perceived as supportive and accepting by another, it is more likely that they will build strong connections, and potentially high- quality connections.

The process of perspective- taking involves being able to imagine oneself in another person's point of view, familiarizing oneself with their perspective (Stephens, Heaphy & Dutton, 2011). This refers to mentally taking another person's experience as their own, demonstrating understanding rather than simply recognizing the person. Davis (1983) stresses how perspective- taking includes predicting another person's reactions and behavior. By demonstrating behavior that shows care and understanding towards the other person, one can facilitate positive responses, which further fosters strong connections.

2.2.1.2 The emotional mechanisms

The emotional mechanisms explain how emotions influence people's experience around others in organizations, and how they contribute in building relations between them. The areas of emotions research that are focused on when trying to explain the foundation of high-quality connections, consist of three different aspects. The first concerns positive emotions, that are demonstrated to "broaden thinking", in addition to help develop "durable, social resources", which in turn contributes to the development of closer relationships for the people involved (Stephens, Heaphy & Dutton, 2011, p. 389). Further, emotional contagion regards different ways in which people affect others' emotions and attitudes. This emotional influence can be done both consciously, through "surface or deep acting", and unconsciously, for instance through mimicking of body language. Lastly, the expression of empathy is an integral part of emotional mechanisms.

Oberman and Ramachandran (2007, p. 316) define empathy as "a function of one individual's experiencing the same feelings as another individual through an appreciation of similarity", and it is regarded to be fundamental for how human beings connect. "When people feel empathy for another, they experience warmth, compassion, and concern for the other, which, in turn, motivates altruistic and prosocial behavior, which are markers of high- quality connections" (Stephens, Heaphy & Dutton, 2011, p. 390).

Positive relations and interactions may help people experience more positive emotions, such as openness, joy, and gratefulness (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003). According to Baker and Dutton (2007), these emotions will in turn become valuable if an individual uses them to be more creative when developing solutions and facing challenges at work.

2.2.1.3 The behavioral mechanisms

Lastly, the behavioral mechanisms consist of the sorts of observable behaviors and communication that build high- quality connections in the workplace. These behaviors include respectful engagement, task enabling, and the acting of playful activities. These are emphasized as critical elements in creating strong connections (Stephens, Heaphy & Dutton, 2011).

Respectful engagement involves increasing the quality of connections through engagement, psychological presence, and communication (Stephens, Heaphy & Dutton, 2011). Demonstrating appreciation and value towards the recipient through everyday behavior and communication displays respect towards the person, creating a motivation to further strengthen the connection.

Task enabling includes actions that help another person to perform or complete a task and is considered an important behavior for high- quality connections (Dutton, 2003a). An essential part of task enabling regards the feeling of receiving emotional support and resources from another person, which can encourage the same behavior in return (Gouldner, 1960). Receiving help in a way that is perceived as fair and respectful, increases the positive responses, which in turn can increase the quality of the connection (Stephens, Heaphy & Dutton, 2011).

Play is considered an important part of fostering and building high- quality connections, as engaging in playful activities provides a sense of happiness and freedom (Stephens, Heaphy & Dutton, 2011). Dutton (2003a) stresses that participating in playful activities allows people to both know and see each other differently than usual, and additionally reduces stress. Findings show how playfulness has an impact on formal roles within the workplace, reducing the feeling of hierarchy and sense of bureaucracy (Stephens, Heaphy & Dutton, 2011). Playful engagement also allows people to take more risks, and to connect with people in new and unfamiliar ways.

2.2.1.4 The organizational context

The role of the organizational context refers to how the work context is likely to impact how the mechanisms influence the quality of the connections, and also to what degree they are influenced (Mischel, 1977). In current theoretical approaches, the focus on organizational practices (both formal and informal) that either enables or limits opportunities to connect with others has been examined (Stephens, Heaphy & Dutton, 2011). An example of a practice that allows members to express their needs, gratitude, and appreciation is demonstrated through daily meetings (DeGraff & Lawrence, 2002). Conducting meetings every day where the employees have approximately 20-60 seconds to report their current project status proved to foster high- quality connections through collectively expressing gratitude and admiration (Stephens, Heaphy & Dutton, 2011; Dutton, 2003b). In this case, the employees stood in a circle during the meetings, decreasing different statuses and roles within the company that can inhibit the strengthening of high- quality connections (Pratt & Rafaeli, 2002).

2.2.2 Outcomes of high- quality connections

These underlying mechanisms of high- quality connections in the workplace have several long- lasting and beneficial impacts for organizations and the people within it, as high- quality connections facilitate for performance on both individual and group level (Cross, Baker & Parker, 2003; Losada & Heaphy, 2004), and also increases work engagement (Kahn, 1990). Additionally, findings

show that high- quality connections have a significant role in facilitating for coordination (Gittell, 2002).

Further, as previously examined, positive emotions are closely connected to the area of high- quality connections. Fredrickson (1998) argues that high- quality connections promote several outcomes through positive emotions, for instance the capability and motivation for learning. Perhaps more interestingly, however, he refers to researchers such as Isen Daubman and Nowicki (1987) and Greene and Noice (1988), who through different experiments found that positive affect will broaden the scope of action. The concept of broadening scope of action may be compared to that of creativity, in the sense that creativity as well regards the expansion of horizons in terms of activities or thoughts. The concept of creativity is something that will be further explored later in the thesis, as it is a crucial part of our research.

2.3 High- performing teams

Though certain aspects arguably change in terms of composition and complexity depending on size, all teams share the same foundation. A team can broadly be defined as "a collection of three or more individuals who interact intensively to provide an organizational product, plan, decision, or service" (Devine, Clayton, Philips, Dunford & Melner, 1999, p. 681). Similarly, Francis and Young (1979) define a team as a group committed to achieving common goals. Johnson and Johnson (1991) understand teams as a combination of different interpersonal connections structured to achieve established targets.

To summarize, we may define it as a work team when it involves three or more individuals, working interdependently towards a shared goal. Peters and Waterman (1982) argue that teamwork is a critical factor for organizational success. Further, it is suggested that using teams in an efficient manner may significantly improve creativity, among other things (Colenso, 2000). Castka, Bamber, Sharp and Belohoubek (2001) claim that performance generally can be understood as the purpose of teamwork. Those teams that are in fact able to do so, are regarded as high- performing teams.

Kur (1996) defines high- performing teams as teams that ''consistently satisfy the needs of customers, employees, investors and others in its area of

influence'' and argues that as a result of this, they "frequently outperform other teams that produce similar products and services under similar conditions and constraints" (Kur, 1996, p. 34). He further claims that these teams have a defined purpose, are focused on people and sociality, as well as being technically and systematically advanced. In sum, one may claim that high- performing teams are teams that meet and exceed expectations and needs over time.

2.3.1 High- performing environment

High performance is defined as "performance which is consistently higher than that of the majority of peer organizations in the same sector, and over a prolonged time period" (Jones, Gittins & Hardy, 2009, p. 140). The majority of research in performance psychology has had an excessive focus on individuals and the team itself when studying performance, overlooking the role of the environment (Jones, Gittins & Hardy, 2009). Accordingly, organizations' success is often explained by the individuals within it, rather than the environment they perform in. Jones, Gittins and Hardy (2009) suggest that the environment created by the organization is equally important as the people performing in it, and further stress how success can be influenced by shaping the environment they operate in. Consistently, Stott and Walker (1995) view environment as an important factor in determining general performance.

Moreover, a High Performance Environment Model (HPE) has been developed in order to understand the role of the organizational environment in regards to performance (Jones, Gittins & Hardy, 2009). The presented model highlights several influencing factors for performance outcomes. For the purpose of our thesis we will not elaborate each element in detail, but rather provide an overall understanding with emphasis on factors of specific importance. Jones, Gittins and Hardy (2009, p. 141) has demonstrated the model as such:

Figure II: High performance environment

Figure 1. High Performance Environment Model

The organizational climate consists of internal achievement, wellbeing, innovation, and internal processes, as demonstrated in Figure II. Further, the core of the model is represented through leadership, which is suggested to interact with performance enablers in order to impact the people within the organization (Jones, Gittins & Hardy, 2009). Within a high- performance environment, it is suggested that leaders should aim on maximizing support towards the people within the organization, allowing them to fulfil their potential. Additionally, it is proposed that people need to be aware of their roles of responsibility and how their roles are evaluated in order to provide them with a certain structure in their environment (Jones, Gittins & Hardy, 2009).

Furthermore, the behavior within a team is highlighted as an important factor in understanding the high- performance environment. Jones, Gittins and Hardy (2009) argue that one can expect to see high levels of engagement, energy, and dedication in the team's everyday work, which in turn are behaviors associated with team effectiveness (Campion, Papper & Medsker, 1996). In addition to this, an important factor in performance includes how the individuals perceive the organization as a whole, i.e. the organizational climate. If an individual's experience an excessive focus on internal processes within the organization, it might have negative implications for creativity and innovation (Jones, Gittins & Hardy, 2009).

2.4 Creativity

The concept of creativity spans across a number of different definitions within divergent fields and contexts, and can refer to processes, people, products or environmental responses (Rhodes, 1961). It may therefore be difficult for organizations to define creative work, and also understand how to achieve creative solutions and ways of thinking in work- related contexts (Kurtzberg, 2005). Nevertheless, there are certain aspects of creativity that theorists agree cannot be neglected. Creativity concerns the production of novel ideas and solutions, which includes both the process of generating ideas or solutions, as well as the actual solution or idea itself (Amabile, Barsade, Mueller & Staw, 2005; Amabile, 1983; Sternberg, 1988; Weisberg, 1988). Woodman, Sawyer and Griffin (1993) posit that creativity can function as a positive force within organizations, that allows individuals to advance in the constantly dynamic marketplace. Findings also show that creativity is considered important in terms of self- esteem, fulfillment and job satisfaction, which are positive outcomes for the organization and the people within it (Kurtzberg, 2005).

Carlsen, Clegg and Gjersvik (2012) emphasize the importance of activities concerned with creating value in the company, including the selection, creation, sharing, and the communication of ideas in the organization. Though there are different understandings of the term creativity, scholars agree that it involves the generation of novel and useful ideas (Anderson, Potočnik & Zhou, 2014). The process of generating and implementing ideas has been considered essential for

organizations in order to be successful, as these processes are treated as important sources of competitive advantage (Anderson, De Dreu & Nijstad, 2004; West, 2002; Zhou & Shalley, 2003).

2.4.1 Creativity and positive emotions

Dutton (2003b) posits how individuals who experience joy in the workplace tend to be more creative in their work and come up with ideas that differ from their normal thinking patterns. This requires an environment where individuals feel safe to share their ideas, are encouraged to take risks, and have a focus on being open to new possibilities. One could consider how novel ideas lead to a certain change in the organization, in which an important factor in making change is the ability to be open to new possibilities and dare to pursue them, even if there is a risk of failure in it (Carlsen, Clegg & Gjersvik, 2012). Developing such an environment where creativity is a natural part of the organization, may include facilitating for intuitivity for the members to take risks, providing the ability to see opportunities, and be willing to give an extra effort in order to achieve desired outcomes (Carlsen, Clegg & Gjersvik, 2012).

2.4.2 Research on creativity

Chan (2013) posits that research on creativity is a diverse and large field, as several researchers have tried to make sense of the concept of creativity. An important part of studying creativity is to gain an understanding of how creativity is developed, as it may be a helpful tool for understanding the implications of creativity. As examined, there are several definitions of the concept, and there are also numerous reasons to why it is important to research this subject. Some of the reasons include the usefulness of identifying and realizing people's creative talents, as well as training better problem solvers, and improving learning and development (Chan, 2013).

2.4.3 Creativity in teams

Aggarwal and Woolley (2018) emphasize the important part teams play in creative, organizational outcomes, and there has been an increase in placing together teams in order to achieve creative products and solutions (Nijstad & De Dreu, 2012). Dutton (2003b) emphasizes the importance of communicating with invitation and inquiry, rather than a focus on concluded answers (e.g. *how can we solve this* rather than *the best solution is this, because…*). This may also be a facilitator for developing and nurturing high- quality connections, by developing a language of possibility within the organization or team. It can include different scenarios and metaphors that function as a guideline for the members to see possibilities in the future, by thinking creatively in work processes (Carlsen, Clegg & Gjersvik, 2012). This language focuses on opportunities rather than problems, in which may be important for the team in regards of daring to share ideas and thoughts.

PART III: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Our study was completed as a qualitative research in order to answer the formulated research question that has been addressed. We found this method to be efficient as we wish to investigate a specific phenomenon and gain a deeper understanding of special characteristics of the phenomenon (Johannessen, Tufte & Christoffersen, 2016). Our aim is to understand how high- quality connections facilitate for creativity in high- performing teams, including understanding the world from the perspective of our participants. Pratt (2009) emphasizes how qualitative research is suitable when examining processes and addressing "how" questions, as one of the key strengths within qualitative research is the creative nature.

By exploring and investigating the perspective of the individuals who are part of this phenomenon, we wish to gain insight in, as well as an understanding of, how the phenomenon is experienced (Silverman, 2013). In accordance with a

constructivist epistemology, we find it important to understand the social phenomenon through the individuals' subjective meanings and understanding of their experiences (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In order to do so, it is essential to examine the context of which the individual is in, as it will affect their perceptions of their reality and perspectives (Jacobsen, 2015).

Our chosen research question can be described as an exploratory question, as it intends to elaborate on a phenomenon in which we do not have much knowledge of. Therefore, this was the basis for the research design that we use in our study (Jacobsen, 2015).

3.2 Research design

Our exploratory research question functions as a basis for our research design, which can be described as a phenomenological design. We believe this to be the most suitable design as this approach aims to create an understanding of an individual's subjective perceptions of their reality in a phenomenon (Johannessen, Tufte & Christoffersen, 2016). As a phenomenon can be experienced differently from individual to individual, we find it important to explore their subjective understandings and experiences of it in order to gain an overall understanding and find meaning of their perceptions.

As we aimed to uncover important episodes and situations in a specific context, namely within work that is conducted in a high- performing team, we further chose to use elements from case studies. This allowed us to capture indirect factors that matter for the participants' experiences, as well as to collect detailed descriptions from a low number of participants (Johannessen, Tufte & Christoffersen, 2016). As this approach emphasizes that the meaning of each individual's experiences must be viewed and understood in the context they are in, we investigated their specific experiences when working in their assigned team, and also observed the participants in practice.

Through a deductive approach, the investigator aims at testing whether the predetermined theories, assumptions or constructs are consistent with gathered data (Thomas, 2006). Contrarily, the inductive research approach is an approach that may be regarded as collecting data without any idea of what one will discover

and explore the material to see whether one can use it to find patterns, and generalize these to other, equivalent or similar contexts.

However, we found that a more pragmatic approach to research, was a combination of the two, referred to as the abductive approach. This implies that we initiate an empirical research, and use the collected data to construct a form of hypotheses and theory, before attempting to apply this in practice, consecutively adapting the theoretical perspectives, and making it a iterative process (Jacobsen, 2015).

Based on *who* and *what* we investigated, and the fact that we go into depth of individuals' understanding of their reality, we chose to proceed with an intensive research design (Jacobsen, 2015). Our study comprehends a thorough investigation of a specific subject, which led us to the decision of focusing on nuances and understanding, and also to study few individuals for this purpose.

3.3 Selection

As the purpose of our study was to gain a greater understanding of how individuals experience high- quality connections and creativity within a high-performing team, we had to find candidates who find themselves in this specific context. Based on this, we found it most efficient to conduct a strategic selection process, focusing on a selection that was most suitable for our study (Johannessen, Tufte & Christoffersen, 2016). A strategic selection regards identifying the target audience in which we want to further investigate, and then choose different exclusion and inclusion criteria for those who are eligible to participate in the study (Jacobsen, 2015). Accordingly, we used a criterion- based selection method, combined with an identification of a company we would find suitable for our research. Criteria- based selection involves identifying a target group by specifying criteria which must be fulfilled in order to be a relevant candidate (Jacobsen, 2015). As of this, we highlighted the following criteria as essential to find our participants: 1) the team must consist of a minimum of three members, 2) they need to be considered a high- performing team, and 3) they work in a creative manner, e.g. tasks, processes, products.

3.4 Participants

After thorough consideration and evaluation of our requirements for participants, we made arrangements with a company group located in Scandinavia, that works within consumer goods. To anonymize, the group will be referred to as Product Forum throughout our thesis. At Product Forum, we discovered a subsidiary, in which will be referred to as Planet B throughout the thesis, due to anonymizing. The entire subsidiary consists of a team of six members, with different roles in the team, who work closely together on projects. The team is considered a high performing team, as they consistently outperform other teams within the same parent company and companies that produce similar products (Kur, 1996). They have experienced exceptional growth over the past years and have been awarded for their innovative and creative products.

3.5 Data collection

Based on our methodological approach and exploratory research question, we proceeded our research project with two different data collection methods to gain an understanding of the participants experiences. The data gathering methods consist of a combination of semi- structured, narrative interviews, and observation. We believe that combining these data gathering strategies offer good synergies and capture sufficient data that is valuable for our understanding of the phenomenon. By using different gathering methods, we believe that it increases the reliability and quality of our data gathering process, as it allowed us to use a between- method triangulation (Denzin, 1978). By combining different data collection methods within the study of the same phenomenon, we were able to make the research more robust as we examine the consistency of our several sources within the same method (Patton, 1999). This involves gathering data from different sources at different times within the qualitative method, namely *triangulation of sources* (Patton, 1999). By first conducting individual in-depth interviews with the distinctive members of the team, we wished to further examine our findings from the interviews with participant observation. In addition to this, we found it valuable to conduct interviews with key employees who collaborate with the team on a regular basis, but with positions and roles outside

of the team, further examining and validating our findings. In order to enrich and strengthen our findings, we chose to conduct the data collection in the following way:

Figure III: Triangulation of data sources
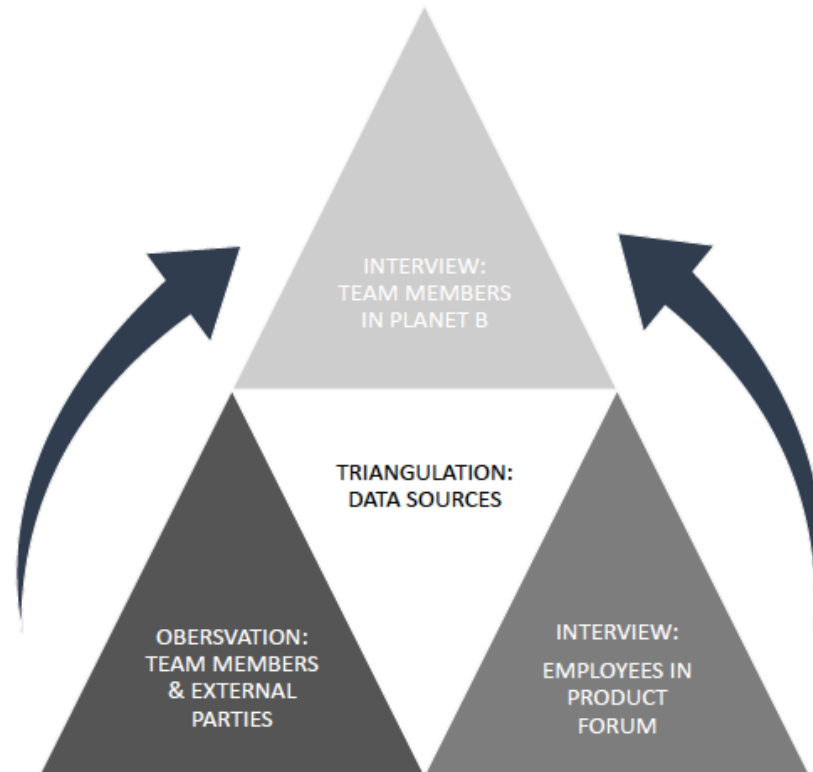
3.5.1 Interview

By using semi- structured, narrative interviews as a data collection method, we wished to both capture the experiences and understandings of our participants, and also narratives and activities that can provide more enriched information and details (Silverman, 2013). This included gathering data and analyzing the information rather than measuring already established theoretical variables. Interview as a research method is used to try and understand how a person sees the world. The goal of narrative interviews is to get detailed explanations rather than short and definite answers (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Riessman, 2008). To

be able to bring forth significant events and experiences, the interview form requires that conversation takes place between interviewer and participant, where both are active and have one constant communication in the conversation (Riessman, 2008). As our aim was to focus on both specific events and episodes that further enhances our understanding of the participants reality, we created open- ended questions for the participants to address freely, in which a way that feels natural to them (see appendix I). Therefore, we chose to conduct semi-structured interviews combined with a narrative approach; including prepared open- ended questions, and conversations that aim for storytelling. To be able to get an understanding of how high- quality connections facilitate for creativity, we wished to use a method that could forth stories that reflected important elements of high- quality connections. Telling a story can lead to small digressions and stories, which in this context could provide deeper insight into the participant's perspective on the phenomenon (Reissman, 2008). We gathered information through open and flexible questions, using a semi- structured interview guide, giving the participant the possibility to elaborate to a high degree. Using semi-structured interviews as a way of gathering data may complicate the data comparisons from the participants. This was solved by asking some central questions to all participants, as a way of creating the same foundation of information from each person (Ringdal, 2018).

It's often easier for people to talk about single events and incidents, rather than to talk about something based on completely open guidelines (Reissman, 2008). By focusing on specific episodes and situations considered to be associated with high- quality connections, we aimed to make it easier for the participants to grasp the whole understanding of the concept.

With our triangulation- approach of different sources, we initially conducted one- on- one in- depth interviews with the distinctive members of the Planet B team. Based on the data collected during the first interview round, we analyzed and categorized the findings that occurred to identify possible themes and episodes that would be of interest to further examine. This became the basis for our second interview guide (appendix I), where we then interviewed on of the participants a second time, in order to gain an even deeper understanding of the phenomenon in our research. This included follow-up questions which ensured

that we captured and elaborated the necessary and important elements from the first interview session. This interview guide was developed by analyzing specific highlights that the participant shared in the first interview, before then asking the participant to elaborate in a more detailed sense.

The final two interviews were conducted with individuals who work at the headquarters of Product Forum. They are not a part of the Planet B team, but rather collaborate with the team. This includes regular contact and communication with the members, as well as occasional meetings. The interviews took place at their office, and included questions based on the findings from our interviews and observations at Planet B (appendix I).

Table I: Overview of data collection

INTERVIEW ROUND 1: PLANET B	OBSERVATION	INTERVIEW ROUND 2: PLANET B	INTERVIEW: PRODUCT FORUM
Participant X1	Participant X1	Participant X4	Participant Y1
Participant X2	Participant X2		Participant Y2
Participant X3	Participant X3		
Participant X4	Participant X4		
Participant X6	Participant X5		
	Participant Z1, Z2, Z3 & X4		
	Participant Z4 & X4		

Xn = members of the Planet B team Zn = external partners and suppliers Yn = employees in Product Forum

3.5.2 Observation

In addition to interviews, we gathered further data through the use of observations. Marshall and Rossman (1989, p. 79) define observation as "the systematic description of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study". Through observing the participants involved, one enables all five senses for a richer and deeper understanding of the topic in question, than through interviews alone.

There are different ways to view observations. One is to generally view them as participant or non- participant observations, these are different in the degree of active involvement from the researchers. For our thesis, we focused on the non- participant way of observing, meaning that we did not play an active role in the situations observed, but rather kept a distance, and remained passive during the observations (Kawulich, 2005). This was to keep the setting as natural as possible for the participants. Our focus was on documenting different behaviors relevant for our thesis and trying to understand these. This was done through taking notes during the observations, so- called field notes. The observations allowed us to further explore the initial information that we gathered in the interviews and provided a tool for us to follow up on important findings from our distinctive interviews. We believe this allowed us to gain a greater overall understanding of the participants' experiences.

3.6 Data analysis

Because of the explorative nature of our master thesis with a focus on finding meaning in our participants reality, we wanted to use analyzing techniques making the most out of our collected data. Accordingly, the qualitative approach in our research often treats the data analysis as a process, where the analyzing of the material starts from the day the data is collected (Silverman, 2013). To ensure that we enquired a comprehensive understanding of our participants perspectives and reality, we aimed at conducting the analysis as a process rather than a step in answering our research question. Concurrently, we used grounded theorizing as our main methodology for analyzing our interviews and observations (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The techniques within this methodology allows participants to speak freely in their own manner, as the researcher seeks to understand their reality (Van Maanen, 1979). The grounded theorizing approach allows the researcher to use the culture of the setting when understanding the patterns of the participants, including the behavior and actions that occur (Van Maanen, 1979). As we both interviewed and observed our participants, we found it valuable to use this approach in order to fully grasp the reality of our participants.

Weick (1989) argue that elaborating the theorizing processes within leadership- and organizational studies should be viewed as a comprehensive and

combined process, rather than being preoccupied with a singular validation, as it provides a broader and complete perspective on how new theoretical insights are developed. Accordingly, processes and interactions among the organization's members comprises the organization itself, when viewing it from a process perspective (Langley & Tsoukas, 2010; Cooren, Taylor & Van Every, 2006; Taylor & Van Every, 2000; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). A focused attention on both discovery of irregularities within the data, combined with connecting the validating and discovery, provides a broader understanding of the method (Locke, Feldman & Golden-Biddle, 2015). As of this, the process of coding captured both exploration and validation to be mutually embodied, rather than having independent approaches to our research.

Based on the nature of our thesis, we used live- coding in order to both grasp the discovery and validation of our data (Locke, Feldman & Golden-Briddle, 2015). Our aim was to understand our data as a processual and comprehensive manner, rather than to create a list of completed observations and relations. By developing codes that represent what is happening in the observations, one can have limited curiosity and deeper understanding of the meaning in the observations, and also a limited understanding of phenomena (Seidel & Kelle, 1995). Live- coding consists of an ongoing process and creation of codes, whereas meaning of the code often changes when conducting the analysis. The coding, meaning of codes, and the data further shape each other, as they are treated as interdependent and indivisible (Locke, Feldman & Golden-Briddle, 2015).

Firstly, we analyzed our transcribed interviews individually in order to prevent the risk of disregarding valuable information, in addition to avoid group thinking. Throughout the process we identified certain codes and categories within our data, in addition to specific episodes or stories that we found relevant to our research question. After reviewing our interviews, we did the same process with our notes from the observations. Secondly, we compared our interpretations and notes to uncover similarities and differences in our analyses. Furthermore, we conducted a second round of analysis, creating tentative concepts and themes for our findings. This led us to identify four main themes in our findings, which were

later discarded as they were too broad, and did not reflect our findings in a sufficient manner.

Concurrently, we found it necessary to conduct an additional round of analysis. After thorough investigation, we discovered the descriptive nature of our gathered quotations, which led us to identifying new, narrower themes and categories. As in live- coding, the meaning of each code often changes during the analysis (Locke, Feldman & Golden-Briddle, 2015), which was evident for our processual analysis. Within our original codes, we discovered new meanings, which in turn led to the creation of first- and second order concepts, whereas the second- order themes consist of: *1) We are not afraid of risks or mistakes, 2) We perceive work as a hobby, 3) We are open for idea sharing, 4) We appreciate each other, 5) We closely coordinate and complement task solving, 6) We are closely related, 7) We work physically close, 8) We put pressure on ourselves, 9) We are impatient: the art of constant drive, 10) Everything is possible, until we have proved it's not,* and *11) We are allowed to be different* (see appendix II).

We further analyzed the eleven sets of second- order themes, identifying several possible practices that captured our identified themes. This process resulted in identifying five sets of practices, including: *Having a playful environment, Valuing each member, Closely connecting each member, Enjoying the pressure,* and *Giving each member the freedom of no boundaries* (see table II). Each practice consists of our identified second- order themes, creating five distinctive practices that emerged through our findings.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Within a research project there are several ethical considerations that may arise which is of importance for us to address (Johannessen, Tufte & Christoffersen, 2016). Firstly, the research should not be detrimental to the participants of the study (Jacobsen, 2015), which implies that we treat all personal data with full confidentiality and anonymity. Secondly, participation in the study was voluntary, which we acknowledged by developing a consent form that the participants filled out before getting involved in the project. This form included their right to withdraw from the study at any time, and also had information about how the data will be used (see Appendix III). Prior to the distribution of the consent forms, we

informed the participants about the purpose of the research project, to ensure that they were in full agreement of how the collected data was to be used (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The voice recordings conducted during the interview process was deleted after being transcribed, and all records and notes will be stored in protected files that comply with NSD regulations and deleted once the thesis has been submitted. The gathered material for this study will not be used beyond what is stated in the consent form.

PART IV: Findings

"I would like to have creativity for breakfast, lunch, and dinner".

(X3)

4.1 Introduction

The empirical analysis of our observations and interviews uncovers some specific elements within high-quality connections which appear to facilitate for the creativity at Planet B. These are:

(1) *Having a playful environment*, (2) *Valuing each member*, (3) *Closely connecting each member*, (4) *Enjoying the pressure,* and (5) *Giving each member the freedom of no boundaries*. We do not claim that these elements fully cover the subject of high- quality connections, but rather view them as the concepts within high- quality connections that assert themselves to the highest degree in this specific team. Findings from the data collection frequently overlaps and intertwines, making it challenging to distinguish them from one another. In these cases, we have categorized the specific data into the element where we find it the most appropriate, though it may be argued to belong to a different category.

In the following, we present a table that summarizes the five practices, before carefully exploring each of them. As the table of participants displays (table I), the participants will be referred to as Xn, Zn and Yn, respectively, for reasons of anonymizing. Further, the participants' specific roles are not mentioned, as we do not find this relevant for our research.

Table II: Five practices of high-quality connections

Practice	Definition
Having a playful environment	The first element our findings revealed, is that of having a playful environment. This practice concerns creating a place of work where there is room for humor, laughter and fun, both when solving tasks and in social settings. Playful activities allow the team members to make jokes, laugh, and engage in informal conversations that do not concern work related topics. Providing space for such activities may in turn contribute to develop a platform to foster and strengthen relations among the team members, in the way that it increases positive emotions.
Valuing each member	The second element that appeared through our findings, concerns how the team values each member. The practice implies how the members express their high regard towards each other. In this setting, valuing means showing appreciativeness for contributions, expressing openness for ideas and suggestions, and allowing all members to contribute.
Closely connecting each member	The third element we came across through our findings, is that of how closely each member is connected to the others. Being closely connected implies both having close relations to other team members, as well as how well they are at coordinating and complementing tasks, roles and responsibilities. It further concerns how closely the team members are to each other in a physical manner.
Enjoying the pressure	The fourth element that came through in our findings, concerns the way in which the team enjoys working under pressure and at a high level of pace. In this setting, pressure implies that there is a constant need to move forward and meet deadlines that are set. A high level of pace refers to solving tasks and making decisions rapidly and frequently, and includes the internal ways of working, as well as the speed of product development and launching.

Giving each member the freedom of no	The practice of giving each member the freedom of no boundaries regards facilitating for members to use their imagination and solve tasks as each member finds to be the best practice. This includes implementing a mindset that demonstrates how "everything is possible", which is further used as a basis for their product development. Further, this practice allows the team to be different than the other team within the parent company.

4.2 Having a playful environment

The first element our findings revealed, is that of having a playful environment. This practice concerns creating a place of work where there is room for humor, laughter and fun, both when solving tasks and in social settings. Playful activities allow the team members to make jokes, laugh, and engage in informal conversations that do not concern work related topics. Providing space for such activities may in turn contribute to develop a platform to foster and strengthen relations among the team members, in the way that it increases positive emotions.

4.2.1 We perceive work as a hobby

A free and easy- going work environment in Planet B is highly appreciated by all the team members and provides a basis for close ties and collaboration. When X4 is asked about which factors that are considered important to create a creative work environment, X4 states:

> I look at Planet B and this place, and I also tell my colleagues, I look at Planet B and my work life as a hobby. It's like going to tennis, it's like going to play football. Working in Planet B is exactly the same. It's like, you know it's like a kindergarten or a candy shop where you get five minutes and you can empty the shelves, you don't have to pay anything when you exit the store. [...] I think that environment creates creativity. And it also has an

impact on the people working there, because they, when you play, [...] you free some energy, and you are not afraid to say what you have on your mind.

This quotation illustrates how X4 perceives work as a place that brings creativity through joy and amusement. Comparing the environment at Planet B with activities such as football and tennis, demonstrates the casual and playful energy that the team holds. Similarly, several of the other team members emphasize the importance of having an easy- going culture when discussing creative work, expressing the need to have a "spontaneous", "free", and "fun" environment. For instance, team member X1 states the following:

To me, creativity is a lot about finding a fun solution to a problem. We always work with a lot of humor in our day- to- day work, [...]. Creativity is a lot about fun, and also about finding new ways to solve problems or to meet demands.

The playful and free environment at Planet B distinguishes itself from both the team members' previous work experience from other companies and teams, as well as from the standardized ways of working within other Product Forum teams. The shared understanding of the environment appears to be an implicit factor, regardless of whether a person has worked at Planet B for one month or five years. Several team members argue that the high pace at work makes it necessary to have a fun environment in order to be creative. For instance, X3 emphasizes the importance of creating an environment of a positive mindset, as the need to constantly be creative can be demanding and pressuring. Due to this high pace and pressure, they are concerned with making sure there is a "loosen- up energy" (X3). They argue that if they persistently feel pressured, their creativity will vanish, making them afraid to come up with and share new ideas. Similarly, X1 expresses the appreciation towards the open and playful mindset of all the team members, and highlights how important it is to have when working at a constantly high pace. Further, X3 states that: "[...] We need that playful environment, [...] that is also what the brand is about".

The above statements may be substantiated by how parties within Product Forum perceive the team, and their understanding of why the team is the way it is. Y2 explains how they perceive the working environment within the team, compared to other teams within Product Forum:

> [...] it seems like a fun environment. And people are working with passion, I mean more than usual, because I feel like they really, really, really believe and they live what they do [...]. I think they probably have more fun [laughs]. No, I'm just joking. I think there is a lack of structure, [...]. And I think they are not so many people, so this is also different, because you have more chances to talk to each other. And I think they also want to talk all the time with each other, and just like share things. And I think it's their engagement to, kind of, really make a change, and not just, you know, think about results and targets, [...] which of course is very important, because you are still a business. But they try to put those two things together, like, both achieving results, but also, you know, making a change and thinking about the impact they have on the environment. [...] Every time you kind of talk with them, you get that feeling that [...] much more than we believe is possible, and we can really make a change if we want to. I mean, it doesn't have to be something that big, but it's important to start. And I also [...] feel like I get a lot of energy and inspiration when we are in touch. You can see that there is a different culture.

Y1 expresses that they have not been exposed to the team a lot, but highlights that the few times they have met, their encounters have been filled with amusement and passion. This level of energy and encouragement is of importance to Y1, as Y1 finds them highly inspiring to collaborate with, and expresses how the team constantly stimulates Y1's own creativity, even through short interactions, such as e- mails and telephone calls.

4.2.2 We are not afraid of risks or mistakes

So far, we have seen how the playful and free environment facilitates for the fostering and strengthening of connections through positive emotions, such as amusement and high levels of energy. Another aspect of this practice concerns the opportunity and encouragement of taking risks, more specifically how the team members promote new ways of thinking and solving tasks. Daring to come up with new solutions and ideas is an important element in the team's creative work, as it creates a platform where ideas are both listened to and challenged. This further allows the members to share their perspectives and viewpoints, which ultimately enables them to help and support each other during projects. X3 demonstrates the importance of taking risks and daring to take in new perspectives, stating the following:

> [...] and if we make mistakes, well, then we make mistakes. Then we correct them, but they [the team members] need to know that we will make mistakes all the time, because we are people, but they need to know that it is OK, and then we'll together maybe turn that mistake around.

At first sight, the words "risk- taking" and "mistakes" may appear as negative actions and outcomes, however, at Planet B they are viewed as positive and necessary. In order for the team members to understand, and truly trust that it is allowed to try and fail, it is important for them to view all mistakes as potentially good ideas, and also valuable learning experiences. The playful environment encourages risk- taking, and it is of essence that the members truly accept and allow high- risk ideas to be tried, and also failed. X3 stresses that if one person makes a mistake, they all make it together, demonstrating the strong relations between the team members. The members argue that if the environment at Planet B was too strict or serious, it would prevent the members' idea sharing, as a mistake would be considered as a burden rather than a possibility.

The positive mindset regarding risk- taking is demonstrated through the spontaneous and impulsive way of working at Planet B, both in terms of product development and processes within the team. The fun and playful environment also

reflects through their products and campaigns, as well as the essence of their brand. X6 explains how each team member is constantly "living the brand", meaning that the fun and spontaneous ways of working also relates to their products. X6 further elaborates how everyone in the team are pulling in the same direction, as they are on the same page regarding the fun and free mindset. Even though the distinctive members might have untraditional or different ways of working, they all agree and appreciate the joy and fun they share. This allows the members to be creative and playful in the way their work and facilitates for building and strengthening the bonds between them. Words such as "love", "fun", and "freedom" are used to describe the feeling and mindset of working at Planet B, where X4 expresses it as: "I love my work and what we do at Planet B", demonstrating the strong connections to the brand, and the people within it. Concurrently, X1 and X2 express the shared love and joy regarding the environment within the team, as it allows them to speak freely and find new ways of thinking. X1 illustrates an example of the appreciation, stating:

> [...]If I should mention one specific one, then it would be the Planet B [product], which was all total craziness with the team. It was so…so fantastic, and the team spirit was amazing!

4.3 Valuing each member

The second element that appeared through our findings, concerns how the team values each member. The practice implies how the members express their high regard towards each other. In this setting, valuing means showing appreciativeness for contributions, expressing openness for ideas and suggestions, and allowing all members to contribute.

4.3.1 We are open for idea sharing

An important aspect of creative work concerns the possibility of coming forward and share ideas and thoughts. Our findings show that this is an element which the team takes very seriously. We find that our participants experience an environment where new ideas are welcomed and highly regarded. X1

demonstrates this by stating that "I don't think I have ever put forward an idea at Planet B where it has not been welcome". Even though this individual has only been working within the team for a short period of time, they are very clear about how all team members facilitate for idea generating and -sharing, and also how they encourage each other to share their thoughts.

A central aspect of idea sharing that of developing a safe sharing environment, which here implies that the members feel as if they can share ideas without experiencing judgement, neglection or rejection. When X3 is asked about whether or not it feels safe to share ideas within the team, they respond: "If it doesn't feel safe to share ideas, then I have failed". Other team members express the same feelings and mentality when discussing the subject, and there is a coherent understanding of the vital role of idea sharing within the team. X4 demonstrates the importance of ideas in the office, through statements such as "any ideas are welcome here", and the following:

> [...] That means that when you walk in in the morning, to this office, everything is possible. Every idea has to come to the surface. That is also why all our walls in this office are writable. So, if you get an idea, write it down. But not on a piece of paper, because paper, that ends up in a drawer and people forget about it.

This point was captured through our observations as well, as we saw their mentioned writable walls filled with notes, drafts, as well as rough and unpolished ideas and thoughts. This visualizes the effort that the team puts into facilitating for idea sharing.

As idea sharing is such a crucial part of their work, they are also concerned with demonstrating this when new members are to be integrated in the team. When X3 is asked about how they include new team members in the idea sharing, and also ensure that they feel safe with expressing their reflections, X3 explains that all team members, including new members, need to have the Planet B DNA under their skin. This includes grasping the whole essence and culture at Planet B, as it is necessary to thoroughly understand the company in order to be able to contribute. X3 further explains that new team members will feel safe and free to

share ideas if they feel like they are part of the team, and therefore it is important for them to ensure that the new members feel included in the team from the very first day.

The emphasis on providing new team members with a safe and sharing environment is further expressed by X2, who has been at Planet B for only a short period of time. They share their experience of first meeting the company, stating that: "[...] I even heard all the way from when I was at my first job interview, that this is a place where creative ideas are very welcomed, and very listened to". X2 further expresses that they immediately felt that it is a safe place to share ideas and speak freely.

As the team members express, creativity is one of the fundamental parts of their usual work, and by being surrounded by all of the ideas that come to the surface, it is easier for them to capture the creativity that grows in the office. This belief is highlighted by X3, who stresses the importance of always facilitating for creativity in the workplace: "The creative environment is open 24/7". Our findings indicate how important the processes around idea sharing is for all the team members, and further how they appreciate the feeling of their ideas being valued and listened to by the other members.

Nevertheless, our findings also suggest that in order to come forward with ideas, one must be prepared to be challenged, and find ways to argue in favor of the idea. For instance, participant X4 argues that "it's a safe place, but it's also unsafe, because people challenge your idea", further stating that "everything is welcome here in the Planet B mind lab, but you have to be ready to be challenged". The understanding that ideas are shared and developed through challenging and processing, is further elaborated by X3:

> [...] every idea is welcome. If people create ideas and are shut down, then it would kill the creativeness. Every idea is welcome, every idea will be discussed. Then in a constructive way, maybe it will be put aside for a while or for later, and then we could add some extra ideas and it would flourish again. But every member of the team knows that they can speak out loud every day about their ideas.

Additionally, X4 argues that the strongest ideas are those that come from the team members brainstorming. These statements provide us with an understanding that ideas are welcomed as a starting point, and that the team members together process these suggestions, and develop them into something more. The process of brainstorming appears to be a crucial aspect in how the members communicate their ideas with each other, allowing each other to challenge perspectives and viewpoints. X1 illustrates this process, stating: "If you don't challenge each other's views, you just end up agreeing to take the wrong direction". Additionally, they express how different the team members are from each other in regards of personality, and their awareness of this, and how this contributes to create a great environment among them. X4 demonstrates this by stating: "I can ask [X6] questions that make [X6] reflect on what I ask, and maybe [X6] will gain something from that that will lead [X6] on in the work.".

To sum up the element of idea sharing, X4 explains that every member of the team are innovators, and that everyone may come up with the next great idea, demonstrating the open and including ways of working. The shared mentality and appreciation of idea sharing is highly visible in each individual interview and conversation with the different team members, as they all express the importance of creating a safe place to share ideas and use this for further development.

4.3.2 We appreciate each other

In addition to creating a place where it is safe to share ideas, our findings also suggest how the feeling of appreciation towards co-workers and their contributions are of importance. All of the team members express the significance of supporting each other's roles and competence, in order to build a safe and trustworthy workplace. X1 expresses the advantage of the distinct roles in the team, and the importance of having different perceptions, but at the same time having a shared understanding of what they are working towards. X1 states: "I think it is important to have, of course, a common understanding of what you are working towards, but to have somewhat different ways of reaching that goal". X1 further elaborates how the different ways of reaching their goal allows each

member to work in their own distinctive ways, creating an environment that appreciates each individual contribution.

This appreciation is further demonstrated through X1's statement about their own contribution to the team: "I think I contribute to creative work every day. I think that is one of the most important parts of my job." This statement is further of significance during our interview with X2, as X2 explains how the other team members contribute creatively in projects. When X2 is asked about their own creative contribution to the team, X2 claims that they are grateful for the creative mindset of others in the team, while X2's work cannot be categorized as creative, but rather analytic. X2 further elaborates their role in the team:

> [...] Because data today and the platforms I have at my fingertips have so much data available for me, but you have to be able to think out "what are the questions I want to ask this data?". Because or else you will have infinite amount of data. So, you have to be able to ask the right questions, and maybe you can call that creativity.

Through this reflection and reasoning, the quotation illustrates how X2 also contributes creatively in their own way. Through the team members explanations and displays of their work environment, it is clear that they share the same mindset towards the company, and each other as co- workers. X6 describes the team as "very personal, and personally connected to the team and company". This implication of closeness and appreciation is strengthened by Y2, who describes the Planet B team in the following way:

> They have a different culture than the one that I am used to see in most of our companies. [...]. They want to talk with each other all the time, and constantly build each other up [...]. Everyone is kind of an equal member or with equal rights.

Here, Y2 implies that the members are highly concerned with strengthening each other. We argue that our interviews and observations imply that the confidence in

own work and capability derives from the members' ability to show appreciation and gratitude towards one another, as well as the closeness among them. Our reflection will be further elaborated in the discussion part of this thesis.

4.4 Closely connecting each member

The third element we came across through our findings, is that of how closely each member is connected to the others. Being closely connected implies both having close relations to other team members, as well as how well they are at coordinating and complementing tasks, roles and responsibilities. It further concerns how closely the team members are to each other in a physical manner.

4.4.1 We are closely related

An important aspect of relations among the team members that our interviews and observations reveal, is what the members argue to be a highly positive organizational culture and extraordinary level of team-spirit. X4 stresses that the team is highly dependent on working very close together and claims that this is one of the key factors for success at Planet B, and an aspect that contributes to what they describe as a "great team spirit". X2 highlights that there is no competition among the team members, and that none of them are concerned with taking credit for performed tasks:

> I mean, I think we share the successes here. And I really mean that out of my heart. I've been places before where titles are very important, and where you expect people to respect you if you are one or the other, and I really feel it's liberating here, that it's not like that.

X2 further emphasizes how the members share a positive mentality, and how this leads them to believe that they together can achieve anything. X3 highlights how the team members' relationships go beyond the work life: "The team is so connected to each other that most of the team are also in contact during the weekend. The chemistry between the team members is very, very important after

work as well". This corresponds well with observations made. During our visit, there were frequent interactions among the team members concerning life outside of work, indicating that the relationships among them go beyond the professional sphere.

These close affiliations were further present for us to observe, when we attended meetings with external vendors and partners. Here, ideas and thoughts were openly and informally discussed, and though some ideas were not necessarily connected to the specific collaborations between the different parties, they used each other as sparring partners. For us as observers, it clearly demonstrates the open and free mindset of the members, and also displayed how the internal connections are transmitted to external parties. Throughout the entire meeting, informal talk, jokes and laughter was shared amongst all attendees.

4.4.2 We closely coordinate and complement task solving

Another of the key factors for success within the Planet B team is their tight and close ties in terms of coordination and complementation in task solving. X4 provides an explanation of how composed and collaborative the team members are, as they are extensively linked together. Even though each member has their own responsibility, the defined roles within the team are not set in stone. X4 explains that each member spends approximately 80% of their working hours in their defined, separate roles, while the last 20% is also covered by the other team members. This displays how closely they work on an everyday basis, and also how updated and familiar they are with each other's work. This allows the team members to complement each other in their ways of working and thinking, which creates synergies that is valued by each team member.

Further, X1 explains how all the team members have a shared understanding of what their goals are, and how to reach the goals, and the importance of having a common understanding in order to complement each other's work in the best possible way. X1 further emphasizes how the different roles contribute to new perspectives and perceptions for the individual team members, where they all see challenges and solutions in different ways. An example of this is how one team members is concerned with the marketing part of a project and may overlook or not consider the statistical and analytical part of it,

whereas the other member considers these elements as vital for the success of the project. In this way, they complement each other's roles and ways of working, which the team members describe as a valuable feature in their everyday work.

Further, X4 explains how the different roles are all linked together, stating: "[...] If the link is unplugged from the chain, then they could be connected still because they are overlapping each other a little bit". X2 builds on this, by arguing how the roles, and the members' awareness of what tasks these roles represent, contributes to the creation of synergies among them. They further claim that "ideas can bounce on and off us, so if an idea sparks one place, then it gets refined, and I can put another aspect to the idea, so it really creates this feeling of synergy".

Another aspect of how the members are coordinated and complement each other's work, was demonstrated in a specific instance where we, together with participant X4, drove to a meeting with collaborating organization. Here, X4 was on the phone with X6, when X6 presented an idea for a new product. X4 was intrigued by the idea, and they discussed it for a few minutes. Further, when in the meeting, X4 proposed this idea as a potential, new product to the external parties. This displays how quickly an idea may develop into a specific business proposal at Planet B.

When it comes to how externals perceive the team, some key features are highlighted. As previously pointed out, Planet B consists of a small team, which Y1 claims to enable the possibility of working in a more coordinated and closely connected manner. Other Product Forum companies, Y1 explains, consist of quite large teams, which requires more complex processes to be in place. "Their whole mentality, culture and way of recruiting is different. I think you need to have some certain characteristics in your personality to enjoy working for Planet B" (Y1). X3 confirms this view of coordinating and close ties, explaining that:

> [...] the team needs to be connected, so that it's like: One team member says A, then the next member says B, and the next one says C, it is more like a chain linked together, we work very, very closely. Otherwise, we couldn't make it work.

Considering these findings, it appears as if the team copes well with the speed and pressure they experience due to the mentioned levels of team- spirit, as well as how well- coordinated they function. Another example of coordination and close collaboration comes from X4, when discussing time- pressure and Planet B's "speed to market":

> An example of that [speed to market], would be that if our innovator tells me about a product idea, and [co- worker] makes some product development on this idea, I'll go to the retailer and tell them about it, and maybe sell the product before [co- worker] has ended his product development.

This example specifically illustrates how the team's coordination permits them to solve tasks and make decision efficiently, in that they do not depend on clarifying each action before in fact doing so.

4.4.3 We work physically close

Another crucial feature of the team members being closely connected, includes the physical office space. When we as observers first entered the Planet B office, we quickly noticed the open and rather small office space. The few doors that were mounted were constantly open, and every team member worked in the same area, with several desks pushed together. This gave us an impression of how closely they work, and the easy access they have to each other.

During our interviews, several of the team members mention the value of having an open and accessible office space, as they believe it is a crucial factor for their work. This is highlighted trough statements such as "the door is always open" (X4), and "everyone can come in and comment on anything and bring inputs" (X3). It appears that it is acceptable to close the doors in the office when necessary, but even so, anyone can join a discussion or conversation at any time. Further, X2 provides us with an example of how the team members work closely together on a day- to- day basis, and emphasizes the importance of sitting physically close to each other:

[...] And when [the co- worker] is sitting there day in and day out answering these messages, and then sometimes gets frustrated: "ah, this one is so stupid", or "this one is so sweet", but it also makes the rest of us aware of what is going on. And that can be some criticism we need to take further, or for example the part about negative comments. When I hear this, OK, then I go in and look at that post: OK, all these negative comments, how much is it compared to usual? And my line of work starts because I hear [the co- worker]. And [co- worker] is not even aware of what [co-worker] is doing. I'm just listening in on [their] day- to- day reactions to [their] normal work, and then sparks new ideas in how I can dig into data. And I wouldn't have that if I couldn't hear [my co- worker].

Through further observations, we noticed how the team members captured important events while they were occurring, without verbally communicating with each other. An example of this was when one of the team members got a phone call during lunch and left the table to take the call in another room. The remaining team members continued eating lunch with us, discussing general topics, and after a while, a second team member left the table to write on their computer. As it turned out, this individual had captured what was going on during the phone call of their co- worker (as the door remained open during the phone call), and immediately started to work on the subject. We, as observers, had not even noticed that this individual was able to hear what their co- worker was discussing on the phone, which showed us the importance of the tight connections and open office space. In our interview with X1, they emphasize the non- verbal communication in their everyday work:

[...] As you already know, [co- worker's] phone is constantly ringing, and then [they] will just run off… and that is a huge part of our daily life, so when we hear about something, we just snap it [...].

The close and rapid ways of working together, and complementing each other's work, is described as vital by X3. The connections between each team member are necessary and decisive in order for the team to be successful, as every decision and task needs to be conducted in a short time. X3 expresses this through an every- day example:

> If I'm shouting out A, they will shout out B to me back, then I'll shout out C, and then we will build up this connection, you could say together. Then we continue by maybe discussing ideas, strategies or innovations.

X2 further explains how they used to sit in a separate office, isolated from the other team members, when they first started working at Planet B. This prevented X2 from both seeing and hearing the other co- workers, which made it difficult to capture what they were working on. X2 recalls the experience:

> [...] I realized that I lost a lot because I couldn't see [co- worker]. And now I sit over here, and I have all the [co- workers] there in my view, and every time [co- worker] is reacting to [their] everyday work, I can pick up on it. And if there's an important [...] tendency that [co- worker] is reacting on, I can grab it from there without [co- worker] even being aware of it. And then I can go over there and say: "what is going on, which post, and how is that?".

This example substantiates the value of sitting close together and being able to react quickly to each other's work, without having to clarify or discuss which tasks that need to be done. Another episode that demonstrates this, occurred during our second lunch at the Planet B office. The present team members were all eating together in the middle of the office space, discussing the upcoming launch of a new product, which was to be released in stores only days after our visit.

Prior to this, the team had a campaign on their social media channels to promote a new product, to create excitement and curiosity among consumers. It

was mentioned how fast their Facebook follower base had grown to the brink of 100.000 followers, which led to one of the team members suggesting some sort of celebration. The remaining members agreed on this and started sharing ideas in terms of how to do so. Within a few minutes, it was suggested a prize for follower number 100.000, one full day with a truck at free disposal, providing the new product.

One of the members immediately rushed to their desk to start developing a graphic poster, to advertise the prize. Only a short amount of time after, the advertisement was published, and had received a lot of attention from consumers. This specific episode demonstrates the fast, informal, and casual way that the team is able to make decisions at any time, by constantly being close to each other.

4.5 Enjoying the pressure

The fourth element that came through in our findings, concerns the way in which the team enjoys working under pressure and at a high level of pace. In this setting, pressure implies that there is a constant need to move forward and meet deadlines that are set. A high level of pace refers to solving tasks and making decisions rapidly and frequently, and includes the internal ways of working, as well as the speed of product development and launching.

4.5.1 We put pressure on ourselves

Our findings suggest that the team generally find themselves in an environment where they work at a very high speed. This high speed derives from the pressure that comes with the constant desire to develop and produce new products. This form of working means that they need to adapt in certain ways. For instance, X1 claims that due to the high pace of work, the team members need to be able to make decisions on their own, rather than constantly running things by others, and argues that they otherwise would be unable to get tasks done.

Nonetheless, they all appear confident and comfortable being in a high-pressure environment and working at a high speed. X1 states the following: "I, of course, have deadlines all the time, but it is part of my daily work, and I know I

how to meet those deadlines". Concurrently, X2, states that they appreciate the energy that comes from working in an eventful environment and emphasizes that the workload rarely stresses them. Further, X4, when questioned about whether they view it as a challenge to work under the pressure they do, they state: "[...] I think pressure is a really good driver for performance", as well as saying, similarly, that pressure is the fuel that keeps the team going. Further, they claim: "the funny thing is that we [the team] always deliver, also when we have short deadlines".

Y1 explains how the Planet B team differs from other Product Forum teams in terms of speed to market. The process from generating an idea, to having the end- product in store, is significantly shorter than any other Product Forum team. As the average Product Forum team spends approximately six months to a year with this process, the Planet B team completes this process at a much higher pace, having end-products out in the market within few weeks. As a result of this, Y1 explains that Planet B is constantly ahead of their competition, as it requires a great amount of creativity and speed to continuously come up with and launch new products.

This way of working influences how the team members relate to meetings. There is some disagreement as to whether the team ever set meetings or not. When asked about this, X2 claims they sometimes set Monday meetings. However, the participant stresses that they tend to get cancelled, as more urgent matters often occur, in which the members choose to prioritize. X4, on the other hand, claims that they do not have scheduled meetings at Planet B, but rather occasional, informal ad- hoc gatherings where they discuss matters that come up as they go. X4 expresses their attitude towards meetings:

> You know, meetings that are scheduled, we don't have that in
> Planet B. It's more like we will gather around, [...], and discuss
> how to name, how to brand, how to move on. [...] When we have
> obstacles that are in our way, we can't wait until tomorrow to have
> a meeting from 12 to 13, because then I wouldn't sleep at night.
> We have to deal with it now.

In addition to how their attitude towards meetings are affected, their way of working means that there is little time to evaluate projects after they are finished. X1 points out that once a project is over, they are already on to the next one. Rather than analyzing the completions and end results of finished projects, the team members follow their gut feeling in terms of why the succeed.

4.5.2 We are impatient: the art of constant drive

Our findings further show that the members are not very concerned with spending time on formalized processes during projects either, but rather act in an intuitive manner in order to maintain a high pace. X2 argues this way of action is due to their internal drive for fast decisions to be made. Further, they describe themselves as a very competent, young and fairly new team, and argue that this forces them to constantly come up with new ways of doing things, as there are no old habits or solutions to rely on. However, X1 claims that this need to search for new actions is something that triggers them. X4 describes it similarly, and argues that they constantly look to move forward with their team:

> I would say that one of the keywords for this team is impatience. We want drive all the time, and that is also why we say that there is no status quo in Planet B. We have to be on the move, and stay on this wave that we are on right now.

This attitude towards constantly driving the organization forward, influences the attributes that Planet B emphasizes in new members. An example that substantiates this, is expressed by X6, who elaborates on a situation where the team faced unexpected delays when redecorating their shop located in [Scandinavian city]. The assigned carpenter had become ill, causing a month delay on the planned work they had set for redecorating. Within two hours, X6 and their spouse were in the shop, painting walls and building furniture, without any previous experience or skills within crafts. The two spent their entire summer vacation on rebuilding the shop, preventing the delay. X6 explains this as using their will instead of their skill, stating:

> I think in general that people in Product Forum, and the most
> common companies in the world, are hiring people by skills [...].
> And it's true that skill is very, very important, but there is one
> thing you need to understand in order to understand this [the
> concept of Planet B]. It's that will, will always conquer skill.
> Always. If you have the will, you can be a winner. If you have the
> skill, you don't necessarily become a winner. So, it is important
> when you are speaking to a person, a potential employee, to look
> for the will.

This example demonstrates the strong drive that is shared by each individual member, as well as the importance of finding and recruiting new employees who share the same feeling. Y2 emphasizes how the team members share their passion and drive for the work with others outside of the team, which inspires Y2 to believe that their work is important: "You want to do something you know; it motivates you to say "OK, I should also make a change". Y1 follows up by expressing what they believe is the mentality within the team: "[...] If we can be creative and fast, [...] competitors will copy us, but then we should be on the next one [product] already, so it is OK.". This mentality and way of working is also illustrated by X4, who expresses the desire and need for ongoing processes of idea generating and product launching:

> [...] What I want from the team is that we all the time have two or
> three new projects in the pipeline. So that we know that when we
> have launched this product, we know that in one and a half month,
> we are going to launch the next item.

An example of how the team continuously seek new opportunities to move the organization forward is illustrated through one of our observations. X4 was in a meeting with an external partner and came up with an idea for a possible product collaboration. Rather than waiting until the meeting had ended to share the idea with the other members, X4 instantly initiated the idea by calling the team to

begin the process of collaboration, demonstrating the drive that exists within the team.

4.6 Giving each member the freedom of no boundaries

The practice of giving each member the freedom of no boundaries regards facilitating for members to use their imagination and solve tasks as each member finds to be the best practice. This includes implementing a mindset that demonstrates how "everything is possible", which is further used as a basis for their product development. Further, this practice allows the team to be different than the other team within the parent company.

4.6.1 Everything is possible, until we have proved it's not

A particular aspect that we noticed through our findings, regards a specific element in the team members' mindset, specifically that each member should experience the freedom to pursue all ideas and opportunities. This is demonstrated through X4's statement: "Everything is possible, until we have proved it's not". As we will see, this mindset is not unique for X4, but rather something that permeates the entire team. It displays itself through several of the participants and communicates how the members should not be afraid to try new things. X1 experiences how the boundless opportunities to think and act freely is an important aspect in their everyday work, and also when developing products:

> I think what describes Planet B as a creative company or an innovative company, is the way to take something that is so well-known as x and x products, and just rethinking them [...], and it takes a lot of creativity from our team to come up with something that consumers are willing to replace.

This highlights the emphasis that the team has on implementing freedom and a mindset of endless opportunities as tools in their product development. More elaborate reflections on the topic of freedom, are demonstrated by X4 and X2, who state:

Creativity to me is, is the free spirit and the free mind, and all that comes to your mind, comes as an output. [...] Creativity for me is if you are in a room without windows. There is nothing in the room. How would you spend eight hours in that room not going crazy? There you would be needing creativity. [...] Creativity for me is a very positive word, it tells me that anything is possible, and everything is allowed [X4].

The feeling I have here, is that nothing is impossible, that only the ideas are the boundaries of what we can do creatively. And that is an incredible feeling, not to consider what is actually possible. [...] When we think out the creative ideas, it is like everything is possible. And I'm not used to that [X2].

This mindset further shows to permeate how new team members are on- boarded in the team. X4 emphasizes the importance of welcoming new members in the right way, and immediately introducing them to the way things are done at Planet B:

I think the most important thing is that you tell new members of team, new colleagues, that they are now in a place where everything is possible, until proven not possible. And that [...] anybody in the team can have the next great idea. And if they have that great idea, we will all listen. [...] We all carry the weight in Planet B.

In terms of how this focus on freedom can be portrayed in a practical manner, there are few specific, standardized procedures for how the team members execute different tasks. X2 claims that the team members are not particularly conscious about how they work and solve tasks, but rather use their intuition as a guideline. This includes the informal and somewhat casual ways of working, where the process of each project and task differs from each other.

4.6.2 We are allowed to be different

Y1 emphasizes that it is fairly common in the respective Product Forum teams to complete several formal and bureaucratic processes before a decision is made, as it is a large company with many involved parts. However, the team members in Planet B are an exception from the standardized processes Product Forum usually use, as they have shown a constant growth and success in the way they do things.

Y1 explains that Planet B is a very good example of a team that solves tasks and projects in a very short matter of time, pointing out that: "We [managers in the headquarters] decided the way to deal with this fantastic jewel that we have is to kind of leave them a little bit alone, and let them have their way of doing things". Y1 describes them as "more agile, flexible and pragmatic" than other teams in Product Forum. Y1 further elaborates the fundamental success of how the team members manage to achieve successful results by doing processes in their own way, pointing out the fact that they are a small team with a shared mentality and culture, constantly focusing on how to nurture their creative processes. If they had been concerned with following the formal and set processes that teams usually do in Product Forum, they would not be able to let creativity be the main source of their work. Y1 states:

> I'm sure there are people in the Product Forum sphere being frustrated as part of a big organization, with a lot of bureaucracy, that would really love to be a part of the Planet B team. I'm a little bit more unsure whether there are people in the Planet B team that really long for longer, more formal processes and documentation.

Y1 elaborates on is comparison of the Planet B teams to other teams in Product Forum, stating that "[...] whereas Planet B, I think they have put creativity and their way of kind of handling new ideas as their main priority, so they are not so concerned about the kind of formal process". The lack of standardized structures and high level of freedom is also expressed by Y2, who states:

They have a different culture than the one that I am used to see in most of our companies [teams in Product Forum]. I think they don't believe in having a structure, so, everyone is kind of an equal member or with equal rights. [...] It takes time before people actually make a decision usually in Product Forum, but I think with them it's more like being very active and proactive, and just doing things. I believe that everything they do is based on creativity.

This underlines a similar point, that Planet B are characterized as a team with little structure and complex processes, but rather work in a more intuitive, ad- hoc way. This is illustrated through the first time Y1 visited the Planet B office:

[...] you come in to the office, and then a normal process would be that you kind of turn up in the reception and ask for the person you are going to meet, and then you go into an office, sit down and have a meeting. When you come into Planet B, number one, there is no reception, so you kind of go in, and it's mix between some production equipment, there are some offices on the side, there are a lot of different things. When I came in [...] they had borrowed a [product] machine, that they had put up. And they had two people that had been working the last week with developing this new [product], so the first, without even asking me if I wanted to see who I was going to meet, they just said, well, you need to come in here, because we are trying this new [product], so we need some people to taste it, and we would like to hear what you think. You are kind of just shuffled into this room with this [product] machine, and there are people around tasting different tastes, spending probably half an hour, or an hour, in that room, discussing the different tastes, and kind of the texture, what we are going to use it for, how we are going to sell it. […]. You know, having a plan for going into that site, having meetings and doing things, you end up being dragged into some very ad-hoc processes that just happen to happen on this and that day. And this happened

on that day because that was the day that one of the guys was able to borrow that machine from some guy [they] knew, who was not going to use it, [...] So, there is very much, these kinds of enthusiasm, passion ad- hoc…but very, very focused on the fact that we need to figure out how we can make [product]. That was [...] very clear, they don't need any presentation or documentation, they just know what they would like to do, and they just get on with it. And they now have an idea about how to fill it, and what kind of packaging, [...]. And the people in that room were not [...] product development people, there was a secretary, it was somebody working with, probably, procurement, [...], it was basically the whole company in that room trying to work out how it tastes, and whether it was best with [type of taste], or whether they should go with [type of taste], [...]. So again, I think it was quite illustrative for how things work. And as I said, I have only been there once, and I can just imagine kind of how all these other projects have developed, and how their ideas have come about. So, yeah. I think that's the only company where they do it that way. But it's fascinating, it's fun, and you see the enthusiasm in team, it's just, uh, yeah, it's just amazing.

Y1's story illustrates the experience of encountering the informal and spontaneous ways of working at Planet B, demonstrating the flexibility that it brings with. This understanding of highlighting freedom is confirmed through our interviews. For instance, X2 explains the differences between working in the Planet B team, compared to other teams they have worked in earlier. In previous experiences X2 has been in teams with a focus on using set frameworks and specific communication programs, while they describe the current work as more intuitive, where decisions are often made on a "gut-feeling".

X4 stresses that they are very aware of why they do not use formal frameworks or processes in their work. A lot of teams in Product Forum spend time and resources on analyzing their consumers before making any decisions on whether to develop and produce new products, while the Planet B team have

chosen to follow another path when deciding whether or not to go forward with an idea.

If Planet B were to follow the standardized and formal processes that Product Forum teams usually apply, they would not be able to deliver the same amount of quantity and quality as they do now. X4 describes it as: "[...] if you are in a very structured office [...]. You are inside a box. Yeah, Planet B is everything that is outside the box.".

PART V: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

We have presented the data we collected from investigating how high- quality connections may facilitate for creativity in a high- performing team. From the observations and interviews we conducted, we found patterns leading us to the five different practices of high- quality connections suggested. In the following chapter, we will discuss these findings, and attempt to link and compare them with existing, previously presented research. Lastly, we will discuss how the different practices may be interconnected.

5.2 The five practices

5.2.1 Having a playful environment

Our findings show that the team are highly concerned with having a playful approach to their work. This includes frequently sharing jokes and laughs, as well as being spontaneous and generally aiding for an environment where informal activities are welcomed. This playful approach on how to solve tasks and find solutions to challenges, is shown to be an important aspect of their happiness at work. Several of the members express this playfulness as a requirement for well-being at work, due to demanding workloads and pressure to perform well. More specifically, the members consciously take off the pressure that exists in the team,

through creating a playful culture, in order to stay creative. This illustrates the vital role of the playful environment, and how it facilitates for stronger connections through making mistakes and taking risks together. Having a playful working environment is something the team members emphasized as a key aspect of their creative success. This is supported by Dutton (2003b), who argues that those who experience joy at work are inclined to be more creative in the workplace.

This is further highlighted by what Dutton and Heaphy (2003) found, in that such an environment is a strong contributor to people experiencing positive emotions such as openness and joy at work. Our empirical analysis finds further support in Baker and Dutton's (2007) findings, who claim that these positive emotions will in turn become valuable when used to be more creative in developing solutions and facing pressure at work.

Our findings reveal how the emphasis on a playful environment fosters positive emotions and well- being at work, which in turn contributes to the development of high- quality connections. However, we further found that the positive outcomes of finding oneself in a playful environment enables creativity to flourish.

5.2.2 Valuing each member

Moreover, our findings show that an important part of the team facilitating for creativity, is the degree to which the members express how they value each other. The team members of Planet B are highly concerned with creating an environment where all ideas are welcomed and discussed, which in accordance with our findings was an integral part of their creative success. The significance of this observation is supported by Dutton (2003b), who stresses how important it is to construct an environment where individuals are safe to share their ideas, as well as encouraged to come up with ideas that differ from their normal thinking patterns. The open- minded and supporting sharing of ideas that we find that the members engage in, can be connected to the construct of respectful engagement. This form of involvement concerns ways in which high- quality connections are strengthened through engagement, psychological presence, and communication, (Stephens, Heaphy & Dutton, 2011). These are elements of great importance to

the team, as it promotes an environment where the members are appreciated for their contributions.

Further, our findings show that in order to facilitate for an environment of open idea sharing, it is crucial for new team members to feel included in the team immediately. The team members emphasize the significance of creating an open and safe environment for new members, by both communicating and demonstrating their appreciation and openness towards new ideas. This view is supported by that of Stephens, Heaphy and Dutton (2011), who emphasize the importance of first impressions and perceptions of others when developing high-quality connections. In accordance with this, a new member of the team will immediately be invited to take part in sharing and discussing new ideas, in order to foster and build strong connections from an early stage of the employment. This corresponds well with our data, in which we found that relatively new team members were instantly welcome to share thoughts and suggestions.

Our findings further show how the team members constantly help each other when working with ideas, providing helpful resources and emotional support. This is for instance demonstrated by how they challenge each other's ideas, frequently engage in sparring and encourage one another to follow through on ideas they share. They further act in accordance with previously mentioned empathy and emotional contagion, by the ways in which they engage in supporting one another. These are as stated fundamental ways of how the members connect with each other (Stephens, Heaphy & Dutton, 2011; Oberman & Ramachandran, 2007).

Gouldner (1960) stresses how receiving emotional support in task solving creates a sense of mutuality that can encourage the same behavior in return, which is highlighted as an important behavior for strengthening high- quality connections (Dutton, 2003a; Stephens, Heaphy & Dutton, 2011). Our findings show how mutual engagement enables the members to both give and receive support, which strengthens the members' sense that their contributions in fact matter.

The way the members are constantly open for sharing of ideas and suggestions, as well as offering support towards one another, may facilitate for a more creative thinking process, and allows individuals to act on own ideas. This is

supported by Carlsen, Clegg and Gjersvik (2012) as well as Dutton (2003b). Nonetheless, our findings suggest that this itself is not sufficient, and that fostering an environment that enables the sense of value and appreciation is of great importance in order to fully accommodate for creative processes and idea sharing.

5.2.3 Closely connecting each member

Our empirical analysis reveals that the members emphasize the value of close relations, both on a professional and personal level. We find that the team is highly dependent on working closely, they regard this to be a key factor to their success. This is visualized through their expressed mindset that they can achieve anything together. The need for close ties and collaboration is vital for the members of the team in order to achieve results, especially when working in a high pace with constant deadlines. Our findings demonstrate how the shared team-spirit functions as a basis for creating close relations, and also eliminates the formal roles and responsibilities within the team. Concurrently, this allows the members to share their accomplishments and successes, reflecting the feeling of equality in the team. The expressed importance of the team- spirit demonstrates the significance of feeling closely connected to each other, in order to coordinate work and complement each other's roles.

Several of the members highlight the significance of complementing each other's tasks and roles, and how this leads to synergies, and strengthens the work environment. Stephens, Heaphy and Dutton (2011) consider other- awareness as an essential element in the formation of high- quality connections, as it allows individuals to be more aware of their own actions through the behavior, actions, and cognition of others. As our findings demonstrate, the team members complement each other's work without verbally communicating which actions to take, highlighting the importance of other- awareness in their everyday work. This also includes the ability to demonstrate an overall understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities, being able to overlap tasks and processes.

The ability to imagine oneself in another person's perspective and understanding is pointed out as an important contributor in strengthening connections, as it allows individuals to predict another person's reactions and

behavior (Stephens, Heaphy & Dutton, 2011; Davis, 1983). As of Planet B, our findings illustrate how the team members act and react to each other's behavior on a day- to- day basis, regardless if they have worked with each other for a couple of months, or for several years. As each team member highly values the tight and overlapping ways of working, it appears that the complementing and understanding of each other's roles are important factors in terms of creating and strengthening high- quality connections.

Our empirical analysis suggests that the team members would not create the same level of synergies they currently have, without having a feeling of close relations to one another. One explanation of the need for these close ties is coherently expressed by Stephens, Heaphy and Dutton (2011), who stress that one of the key assumptions within high-quality connections involves people's search and need for relations and belonging, as we are intrinsically social.

5.2.4 Enjoying the pressure

Our findings show that the team find themselves in an environment of high pace and high pressure. The members emphasize that a great amount of this pressure is something that they inflict on themselves, arguing that this constant pressure comes as a consequence of their own desire for drive and energy. In this context, we understand drive or energy as whether a team member has the necessary capabilities and passion to engage in actions that move the organization forward. This view of how energy is understood, may be supported by Quinn and Dutton (2005). Our findings reveal that this energy to constantly develop, is something that is shared by the entire team, and acts as a crucial factor for their creativity, as well as the team as a whole. The positive experience of the constant drive creates a shared impatience within the team, forcing the members to trust own instincts and intuition. This leads the members to make fast decisions, which in turn makes it possible for them to maintain a high pace. An example of how the team continuously seek new opportunities to move the organization forward is illustrated through one of our observations. X4 was in a meeting with an external partner and came up with an idea for a possible product collaboration. Rather than waiting until the meeting had ended to share the idea with the other members, X4

instantly initiated the idea by calling the team to begin the process of collaboration, demonstrating the drive that exists within the team.

In terms of the previously mentioned High Performance Environment (Jones, Gittins & Hardy, 2009), several of the aspects that are emphasized in the model correspond well with what are findings suggest. For instance, the organizational climate (e.g. innovation, internal processes and well- being) is an important factor in connection with performance at Planet B, as in accordance with the model. Additionally, the behavior in the team is considered to be a significant element in understanding high- performance environments, which is consistent with our research. However, Jones, Gittins and Hardy (2009) stress the importance of each member's awareness of their own roles and responsibilities, which may be argued to be in contrast with our findings. Our findings show that the members are highly aware of their different areas of responsibilities. Nevertheless, these roles are not of significance in practice, as their tasks and roles tend to overlap. Lastly, the high- performance environment model does not take into consideration the high pace or time pressure within the organization, which we found to be two highly important factors at Planet B.

Our empirical analysis suggest that the constant drive and impatience shared by the members functions as a facilitator for trust, proposing: 1) they are confident that the other team members will perform creatively, and 2) each member experiences that the others have confidence in in them creatively.

5.2.5 Giving each member the freedom of no boundaries

The last practice that emerged through our empirical analysis, is that of how the team gives each member a high degree of freedom in terms of how to solve tasks. The members express that they prefer to solve tasks in a more intuitive and free manner, rather than using formalized processes and standardized frameworks. This is made possible through the amount of freedom that they are each provided. The members argue that this shared, informal mentality and culture enables their creativity, as it allows everyone to solve any given tasks, regardless of their roles and responsibilities, in what they regard to be best practice. This lack of bureaucratic processes and hierarchy reflects the informal and playful environment, which in turn functions as a source for creating and building high-

quality connections (Stephens, Heaphy & Dutton, 2011). The sense of freedom and openness allows the team members to make frequent decisions, and encourages them to use their own creativity, in order to find the best solutions. According to the members, everyone in the team have a say when decisions are to be made, and no member's opinion matter more than others. In terms of task solving, our findings show that Planet B believes in a flat and ad- hoc structure, in the way that they refrain from any sort of hierarchy.

5.2.6 The five practices combined

In our findings section we present how the practices individually may facilitate creativity. Furthermore, our empirical analysis reveals that each of the five practices may facilitate for creativity, something in which we have attempted to demonstrate in our discussion.

However, we argue that the identified practices should not be considered as individual mechanisms, but rather as an interconnected set of practices, as we through our analysis noticed how some of the practices may influence one another.

As an example, our findings suggest that in order for the members to be open towards idea sharing (i.e., *Valuing each member: We are open for idea sharing*), they need to feel closely connected to each other (i.e., *Closely connecting each member: We are closely related*). This implies that it may be helpful to view them as a set of practices, rather than separate elements of high-quality connections. We argue that to perform only one of the practices may not be sufficient, and that other practices need to be presented for each of them to facilitate for creativity in a successful manner. This is further demonstrated in figure IV:

Figure IV: The dynamics and facilitating between the five practices of high- quality connections and creativity

*HQCs = High-quality connections
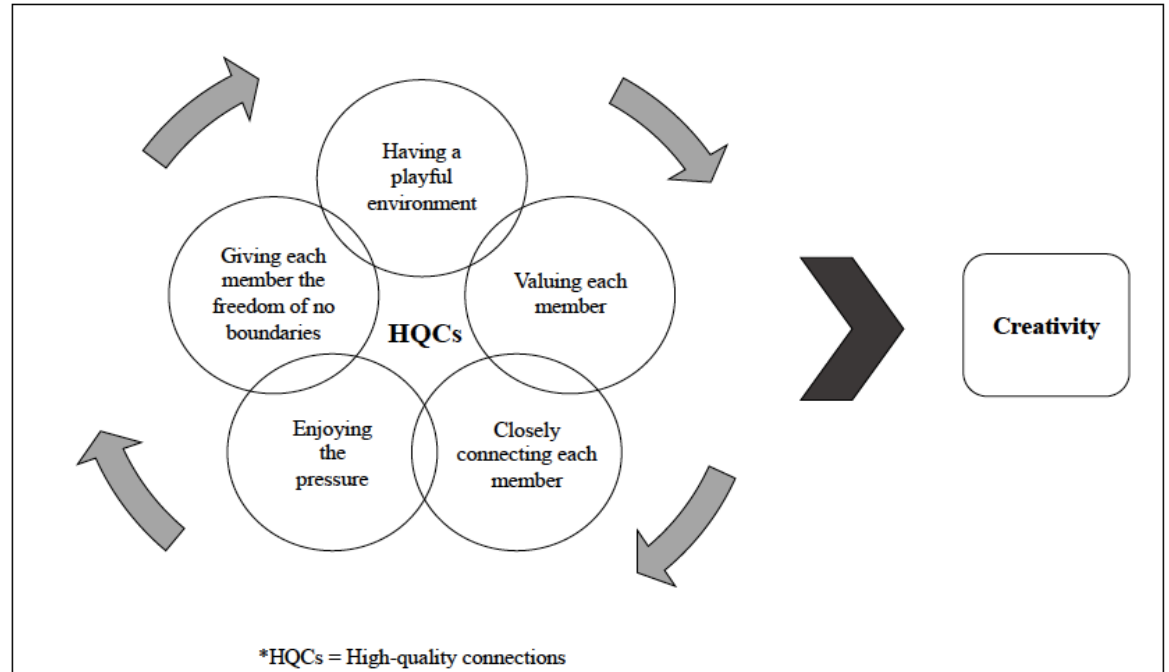
5.3 Practical implications

Our empirical analysis indicates how the five practices may have practical implications for teams and organizations that wish to facilitate for more creativity. The findings in our thesis may therefore have practical implications for team managers in order to facilitate for and enable a creative environment though the relations among the team members. Our practices reflect how the team facilitates for these elements together, however, we suggest that managers or team leaders should contribute to the enabling and facilitating of these practices, as it is not necessarily something that the team members are able to implement independently.

Firstly, managers and their team should be aware of the positive implications of creating an environment that enables playful activities and humor (i.e. *Having a playful environment)*. Having a playful environment may lead to a more relaxed atmosphere, more space for informal conversations, discussions and

sharing of ideas. Secondly, demonstrating appreciation and gratitude towards team members (i.e. *Valuing each member*) enables the members to support and help each other in their work. This includes welcoming and listening to every idea that is presented, creating a positive mentality among the members in terms of idea sharing. Thirdly, teams should be concerned with being closely connected, both in terms of relations and physical space, as well the ways in which tasks and roles are coordinated and complemented (i.e. *Closely connecting each member)*. Fourthly, creating a sense of time pressure and high pace allows the team members to be impatient in their work, including creating their own pressure (i.e. *Enjoying the pressure*). The positive mindset regarding pressure enables a shared drive and energy within the team, which in turn allows them to trust each other's work. Fifthly, allowing the team members to work in their own ways and facilitating for a free work environment (i.e. *Giving each member the freedom of no boundaries*), enables the members to be creative on their own terms.

As previously mentioned, we argue that these five practices are interrelated, and that it is necessary to view them together rather than separately. This may be important for managers and teams to be aware of, in order for an implementation of them to be successful.

5.4 Limitations

Our aim was to understand how high- quality connections facilitate for creativity in high- performing teams, and our research is not without limitations. Firstly, our data collection has been based on interviews and observations, but we were only able to conduct in- depth interviews with five out of the six members within the Planet B team. As participation in our study is voluntary, we did not want the members to feel pressured to participate in the interviews and made this clear from the beginning of our process. Nonetheless, our observations of the participant included all team members, further enriching our findings. As we have not completed in- depth interviews with all participants, we might not have a complete understanding of the nuances and dynamics within the team.

Secondly, our study consists of a relatively low number of participants, as our aim was to acquire rich and elaborated details within one specific team. Thus,

there are limitations regarding how far our empirical findings can be generalized beyond our research.

Thirdly, the team we have investigated find themselves in a dynamic and changing environment, inclining that our findings may not necessarily be stable over time. Moreover, we do not claim that we have obtained a complete and comprehensive understanding of the five practices in the team, as they may be induced to change.

5.5 Future research

In terms of future research, we argue that this is necessary to determine whether the practices we identified are found in other contexts and conditions. We encourage researchers to explore the practices that we discovered, as we argue they cover a wide range of elements within the area of high-quality connections, and therefore would be interesting to further investigate, in regard to future possibilities of generalizability.

Moreover, a longitudinal study might be able to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of the five practices. By collecting data on several occasions, studies might also be able to identify changes in the influence of each practice. Further, it would of interest to further explore how the different practices are interconnected, and more specifically in what ways they are dependent on each other. Another interesting aspect of further research would to examine whether similar practices are discovered.

Lastly, we have throughout the writing of this thesis discussed how interesting it would have been to explore how the area of personality asserts itself in this setting. Based on our findings, we are open to the idea that this area may play a large part in our practices. An example of how our attention was brought to this is through Y1's statement regarding how there are certain types of people that would prefer to work in Planet B than Product Forum. Throughout or analysis we noticed the different types of personalities in Planet B compared to Product Forum, which would be an interesting aspect to further investigate.

5.6 Conclusion

> Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work (Aristotle).

This quote by the famous philosopher Aristotle may be perceived as unoriginal due to its excessive use. However, it does in fact highly reflect the foundation of what Planet B represents. Throughout our research of the team, we have uncovered what we believe to be the true meaning of well- being at work. The high- quality connections in this team appear undisputable and lay the ground for the constant success in their work.

The aim of this thesis has been to uncover and present ways in which high-quality connections may facilitate for creativity in high- performing teams, and through interviews and observations, we have found various practices within the area of high- quality connections to be essential for Planet B in doing so. Generally, our data proposes that how ideas, relations, tasks, as well as the team itself, are handled will impact how the team functions creatively. More specifically, we have found that: (1) Having a playful environment, (2) Valuing each member, (3) Closely connecting each member, (4) Enjoying the pressure, and (5) Giving each member the freedom of no boundaries, are integral parts of how high- quality connections influence creativity.

It is useful to view these not as five separated practices, but rather as interrelated parts of high- quality connections, constantly influencing the impact of one another. Further, we do not claim that these are factors that apply to all high- performing teams, but rather that in this particular context, these elements in sum enable high- quality connections, which in turn facilitates for the team's creative work. However, our findings may still be useful for other teams in similar contexts to be aware of, as they may strengthen the understanding of how to foster creativity through high- quality connections and have a positive influence on doing so.

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Appendix I: Interview guides

Interview guide Planet B

Phase 1	**Introduction**
	- Small talk
	- Introduction of us
	- Purpose of study
	- Present consent form and its implications, and anonymity
	- How long have you been working in the company?
	- How long have you been working in this team?
	- What is your current position/role/responsibility in the team?
Phase 2	**Teams**
	- Do you have previous experience of working in a team, either in this company or other companies?
	o If yes; did you find it successful?
	- How is your experience of the team you are currently in now compared to earlier experiences with team work?
	- How does your current team make decisions under pressure?
	- Could you tell us about a successful project you were involved in, either in your current team or a previous one?
	o Why was it successful/what happened?
	o How did the team solve the problem/challenge?
Phase 3	**Creativity**
	- What does creativity mean for you?
	o How important is creativity in your work?
	- In what ways does the team consider creativity as an important part of project and tasks?
	- Would you describe you and your teams' work as creative?
	o What makes it creative?

	- If you had to describe factors in your team that would be of importance to facilitate creative work, what would you consider as important?

Phase 4	**Relations within the team**
	
	- What do you think is the difference between a co-worker you collaborate well with, and a co-worker you collaborate especially well with?
	- What do you consider to be the difference between a good team, and an extraordinary team?
	- When was the last time you experienced contributing to creative work?
	- Could you provide an example of when you experienced high time pressure?
	    o How did you feel?
	    o Who did what?
	    o How did you solve the task/process?
	    o Did you follow the "normal" patterns you usually do when solving tasks?

Phase 5	**Summary** - Recap of findings - Did we understand you correctly? - Is there anything you would like to add? - Is it OK if we contact you later if we have additional questions?

Interview guide 2 Planet B

Phase 1	**Ways of working**
	- How do you explain your successes to the average joe? - When hiring a new person (or when someone leaves the company), how do you keep the consistency of your ways to work? o How do you get new people "onboard" in the team? - When talking about your ways of working: was this something decided from the very start, or has it emerged over time? o In regard to environment, products, ideas etc. o Have you always had the consumer-based approach in developing new products?
Phase 2	**Relations**
	- Are there any specific factors in creating excellent relations between the co-workers? o What do you believe is important to create the type of environment you have today? - We talked a little bit about synergies last time. How do they emerge? o What is important to create or facilitate in order to create and sustain that kind of environment?
Phase 3	**Summary**
	- Recap of findings - Did we understand you correctly? - Is there anything you would like to add? - Is it OK if we contact you later if we have additional questions?

Interview guide Product Forum

Phase 1	**Introduction**
	 - What is your current role/area of responsibility?
	 - What is your relation to Planet B?
	    o How long have you had this relation?
	    o How often do you interact with them?

Phase 2	**Planet B** - How would you characterize Planet B? - Do you experience creativity and innovation as an important part of their work? - How do you experience their communication with external partners (e.g. consumers, suppliers, partners etc.)? - How would you compare the Planet B team with similar/other teams in Product Forum? o Do you have any particular experiences with the ways of how Planet B works?
Phase 3	**Summary** - Recap of findings - Did we understand you correctly? - Is there anything you would like to add? Is it OK if we contact you later if we have additional questions?

4

Appendix II: Coding of data into first- and second order themes

Practice I: Having a playful environment
Overview over quotations, first- and second-order themes

Quotation	First-order theme	Second-order theme
[...] and if we make mistakes, well, then we make mistakes. Then we correct them, but they [the team members] need to know that we will make mistakes all the time, because we are people, but they need to know that it is OK, and then we'll together maybe turn that mistake around.	We make mistakes	We are not afraid of risks or mistakes
I look at Planet B and this place, and I also tell my colleagues, I look at Planet B and my work life as a hobby. It's like going to tennis, it's like going to play football. Working in Planet B is exactly the same. It's like, you know it's like a kindergarten or a candy shop where you get five minutes and you can empty the shelves, you don't have to pay anything when you exit the store. [...] I think that environment creates creativity. And it also has an impact on the people working there, because they, when you play, [...] you free some energy, and you are not afraid to say what you have on your mind.	Work is a fun hobby	We perceive work as a hobby

Practice I (continued): Having a playful environment

Quotation	First-order theme	Second-order theme
To me, creativity is a lot about finding a fun solution to a problem. We always work with a lot of humor in our day-to-day work, [...]. Creativity is a lot about fun, and also about finding new ways to solve problems or to meet demands.	We need to have fun to be creative	We perceive work as a hobby
Living the brand.	We live the brand	We are not afraid of risks or mistakes
[...] If I should mention one specific one, then it would be the Planet B [product], which was all total craziness with the team. It was so…so fantastic, and the team spirit was amazing!	It is fun to take risks	We are not afraid of risks or mistakes
[...] We need that playful environment, [...] that is also what the brand is about.	We need to be playful	We perceive work as a hobby

6

Practice I (continued): Having a playful environment

Quotation	First-order theme	Second-order theme
[...] it seems like a fun environment. And people are working with passion, I mean more than usual, because I feel like they really, really, really believe and they live what they do [...]. I think they probably have more fun [laughs]. No, I'm just joking. I think there is a lack of structure, [...]. And I think they are not so many people, so this is also different, because you have more chances to talk to each other. And I think they also want to talk all the time with each other, and just like share things. And I think it's their engagement to, kind of, really make a change, and not just, you know, think about results and targets, [...] which of course is very important, because you are still a business. But they try to put those two things together, like, both achieving results, but also, you know, making a change and thinking about the impact they have on the environment. [...] Every time you kind of talk with them, you get that feeling that [...] much more than we believe is possible, and we can really make a change if we want to. I mean, it doesn't have to be something that big, but it's important to start. And I also [...] feel like I get a lot of energy and inspiration when we are in touch. You can see that there is a different culture.	They need to have fun	We perceive work as a hobby
I love my work and what we do at Planet B.	We love our work	We are not afraid of risks or mistakes

Practice II: Valuing each member
Overview over quotations, first- and second-order themes

Quotation	First-order theme	Second-order theme
I don't think I have ever put forward an idea at Planet B where it has not been welcome	My ideas are welcome	We are open for idea sharing
I think it is important to have, of course, a common understanding of what you are working towards, but to have somewhat different ways of reaching that goal.	We acknowledge our differences	We appreciate each other
They have a different culture than the one that I am used to see in most of our companies. [...]. They want to talk with each other all the time, and constantly build each other up [...]. Everyone is kind of an equal member or with equal rights.	They are equally appreciated and they help each other	We appreciate each other
[...] every idea is welcome. If people create ideas and are shut down, then it would kill the creativeness. Every idea is welcome, every idea will be discussed. Then in a constructive way, maybe it will be put aside for a while or for later, and then we could add some extra ideas and it would flourish again. But every member of the team knows that they can speak out loud every day about their ideas.	I can share ideas freely, they are welcomed	We are open for idea sharing

8

Practice II (continued): Valuing each member

Quotation	First-order theme	Second-order theme
I think I contribute to creative work every day. I think that is one of the most important parts of my job.	My work is valued	We appreciate each other
If it doesn't feel safe to share ideas, then I have failed	Everyone needs to feel safe	We are open for idea sharing
[...] Because data today and the platforms I have at my fingertips have so much data available for me, but you have to be able to think out "what are the questions I want to ask this data?". Because or else you will have infinite amount of data. So, you have to be able to ask the right questions, and maybe you can call that creativity.	I contribute creatively in my own way	We appreciate each other
It's a safe place, but it's also unsafe, because people challenge your idea.	We help each other grow	We are open for idea sharing
Very personal, and personally connected to the team and company.	We are connected to the people in our company	We appreciate each other
Everything is welcome here in the Planet B mind lab, but you have to be ready to be challenged.	We challenge each other	We are open for idea sharing

Practice II (continued): Valuing each member

Quotation	First-order theme	Second-order theme
The creative environment is open 24/7	Ideas are always welcomed	We are open for idea sharing
If you don't challenge each other's views, you just end up agreeing to take the wrong direction	We challenge each other	We are open for idea sharing
I can ask [X6] questions that make [X6] reflect on what I ask, and maybe [X6] will gain something from that that will lead [X6] on in the work.	We help each other grow	We are open for idea sharing
[...] That means that when you walk in in the morning, to this office everything is possible. Every idea has to come to the surface. That is also why all our walls in this office are writable. So, if you get an idea, write it down. But not on a piece of paper, because paper, that ends up in a drawer and people forget about it.	We listen to every idea, and value them	We are open for idea sharing
[...] any ideas are welcome here.	All ideas are welcome	We are open for idea sharing
[...] I even heard all the way from when I was at my first job interview, that this is a place where creative ideas are very welcomed, and very listened to.	My ideas are valued	We are open for idea sharing

Practice III: Closely connecting each member
Overview over quotations, first- and second-order themes

Quotation	First-order theme	Second-order theme
[…] If the link is unplugged from the chain, then they could be connected still because they are overlapping each other a little bit.	We are connected	We closely coordinate and complement task solving
I mean I think we share the successes here. And I really mean that out of my heart. I've been places before where titles are very important, and where you expect people to respect you if you are one or the other, and I really feel it's liberating here, that it's not like that.	We share achievements	We are closely related
The team is so connected to each other that most of the team are also in contact during the weekend. The chemistry between the team members is very, very important after work as well.	We need to know each other	We are closely related
Ideas can bounce on and off us, so if an idea sparks one place, then it gets refined, and I can put another aspect to the idea, so it really creates this feeling of synergy.	We help each other	We closely coordinate and complement task solving
Everyone can come in and comment on anything, and bring inputs.	We value every voice	We work physically close

11

Practice III (continued): Closely connecting each member

Quotation	First-order theme	Second-order theme
Their whole mentality, culture and way of recruiting is different. I think you need to have some certain characteristics in your personality to enjoy working for Planet B.	They are connected	We closely coordinate and complement task solving
[...] the team needs to be connected, so that it's like: One team member says A, then the next member says B, and the next one says C, it is more like a chain linked together, we work very, very closely. Otherwise, we couldn't make it work.	We need each other	We closely coordinate and complement task solving
An example of that [speed to market], would be that if our innovator tells me about a product idea, and [co-worker] makes some product development on this idea, I'll go to the retailer and tell them about it, and maybe sell the product before [co-worker] has ended his product development.	We trust each other	We closely coordinate and complement task solving
The door is always open.	Everyone is welcome to share their thoughts	We work physically close

12

Practice III (continued): Closely connecting each member

Quotation	First-order theme	Second-order theme
[...] And when [the co-worker] is sitting there day in and day out answering these messages, and then sometimes gets frustrated: "ah, this one is so stupid", or "this one is so sweet", but it also makes the rest of us aware of what is going on. And that can be some criticism we need to take further, or for example the part about negative comments. When I hear this, OK, then I go in and look at that post: OK, all these negative comments, how much is it compared to usual? And my line of work starts because I hear [the co-worker]. And [co-worker] is not even aware of what [co-worker] is doing. I'm just listening in on [their] day-to-day reactions to [their] normal work, and then sparks new ideas in how I can dig into data. And I wouldn't have that if I couldn't hear [my co-worker].	We need to work closely	We work physically close
[..] As you already know, [co-worker's] phone is constantly ringing, and then [they] will just run off... and that is a huge part of our daily life, so when we hear about something, we just snap it [...].	We react to each other's actions	We work physically close
If I'm shouting out A, they will shout out B to me back, then I'll shout out C, and then we will build up this connection, you could say together. Then we continue by maybe discussing ideas, strategies or innovations.	We are connected	We work physically close

Practice III (continued): Closely connecting each member

Quotation	First-order theme	Second-order theme
[…] I realized that I lost a lot because I couldn't see [co-worker]. And now I sit over here, and I have all the [co-workers] there in my view, and every time [co-worker] is reacting to [their] everyday work, I can pick up on it. And if there's an important […] tendency that [co-worker] is reacting on, I can grab it from there without [co-worker] even being aware of it. And then I can go over there and say "what is going on, which post, and how is that?".	I react on my co-worker's behavior	We work physically close
[…] Great team spirit.	We are in this together	We are closely related

Practice IV: Enjoying the pressure
Overview over quotations, first- and second-order themes

Quotation	First-order theme	Second-order theme
You know, meetings that are scheduled, we don't have that in Planet B. It's more like we will gather around, [...], and discuss how to name, how to brand, how to move on. [...] When we have obstacles that are in our way, we can't wait until tomorrow to have a meeting from 12 to 13, because then I wouldn't sleep at night. We have to deal with it now.	We instantly deal with obstacles	We put pressure on ourselves
I would say that one of the keywords for this team is impatience. We want drive all the time, and that is also why we say that there is no status quo in Planet B. We have to be on the move, and stay on this wave that we are on right now.	We are impatient and need to be on the move	We are impatient: the art of constant drive
You want to do something you know; it motivates you to say "OK, I should also make a change.	The team motivates me	We are impatient: the art of constant drive
[...] I think pressure is a really good driver for performance.	We need pressure to perform	We put pressure on ourselves
The funny thing is that we [the team] always deliver, also when we have short deadlines.	We handle deadlines well	We put pressure on ourselves

15

Practice IV (continued): Enjoying the pressure

Quotation	First-order theme	Second-order theme
[...] What I want from the team is that we all the time have two or three new projects in the pipeline. So that we know that when we have launched this product, we know that in one and a half month, we are going to launch the next item.	We need a constant drive	We are impatient: the art of constant drive
I think in general that people in Product Forum, and the most common companies in the world, are hiring people by skills [...]. And it's true that skill is very, very important, but there is one thing you need to understand in order to understand this [the concept of Planet B]. It's that will, will always conquer skill. Always. If you have the will, you can be a winner. If you have the skill, you don't necessarily become a winner. So, it is important when you are speaking to a person, a potential employee, to look for the will.	We have will	We are impatient: the art of constant drive
I, of course, have deadlines all the time, but it is part of my daily work, and I know I how to meet those deadlines.	I handle deadlines well	We put pressure on ourselves
[...] If we can be creative and fast, [...] competitors will copy us, but then we should be on the next one [product] already, so it is OK.	We are constantly on the move	We are impatient: the art of constant drive

Practice V: Giving each member the freedom of no boundaries
Overview over quotations, first- and second-order themes

Quotation	First-order theme	Second-order theme
Everything is possible, until we have proved it's not.	I have the freedom to try anything	Everything is possible, until we have proved it's not
We [managers in the headquarters] decided the way to deal with this fantastic jewel that we have is to kind of leave them a little bit alone, and let them have their way of doing things.	We trust their ways of working	We are allowed to be different
I think what describes Planet B as a creative company or an innovative company, is the way to take something that is so well-known as x and x products, and just re-thinking them [...], and it takes a lot of creativity from our team to come up with something that consumers are willing to replace.	We rethink existing items	Everything is possible, until we have proved it's not
[...] more agile, flexible and pragmatic	They are different	We are allowed to be different
[...] if you are in a very structured office [...]. You are inside a box. Yeah, Planet B is everything that is outside the box.	We are different	We are allowed to be different

17

Practice V (continued): Giving each member the freedom of no boundaries

Quotation	First-order theme	Second-order theme
Creativity to me is, is the free spirit and the free mind, and all that comes to your mind, comes as an output. [...] Creativity for me is if you are in a room without windows. There is nothing in the room. How would you spend eight hours in that room not going crazy? There you would be needing creativity. [...] Creativity for me is a very positive word, it tells me that anything is possible, and everything is allowed.	I have the freedom of being creative	Everything is possible, until we have proved it's not
The feeling I have here, is that nothing is impossible, that only the ideas are the boundaries of what we can do creatively. And that is an incredible feeling, not to consider what is actually possible. [...] When we think out the creative ideas, it is like everything is possible. And I'm not used to that.	There are no boundaries	Everything is possible, until we have proved it's not
[...] whereas Planet B, I think they have put creativity and their way of kind of handling new ideas as their main priority, so they are not so concerned about the kind of formal process.	Formal processes are not prioritized	We are allowed to be different

18

Practice V (continued): Giving each member the freedom of no boundaries

Quotation	First-order theme	Second-order theme
I'm sure there are people in the Product Forum sphere being frustrated as part of a big organization, with a lot of bureaucracy, that would really love to be a part of the Planet B team. I'm a little bit more unsure whether there are people in the Planet B team that really long for longer, more formal processes and documentation.	They love to work in their own ways	We are allowed to be different
They have a different culture than the one that I am used to see in most of our companies [teams in Product Forum]. I think they don't believe in having a structure, so, everyone is kind of an equal member or with equal rights. [...] It takes time before people actually make a decision usually in Product Forum, but I think with them it's more like being very active and proactive, and just doing things. I believe that everything they do is based on creativity.	They are different	We are allowed to be different
I think the most important thing is that you tell new members of team, new colleagues, that they are now in a place where everything is possible, until proven not possible. And that [...] anybody in the team can have the next great idea. And if they have that great idea, we will all listen. [...] We all carry the weight in Planet B.	Together, everything is possible	Everything is possible, until we have proved it's not

19

Practice V (continued): Giving each member the freedom of no boundaries

Quotation	First-order theme	Second-order theme
[...] you come in to the office, and then a normal process would be that you kind of turn up in the reception and ask for the person you are going to meet, and then you go into an office, sit down and have a meeting. When you come into Planet B, number 1, there is no reception, so you kind of go in, and it's mix between some production equipment, there are some offices on the side, there are a lot of different things. When I came in [...] they had borrowed a [product] machine, that they had put up. And they had two people that had been working the last week with developing this new [product], so the first, without even asking me if I wanted to see who I was going to use it for, they just said, well, you need to come in here, because we are trying this new [product], so we need some people to taste it, and we would like to hear what you think. You are kind of just shuffled into this room with this [product] machine, and there are people around tasting different tastes, spending probably half an hour, or an hour, in that room, discussing the different tastes, and kind of the texture, what we are going to use it for, how we are going to sell it. [...] You know, having a plan for going into that site, having meetings and doing things, you end up being dragged into some very ad-hoc processes that just happen to happen on this and that day. And this happened on that day because that was the day that one of the guys was able to borrow that machine from some guy [they] knew, who was not going to use it, [...] So, there is very much, these kinds of enthusiasm, passion ad-hoc...but very, very focused on the fact that we need to figure out how we can make [product].	They are different	We are allowed to be different

That was […] very clear, they don't need any presentation or documentation, they just know what they would like to do, and they just get on with it. And they now have an idea about how to fill it, and what kind of packaging, […]. And the people in that room were not […] product development people, there was a secretary, it was somebody working with, probably, procurement, […], it was basically the whole company in that room trying to work out how it tastes, and whether it was best with [type of taste], or whether they should go with [type of taste], […]. So again, I think it was quite illustrative for how things work. And as I said, I have only been there once, and I can just imagine kind of how all these other projects have developed, and how their ideas have come about. So, yeah. I think that's the only company where they do it that way. But it's fascinating, it's fun, and you see the enthusiasm in team, it's just, uh, yeah, it's just amazing.

APPENDIX III: Consent form

Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet: The role of high quality connections in creative team work

Informasjonsskriv for deltagere
Dette forskningsprosjektet er en masteroppgave som har som formål å studere hva som gir kvalitet i relasjoner og kreativitet i arbeidsteam. Prosjektet er knyttet til virksomhetenes egne prosesser, hvor relasjonell praksis er særlig viktig. Opplysningene som innhentes vil benyttes til å undersøke dette området, og vil kun brukes til å svare på forskningsspørsmålet i masteroppgaven.

Dette informasjonsskrivet forklarer hvordan informasjonen som genereres eller innhentes vil bli behandlet. Prosjektet er meldt til Personvernombudet NSD. Forskningsgruppen består av Paul Trevor Robbins (masterstudent), Kristin Nichole Ballou (masterstudent), som blir veiledet av Joanne Sundet (PhD stipendiat) og Professor Arne Carlsen på handelshøyskolen BI.

Metode for datainnsamling
Om du velger å delta, vil det bli benyttet to ulike metoder for datainnsamling til masteroppgaven. Det vil gjennomføres et intervju på ca. 60 minutter, samt observasjon av din arbeidsgruppe i sin helhet, med varighet ca. 3 timer.

Frivillig deltagelse
Det er frivillig å delta i intervjuer og andre aktiviteter i prosjektet. Dette gjelder selv om arbeidsgiver har satt av ressurser internt til gjennomføring. Deltakerne kan reservere seg mot å svare på enkeltspørsmål eller når som helst trekke seg uten å måtte oppgi noen grunn. Å delta krever ingen spesielle forberedelser. Alle opplysninger om deg vil bli anonymisert. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg. For øvrig har du mulighet til å klage over behandlingen av personopplysninger til Datatilsynet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?
Du blir spurt om å delta i dette forskningsprosjektet ettersom du arbeider i det vi definerer som et *high performing team*, og jobber med kreative produkter og løsninger. Dermed oppfyller du de utvalgskriteriene som vi har satt for deltakere i forskningsprosjektet vårt.

Konfidensiell informasjon
Konfidensiell og internt sensitiv informasjon vil ikke bli brukt uten at det er avklart med virksomheten og individuelle kilder på forhånd, og aldri slik at informasjon kan knyttes til individuelle kilder.

Opptak og lagring av informasjon

For å sikre god og presis dokumentasjon vil vi be om å få gjøre lydopptak. Utskrift av intervju og lydopptak oppbevares slik at ingen uvedkommende kan få tilgang til det. Bare forskningsgruppen og de som er godkjent av Paul Trevor Robbins, Kristin Nichole Ballou og Joanne Sundet, vil ha tilgang til materialet. Utskrifter avidentifiseres, og nøkkel for kobling av personopplysninger til avidentifiserte utskrifter oppbevares separat, i henhold til personopplysningsloven.

Før datainnsamlingen gjennomføres, vil det innhentes personopplysninger (navn, tittel og e- postadresse). Oppbevaring og lagring av personopplysninger vil foregå på en passorbeskyttet mappe på datamaskin, samt på BI Norwegian Business School sin egen server der ingen uvedkommende har tilgang. Datamaskinene vil også bli oppbevart i låste skap når de ikke er i bruk. Navn vil bli erstattet med kodeord, og kontaktopplysninger vil bli lagret på et adskilt dokument. Prosjektet skal etter planen ferdigstilles og avsluttes 01.07.2019, og alle lagrede personopplysninger, kontaktopplysninger og lydopptak vil bli slettet på dette tidspunktet.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:
- Innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg
- Å få rettet personopplysninger om deg
- Å få slettet personopplysninger om deg
- Å få utlevert kopi av dine personvernopplysninger (dataportabilitet)
- Å sende klage til personvernombudet eller Datatilsynet om behandlingene av dine personopplysninger

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra BI Norwegian Business School har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Ytterligere informasjon/kontakt

Paul Trevor Robbins, BI Norwegian Business School. E-post: paultrevorrobbins@gmail.com. Tlf: +47 979 50 132.
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NSD - Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS, på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller telefon: +47 555 82 117. Personvernombud: http://www.nsd.uib.no

24

Samtykke til deltakelse i studien: The role of high quality connections in creative team work

Jeg har mottatt informasjon om studien, og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

☐ å delta i intervju
☐ å delta i observasjon

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)