



A survey of Danes' experience of mastering at work



Job Satisfaction INDEX 2018

The complete person at work



The complete person at work

KRIFA is a labour market organisation established in 1899 with approx. 200,000 members. To most people, "have a nice day at work" is a greeting. To us it's more than that. It is our mission. We wish to create perceived job satisfaction for the individual at all stages of working life, in working communities and in workplaces.

KRIFA'S JOB SATISFACTION KNOWLEDGE CENTRE examines and analyses working life to learn about what creates job satisfaction and what we can do to improve it. The Knowledge Centre continuously maps Danish job satisfaction in the Job Satisfaction Index and prepares a number of other studies and publications about what gives meaning to working life, how leadership affects job satisfaction and much more. Read more on krifa.dk/videncenter.

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Mastering creates job satisfaction!

The best moments in life are not passive or relaxing. Rather, the best moments arise when we voluntarily use our abilities to achieve something difficult and meaningful. So said Hungarian psychology professor Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi – and I think this is absolutely true. Therefore, it is not surprising that the experience of being able to master one’s daily tasks is one of the most important factors in whether we experience job satisfaction in our work.

Mastering and the complete person

Mastering at work is about much more than our ability to master specific professions and the task at hand. We go to work as complete people, and therefore it makes sense to consider mastering from more perspectives than the purely professional. In this edition of *Job Satisfaction Index* we will therefore be looking at mastering from three different perspectives: personal, social and professional.

The good mastering – a shared responsibility

The studies on which this report is based suggest that a lot of people blame themselves when they do not succeed at work. This is a trend which we also see elsewhere in society, and undoubtedly one which contributes to so many people experiencing stress and burnout. We should not go back to everything being society’s fault, but there is need for a break with the trend where we constantly look inward, and where the individual shoulders the blame for matters that he or she cannot and should not take responsibility for.

Of course, individual employees are responsible for their working lives. But it makes no sense to impose on the individual full responsibility for phenomena of a more structural nature, such as the requirement to be robust and willing to adapt. Both as individuals, workplaces and communities, we have a responsibility to help each other master both life and working life as best possible.

Together for better job satisfaction

From previous years’ Job Satisfaction Index and from our other studies, we know that it makes good sense to unfold the different perspectives on job satisfaction with others. Therefore, Krifa’s Job Satisfaction Knowledge Centre asked several experts to contribute their comments and interpretations of the survey results to this publication.

Among other things, you can look into the future when futurologist Louise Fredbo-Nielsen comments on the survey’s results and outlines the importance of being able to reinvent yourself in the future labour market.

I hope that with this publication, we can help inspire both managers and employees to join us in the effort to let even more people experience mastering their work, and allow even more to experience a working day and a working life filled with job satisfaction.

Enjoy reading!



Søren Fibiger Olesen
Chairman
Krifa

Job satisfaction and mastering

Since 2015, Krifa's Job Satisfaction Knowledge Centre collaborated with the Happiness Research Institute and Kantar Gallup to ask more than 11,500 employees and middle managers in the Danish labour market to assess various dimensions of their working life and workplace. This has given us a unique insight into Danish job satisfaction.

In the *Job Satisfaction Index*, we have identified seven factors which, both collectively and individually, are of great importance to our perception of job satisfaction. The seven factors are meaning, mastering, leadership, balance, influence, achievement and colleagues.

Meaning is the factor that has the greatest impact on our job satisfaction¹. That is why, in 2016, we chose to delve further into the concept of meaning and publish the *What is meaning? report. Meaning as motivation at work*. Another factor with a major effect on our job satisfaction is leadership. Therefore, we also chose to take a closer look at leadership in the *When management creates job satisfaction* report published in 2017. Among other things, the latter study has provided concrete inspiration for the government's Leadership Committee in their work to support better leadership in the public sector.

THE EFFECT OF MASTERING ON JOB SATISFACTION

Second only to meaning, our studies indicate that mastering is a factor with an immense impact on Danish job satisfaction. Fundamentally, mastering is about feeling able to cope with the situations that we face in our working life. It is about feeling adequate and competent when faced with one's work tasks. Therefore, it is not surprising that the perception of mastering is a particularly important ingredient in a good working life and our experience of good job satisfaction during the workday.

MORE PERSPECTIVES ON MASTERING

Therefore, it makes sense to delve deeper into the concept of mastering and describing the concept further. That way, we can give it a few more levers that might hopefully help inspire both leaders and employees in an effort to enhance the individual experience of mastering at work – now and in the future. That is the aim of this report.

We also know from the previous years' *Job Satisfaction Index* that our motivation to work is largely linked to the feeling that we master our work. Therefore, focusing on mastering creates value for both the employee and management, because it is good for both motivation and the bottom line.

MASTERING – NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

As a modern working life organisation, in Krifa we are not just interested in the state of the Danish population's mastering in the here and now. It is equally interesting to know something about how we safeguard the mastering – in the future labour market too. Therefore, in the studies on which this report is based, we also asked what each employee does to ensure that they have the right skills to solve the tasks they are presented with in the workplace. In this context, we also asked how the culture is at their workplace as regards competency development, including whether their immediate manager supports requests for courses and training.

NEWS IN 2018

Did you read Job Satisfaction Index 2015, 2016 and 2017? Here's a quick overview of some of the new perspectives in this year's edition.

- We identify three dimensions of mastering at work: professional, personal and social
- We present two different mindsets of importance to our mastering: the fixed and the growth mindset
- We mostly blame ourselves when we do not succeed at work
- Young people are the most immersed in their work
- Only about half of Danish employees take a proactive approach to courses and continuing education
- We generally feel well equipped to engage in social relationships in the workplace
- 61 percent of employees feel that colleagues make us perform better at work – while 32 percent find that colleagues pull us down

What we did

From Krifa's *Job Satisfaction Index 2017*, we know that mastering is one of the factors with the greatest impact on the perception of job satisfaction. This report is thus based on the knowledge about mastering we obtained from the work with *Job Satisfaction Index 2017*.

The report *Job Satisfaction Index 2018* is based primarily on two different survey methods; literature studies and two major quantitative studies. In addition, we also conducted a series of telephone interviews with selected respondents. Finally, we conducted a series of interviews with experts in order to qualify and interpret some of the results of the studies.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

In *Job Satisfaction Index 2017*, we defined mastering as the feeling of being able to master the situations we face – to feel adequate and competent in our encounter with daily tasks. The primary purpose of the literature review has been to dig a bit deeper and be able to point to multiple perspectives on mastering.

2. QUANTITATIVE SURVEYS

Based on the literature review, for *Job Satisfaction Index 2018* we conducted two quantitative studies with a total of 2,051 representatively select employees and middle managers in the Danish labour market. Both

surveys were conducted by Kantar Gallup. The purpose of these studies was to get a feel for the employees' experience of mastering at work.

3. TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS

In continuation of the quantitative studies, we have conducted a number of telephone interviews among respondents in the four selected job categories (*office, retail, social & health and middle managers*). The primary purpose of these interviews was to further verbalise and flesh out some of the findings from the quantitative studies. Therefore, among other things we asked respondents some of the same questions we asked in the quantitative surveys.

4. EXPERTINTERVIEWS

In connection with our interpretation of the results of the quantitative research, we also conducted a number of interviews with selected experts to help qualify and interpret selected results of our study.



ATTITUDE TO READJUSTMENT

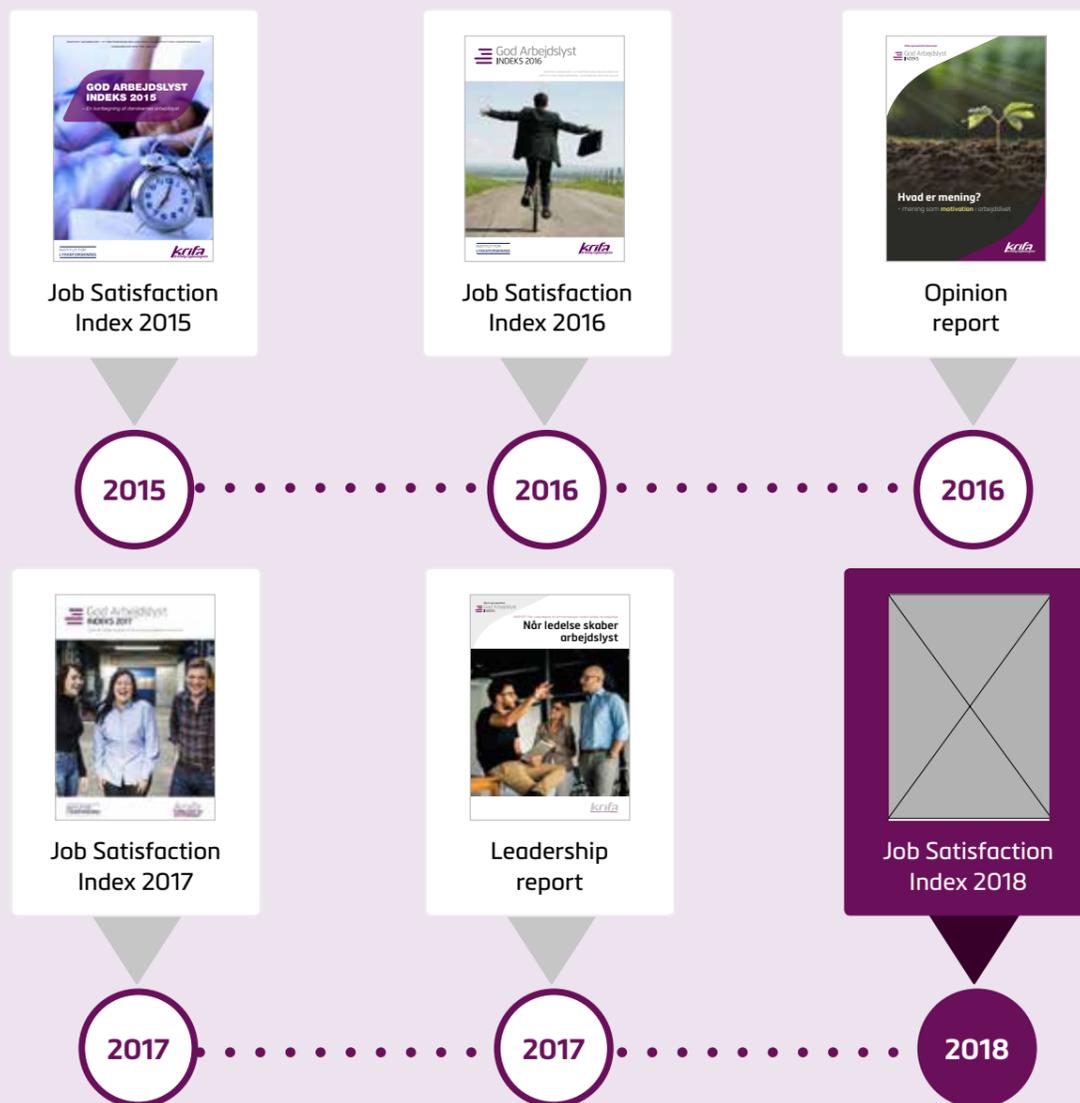
Overall, studies show that Danes both think they are good at their work, and that being good at one's job is important. On the other hand, only about half of us actively consider courses and training which might be relevant to our work, and a fifth of us even think that we already have the skills we need. You can read more about this in the "Mastering – in the long run" section.

OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this report is not to provide exhaustive coverage of mastering, but to provide an indication of the state of Danish mastering as well as develop appropriate perspectives on mastering in a professional context.

In this context, focus is on angles which can provide inspiration and create reflection as regards supporting employees in mastering the situations they are faced with in their working life, ensuring that each employee experience greater mastering and thus greater job satisfaction.

PUBLICATIONS FROM KRIFA'S JOB SATISFACTION KNOWLEDGE CENTRE



Job Satisfaction Index 2018 is the latest publication in a series of publications from Krifa's Job Satisfaction Knowledge Centre and builds on the knowledge we have accumulated about what creates job satisfaction in Danish workplaces.

Mastering, Life happiness and Job Satisfaction

In *Job Satisfaction Index 2017*, the Danish job satisfaction is mapped. Based on a factor analysis, it appears that seven factors in particular explain much of the job satisfaction in the Danish labour market. As our job satisfaction is also important for our overall life satisfaction, the model also explains a significant part of the general life happiness of Danes. This study on

mastering is founded on knowledge from *Job Satisfaction Index 2017*. In this section, we demonstrate how the results of *Job Satisfaction Index 2017* contribute to this study's focus on mastering. On page 14, you will also find our definition of job satisfaction and its seven key factors.



JOB SATISFACTION INDEX

Job Satisfaction Index 2017 is a comprehensive study that charts job satisfaction in Denmark. The survey is based on responses from 2,706 people. Based on these data, a factor analysis is made which allows us to calculate the various factors affecting job satisfaction.

Job Satisfaction Index 2018 aims to identify and focus on one of the seven factors, namely mastering. The two quantitative studies underlying this report consist of responses from a total of 2,051 employees and middle managers in the Danish labour market.

TEMPERATURE point

The temperature is a measure of how happy the Danes are with their overall job satisfaction and the seven factors we measure. For example, this could be to which degree we experience having influence at work. The temperature is calculated based on a number of issues about influence; for example, "To what extent do you have influence on how you perform your tasks?" and "To what extent are you able to organise and structure your work yourself?". We score the temperature in points on a scale of 0 to 100.

JOB SATISFACTION

74

The Danish job satisfaction on a scale of 0-100 points.

HAPPINESS

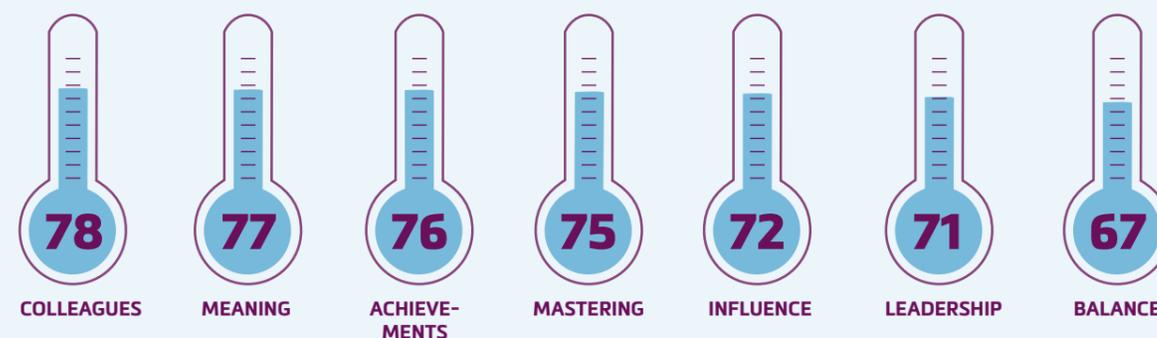
77

The Danish happiness level on a scale of 0 to 100 points.

HOW SATISFIED ARE THE DANES

WITH WHAT IMPACTS JOB SATISFACTION?

The temperature of seven factors affecting the Danish population's job satisfaction on a scale of 0 through 100.



CONNECTION BETWEEN

SKILLS AND TASKS

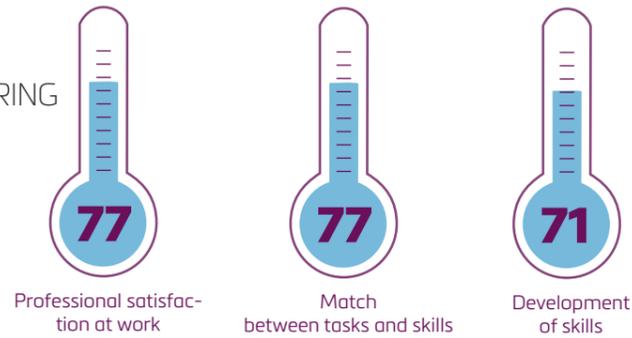
In *Job Satisfaction Index 2017*, we asked three questions which jointly define the mastering factor. We asked to what extent the respondent felt professional satisfaction through the work, the degree to which they felt like they developed their competences and finally, we asked about the match between tasks and competences.

In this way, the mastering concept we used in *Job Satisfaction Index 2017* is closely linked to skills and the experience of feeling competent. As seen in the chart on the next page, the experience of developing skills at work is apparently worse off than professional satisfaction and the match between tasks and skills.

TEMPERATURES FROM QUESTIONS ABOUT MASTERING

The employees' score in the three questions about mastering is rated on a scale of 0 through 100.

Source: Job Satisfaction Index 2017



WORKING WITH MASTERING MAKES A DIFFERENCE

The chart below shows the factors' temperature and their impact on job satisfaction – and thus how great the potential of working with the individual factors is.

On the horizontal axis, the potential map shows the individual factors' effect on the work with job satisfaction – i.e. their impact – and, on the vertical axis, we see the current temperature of individual factors.

Addressing factors with a high impact and low temperature makes sense, as they have the greatest impact on the Danish job satisfaction and the greatest potential. But it is also relevant to consider factors with high impact and high temperature, as maintaining a high level requires effort. Therefore, it also makes sense to work with mastering!



THE DEGREE OF EXPLANATION

The degree of explanation expresses which proportion of the dependent variable (job satisfaction) is explained by the model in the independent variables (the seven factors). That is, to which extent job satisfaction can be explained by our model with the seven factors.

Like the impact, the degree of explanation is the result of complex mathematical calculations which Kantar Gallup performs and guarantees the validity of.

IMPACT

The impact tells us how much of an influence a given factor has on job satisfaction. If the temperature of a factor is raised by 10 points, how much will overall job satisfaction increase?

Let us say that an employee, Bo, experiences a total job satisfaction of 70 on a scale from 0 to 100 and has an experience of mastering of 50, also on a scale of 0 to 100. The following year, Bo experiences a greater degree of mastering at work, and now reports 60 instead of 50. According to our study, the impact of mastering is 2.0 points. This means that Bo's overall job satisfaction increases from 70 to 72.

POTENTIAL MAP



The potential map combines the factor temperatures on the y axis with their impact on the x axis. The potential map thus offers a clear picture of how the factors are ranked in relation to each other and where potential efforts will have the greatest impact.

Source: Job Satisfaction Index 2017

Understand the factors of job satisfaction

In Job Satisfaction Index, we identified seven factors which affect job satisfaction. This page gives you a quick overview of our definitions of job satisfaction and the factors of job satisfaction.

JOB SATISFACTION

In the index model, we broke the concept of job satisfaction down into minor components. We ask about five angles, illustrating the degree of job satisfaction: To what extent do you feel joy in your work? To what extent do you feel motivated to go to work? To what extent would you say that, overall, your workplace is a good place to work? To what extent did you enjoy your last working day? To what extent do you look forward to the next time you are going to work?

FACTORS

Factors are the areas that affect the overall Danish job satisfaction. The Job Satisfaction Index operates with seven factors:

Meaning
The feeling of spending our working life doing something meaningful is critical to us. Among other things, we must be able to identify a higher purpose with our work to experience job satisfaction. The factor is also affected by whether you feel that the function you fill in the organisation holds meaning.

Masterring
Masterring is about the feeling of being able to master the situations we face – to feel adequate and competent in meeting the daily tasks.

Leadership
If we find that our immediate manager has good professional and social skills, and if we have a trusting relationship with him or her, it greatly affects our job satisfaction positively.

Influence
When we feel that we have influence on the conditions of our working day, it affects our job satisfaction. If we are masters of how, when and with whom we perform our jobs, it strengthens the desire to go to work.

Achievements
We can have both small and large goals that we reach on our own or with our colleagues. However we achieve results, it is very important that we feel we accomplish something when we are at work.

Balance
If we find that there is a balance between the number of tasks and the time available to solve them, it strengthens our job satisfaction. However, balance is also about what lies outside the workplace – the balance between our work and our spare time.

Colleagues
To many of us, our colleagues in the workplace are some of the people we spend the most time with in everyday life. Therefore, our relationships in the workplace are an important point in the study of job satisfaction.

Mastering is more than professional ability

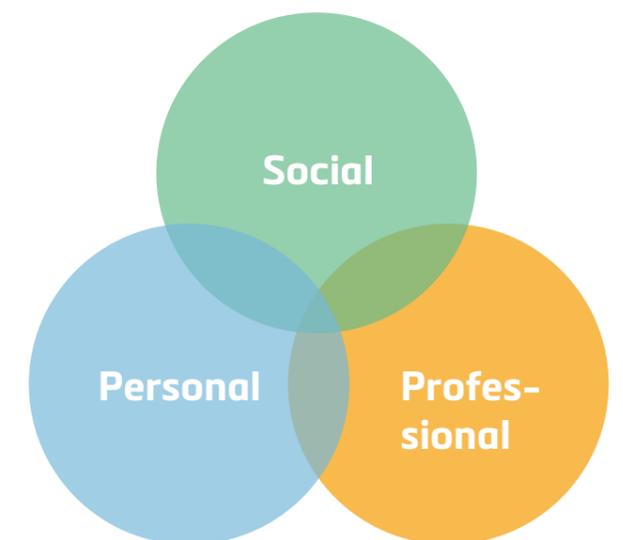
Mastering is not just about how to take care of your profession-specific tasks. In 2018, we go to work with our whole personality and all our characteristics. But what should you really master as an employee?

Back in 2016, Krifa's Job Satisfaction Knowledge Centre introduced mastering as a factor in the *Job Satisfaction Index*. We had an assumption that the experience of mastering had a decisive influence on Danish job satisfaction. In both 2016 and 2017, the index survey showed that there was some truth to this.

Based on, among others, acclaimed Hungarian psychology professor Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's thoughts on mastering and his so-called flow theory, we defined mastering as the feeling of being able to master the situations we face – and feeling adequate and competent in our encounter with daily challenges and tasks.

MASTERRING IS MORE THAN THE TASK AT HAND

On the intuitive level, we think it makes sense to most people that mastering at work is about much more than whether we feel competent when faced with the professional tasks in the strictest sense. With this chapter, we create a theoretical basis for an understanding of mastering across multiple dimensions.



The figure illustrates the three dimensions of mastering. Source: Krifa's Job Satisfaction Knowledge Centre, 2018

The feeling of being in control of the job – that you master the purely professional function which, after all, is what you were employed to do – is obviously an important ingredient in the recipe for a good day. But to most of us, it is not enough to feel successful at work. For example, how many people do not recognise the situation where a colleague has been dismissed, and it has subsequently been concluded that he or she "didn't really fit in here anyway." In this situation, it makes intuitive sense to us that mastering – or lack of it – is about much more than just the presence of the appropriate professional skills. For example, it is also about the ability to enter into relations with others and whether they feel at all psychologically prepared to face the work

and working life. Therefore, it makes sense to look at mastering as a phenomenon that can be viewed from several perspectives.

MORE PERSPECTIVES ON MASTERING

In the following, we look at mastering from three different dimensions. The three dimensions are not exhaustive and should not be seen as three distinct items – as is also apparent from the illustration on page 15, the three "spheres" overlap one another. Rather, they shall be understood as the three dimensions from which we try to zoom in on the rather diffuse and difficult-to-handle phenomenon which mastering is.

THREE DIMENSIONS OF MASTERING



Definition of the three dimensions of mastering and theoretical basis for our understanding.

Source: Krifa's Job Satisfaction Knowledge Centre, 2018

The labour market is changing, and the requirements for employees changes with it. In most jobs, it is not enough to be academically proficient. Employees must now contribute with personality, commitment and willingness to be active partners in the workplace. This development has meant that employees are faced with

more challenges and requirements that they must be able to master in order to keep the job.

MASTERING IN A DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

The ability to master is not just a thing of the working life. From we are born, we are faced with tasks and

challenges that we must learn to handle. We must learn to eat, walk, care for others and look after ourselves. Our ability to master is practiced throughout life, through our upbringing, school and of course the labour market. The ability to master – not just at work, but in life – is a lifelong and never-ending process. Our ability to master is therefore inextricably linked with our approach to the challenges we face throughout life. We will elaborate further below.

DIFFERENT MINDSETS

American psychologist Carol Dweck believes that our attitude and approach to the tasks we face in life is very important for how we succeed in mastering². She basically defines two different mindsets which she believes to be essential to our way of mastering – and to how we relate to new tasks and requirements, and how we handle defeats and challenges. Dweck talks about, respectively, the fixed and the developing mindset.

Our mindset will largely determine how we assess our own level of intelligence. Here, intelligence is under-

stood as the individual's cognitive ability to solve complex tasks across challenges and competences³. Therefore, our mindset is also crucial to mastering at work. It is important to emphasise that our mindset is not unchangeable and that, according to Dweck, we actually have the option of influencing and changing our mindset.

Dweck emphasises that, in practice, a lot of people will typically have elements of both mindsets – which is also evident from some of the interviews we conducted during the preparation of this report. Whether you are dominated by the fixed or the developing mindset is partly to do with how you view making mistakes.

THE FIXED MINDSET

With the fixed mindset, you are dominated by the belief that one's intelligence and skills cannot be developed or modified. Dweck argues that people with a fixed mindset are in a constant battle to confirm what they can do, and will constantly try to prove that they possess the skills to master the required task. The problem

TWO MINDSETS

WITH SIGNIFICANCE TO OUR MASTERING



Illustration of the growth and the fixed mindset.

Source: Krifa's Job Satisfaction Knowledge Centre, paraphrasing Carol Dweck, 2018

with the fixed mindset may occur in the moment when a task is experienced as *too* challenging. People with a fixed mindset will often have a tendency to avoid tasks that they do not feel completely confident solving. They will usually try to avoid making mistakes.

Therefore, employees with a fixed mindset can only prove their worth in the workplace through the tasks they are confident that they can master. That is why the fixed mindset is not good at matching the requirements typically encountered in the modern labour market.

THE GROWTH MINDSET

Unlike the fixed mindset, the idea behind the growth mindset is characterised by the notion that our abilities, intelligence and personality is something that we can influence, train and develop. Challenges with new tasks are seen as a potential for learning, and defeat is not experienced as something negative – on the contrary, it is just another opportunity to learn.

As the name suggests, this mindset focuses on the approach that human beings should develop. Mastering is the individual's experience of feeling sufficiently competent to solve the challenges we are faced with. A definition that describes the encounter with the challenges of the now – but what about tomorrow? And what will the company and our field of work look like next year? We will have to deal with society, the labour market and our daily tasks constantly changing. According to Dweck, with the growth mindset we can ensure that we are better equipped to master the changes we face. In this way, the growth mindset also has to do with our ability to remain attractive in the labour market. You can read more about this in the section on employability on page 21.

PERSONAL MASTERING

When as employees we are faced with a challenge or a demand at work, a number of factors influence how we meet this challenge. This is partly to do with our competences in what we have chosen to call personal mastering.

How we respond to a challenge largely has to do with what American psychologist Richard S. Lazarus terms coping, which is about how we as people handle stress and challenges in everyday life⁴. Coping, therefore, impacts how our personal mastering is unfolded in the workplace.

COPING

When we are challenged, pushed or otherwise overloaded, we have different coping strategies to try

and prevent or deal with the challenge we face. In the extreme, the coping of an individual can result in either success or failure: Did I master the challenge, or did I not?

Lazarus points to a variety of coping strategies, which can be either problem-focused, emotionally determined or evasive⁵. Do we approach the day's tasks with a fundamental belief that we can solve them? Or do we become frustrated, sad or even angry when faced with today's tasks. Or do we flee the difficult task by either retreating or trying to ignore the task? These are just examples of coping strategies, and common to them all is that whatever strategy we use, it will be important to our mastering of the challenges and demands we encounter during the workday.

Coping is an aspect of our personal mastering which is basically shaped by the experience of feeling mentally prepared for the challenges and demands we face. Therefore, coping is part of our attempt to manage these. Our personal mastering is also influenced by the experience of whether we believe we will manage the challenge or not.

FAITH IN OUR OWN ABILITIES: SELF-EFFICACY

Both as an employee, colleague and private person, many of us juggle a lot of balls at a time every day, and our focus on each of them is what makes demands of our personal mastering and mental resources. In this understanding, personal mastering is also closely linked to our belief in our own abilities when we are faced with a specific challenge or task. This, American psychologist Albert Bandura calls our self-efficacy⁶.

Therefore, our actions and motivation in working life depends on our belief in our own abilities. If we do not possess a particularly high degree of "self-efficacy", we risk not being able to solve a task – not because we do not have the capability to do so, but only because we do not believe in ourselves enough. Our self-efficacy is enhanced when we succeed in a task and experience success and, similarly, is weakened when we experience not succeeding satisfactorily in a task.

The degree of self-efficacy plays an important role in how good we are at taking control of our lives and the situations we find ourselves in. Employees with low self-efficacy will tend to perform worse than their potential, whereas employees with high self-efficacy can perform better than expected, even at tasks they do not immediately possess any expertise in. In other words, our confidence in our own mastering is of great importance to our personal mastering.





SOCIAL MASTERING

We initially described how mastering professional tasks at work are not enough. We must also have an experience of "fitting in" – i.e. we must be able to manage ourselves among other people. Today, very few people go to work and only have to deal with themselves. Most of us are constantly surrounded by colleagues, managers, members, citizens, customers and other partners. This requires an almost constant attention to other people. Personal mastering is about allocating profits and resources to where the individual experiences challenges and demands. Social mastering is about how the individual can manage the challenges and demands that arise in the encounter with the other or others.

MASTERING IN THE ENCOUNTER WITH OTHER PEOPLE

People influence each other constantly, and when we enter into social relationships, we are attentive to both ourselves and the other person⁷. In his social psychological studies, American philosopher and psychologist George H. Mead has been particularly interested in what happens when people meet. Among other things, Mead argues that in meeting others, we develop our own identity as we are aware of the reaction that our actions prompt from others. In that context, our understanding of ourselves as social beings is also developed through our own reflection on others' view of us.

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Our understanding of the individual's social mastering is based on such a process, in which the individual continually reacts to, and rationalises about, their own actions in relation to the other or others. In other words, the individual tries to adapt their behaviour to what is morally and socially acceptable in the community in which we

are involved. In the workplace, there will be an organisational culture which we need to fit in, some values that are important to the workflow and a way of talking to each other which has become part of the organisation – typically over a long time. Social mastering is also an important prerequisite for succeeding in our work.

PROFESSIONAL MASTERING

Professional mastering is the basis of our mastering at work. As we described it previously, professional mastering is about our experience of feeling competent when faced with the daily tasks. In other words, professional mastering is the individual's knowledge and experience in the profession he or she works in. The degree of professional mastering is partly the education and training that the employee has received in the encounter with the task, but also an expression of the professional competence and expertise the individual possesses.

As in *Job Satisfaction Index 2016*, we dealt a lot with professional mastering in particular, this perspective is not elaborated further in this chapter. Professional mastering is also more subject-specific, why it becomes less generalisable than personal and social mastering, which are more general. These two perspectives are our primary foci here, as they are also new additions to the job satisfaction factor of mastering.

MASTERING – NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

From a labour market perspective, a continued interest in professional mastering is quite obvious. But since the purpose of focusing on mastering at work is also to achieve a greater knowledge and a greater understanding of what respectively contributes to and challenges Danes' experience of being able to control

the situations we face in our working life individually, it is appropriate to think about not just professional mastering, but also what we have called personal mastering and social mastering. Furthermore, it is also relevant to focus on mastering from a development perspective. We touched upon this in the chapter on respectively the fixed and the developing mindset. For how do we ensure that we stay able to master? That is what employability is about. In the chapter "A look into the future" on page 63, you can also read futurologist Louise Fredbo-Nielsen's views on how to best ensure your mastering in the future labour market as well as the capabilities that will be in demand in the future.

EMPLOYABILITY

There is no doubt that in the future labour market, being adaptable will become even more important than it is today. As more and more people experience frequent job changes, and as the very routine jobs are taken over by robots or disappear entirely, it requires us to be adaptable – not just now, but also in the future. Besides having to master the individual working day with everything it entails, the matter of one's job security is also important. To a great extent, mastering is about us as employees mastering our current work and the related challenges. But on a more general level, it is also about us generally remaining attractive to the labour market. This is a quality referred to in English as *Employability*⁸, which broadly covers the employee's ability to find and retain a job.

EQUIPPED FOR THE FUTURE

Along with the perception of meaning, the experience of being able to master your work is among the key ingredients in the recipe for a working life full of job

satisfaction. As we described previously, the aim of mastering is being able to manage our daily work. But the way there depends largely on our mental resources, our social interactions and our professional skills.

Are we prepared for the future labour market? Are we able to do away with a mindset that might lock us into rigid behavioural patterns? And how is our confidence and belief in our own abilities in a complex and challenging working life really? Our answers to these questions and many more affect our experience of mastering at work.

FROM THEORY TO REALITY

When we go to work, we do it as complete people, and we are expected to invest something of ourselves in the work, so to speak. Therefore, as employees we are challenged on our ability to balance our mental resources, our social skills and our professional skills. This understanding of mastering has been the theoretical basis for this chapter and for our understanding of the three dimensions of mastering in this report.

Of course, we are fully aware that the three dimensions are intertwined and cannot, and should not, be isolated in any respect. At the same time, it is also clear that such a theoretical distinction between the three dimensions only holds value if, to some degree, it can be demonstrated "in real life".



Achievements

Points from Job Satisfaction Index 2018

Our studies show a number of results in various aspects of mastering. In this chapter, we have selected a number of points that offer a quick overview of the Danish experience of mastering at work.

From the figure below, we can see that for the vast majority of employees, the experience of being good at one's job is "important" or "very important". The study also shows that employees score as high as 84 points on a scale ranging from 0 to 100, when assessing

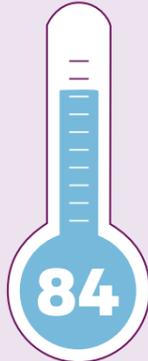
whether they are good at their work. This shows a generally high level of ambition and a generally high level in the assessment of one's own mastering.

HOW IMPORTANT IS BEING GOOD AT YOUR WORK TO YOU?



The proportion of employees who believe that it is important to be good at their jobs.

Source: Job Satisfaction Index 2018



The temperature of the experience of being good at one's job on a scale from 1 to 100.

Source: Job Satisfaction Index 2018

PROFESSIONAL SATISFACTION BUT LACK OF DEVELOPMENT

Employees score highly on the question of whether they experience a "match between tasks and competences" and "professional satisfaction" – therefore, the level of professional mastering is high. Conversely, the Danes' own assessment of the need for competence development is somewhat lower. Overall, this gives the impression that Danish employees experience great satisfaction in their jobs, but that progression in learning lags.

DEVELOPMENT OR STANDING STILL

The survey shows that 55 percent of employees are taking a proactive approach to training and continuing education, while less than 21 percent feel that they have the skills needed to solve their tasks. In the chapter called "Mastering – in the long run" we will unfold what employees in Danish workplaces' concretely do to develop skills throughout their working lives.

DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS

ON THE JOB



Distribution of employees' responses to the question "What do you do yourself to ensure that you have the right skills to solve the tasks that you are faced with at work?".

Source: Job Satisfaction Index 2018

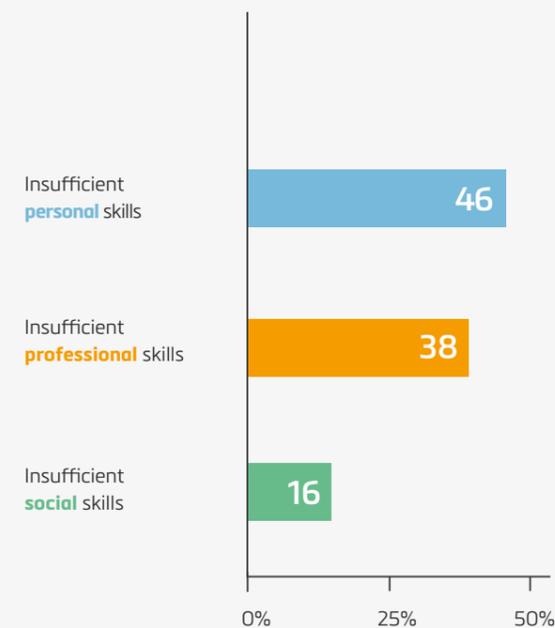
WE ARE PARTICULARLY CHALLENGED ON PERSONAL SKILLS

In this report, we make a distinction between professional, personal and social mastering. In this context, we examine the skills on which employees in the Danish labour feel challenged. Our study suggests that employees are often in situations where they feel that their personal skills are inadequate.

MASTERING ON THE MOST RECENT WORKING DAY

From *Job Satisfaction Index 2017*, we know that mastering is important for our overall job satisfaction. In *Job Satisfaction Index 2018*, we ask how close to perfect the employee's last working day was. The level is high, but we know that mastering can contribute to an even better experience. The dimensions of mastering which can contribute to greater job satisfaction are precisely what will be discussed in the following sections.

IN REGARDS TO WHAT SKILLS IS THE EMPLOYEE CHALLENGED?



The distribution of employee responses to the question: "Try to think back to a day when you felt that you did not succeed sufficiently in your work. What (best) characterised the situation you were in?".

Source: Job Satisfaction Index 2018

SATISFACTION WITH LAST WORKING DAY?



The chart shows respondents' average estimate of how close to, or how far from, the perfect day their last working day was. The answers are given on a scale of 0-100 on which '0' is 'far from the perfect working day' and '100' is 'the perfect working day'.

Source: Job Satisfaction Index 2018

Mastering in selected industries

Generally, there is a high level of job satisfaction in Denmark across industries. But how are we doing on mastering, when we zoom in on selected industries?

In this chapter, we look at results from the following industries: *teaching and research*, *office and communications* as well *public administration and service* and *social and healthcare*.

At the industry level, the experience of mastering is generally high. The industry with the best score is *public service and administration* followed by *social and healthcare*.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The interviewees in the study employed in *social and healthcare* and *teaching and research* are more likely to report being good at their job when they "make a difference". Perhaps unsurprisingly, employees in these industries see this as an important and meaningful part of their work. Previous studies from Krifa's Job Satisfaction Knowledge Centre also show that employees in the *social and healthcare* sector are most likely to experience contributing positively to other people's lives and that they fill an important function in the workplace. Mastering and meaning at work are thus linked, as the experience of mastering may depend on whether you perceive your work as meaningful.

WE ARE CHALLENGED DIFFERENTLY

The employees in the various industries are obviously challenged in different areas. In this study, this becomes apparent in the question of what characterises the last situation where the employee did not adequately succeed in their duties. There is a clear tendency that while employees in *social and healthcare* and *teaching and research* are challenged on personal skills, employees in *office* and *communication* as well *public administration and service* are challenged on their professional skills.

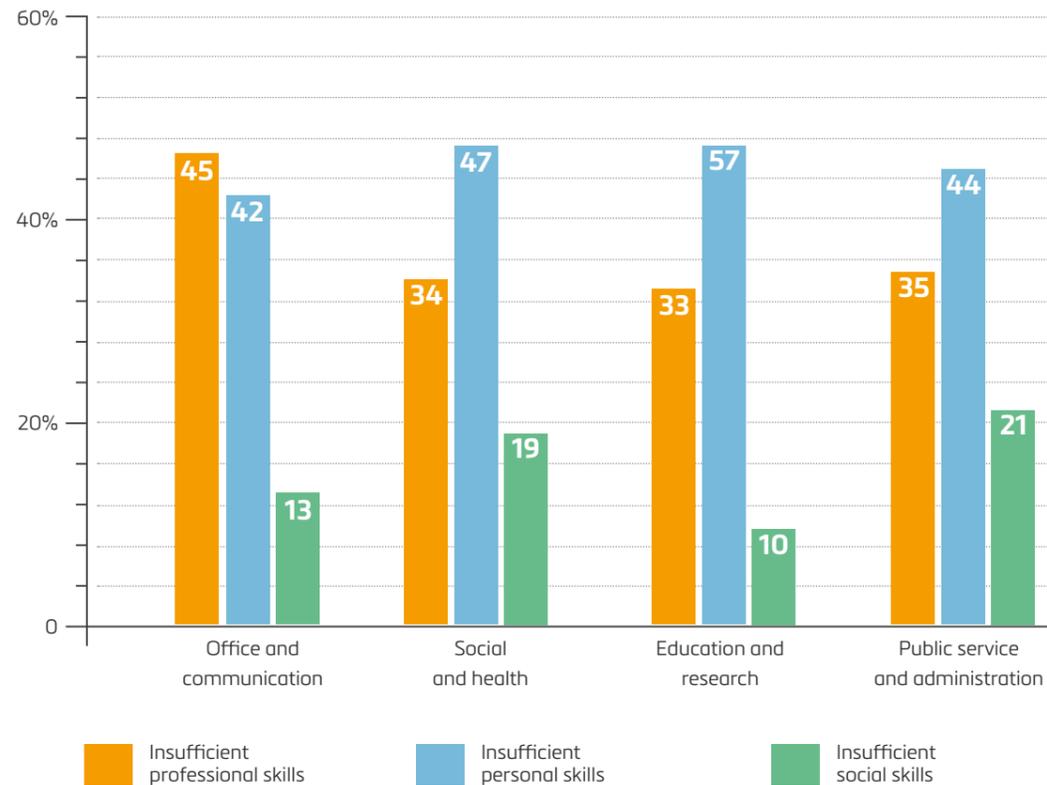
CAN CHALLENGES BE MEANINGFUL?

The fact that significant challenges with personal skills are experienced in some industries does not necessarily mean that these groups are less competent. Unsurprisingly, employees in industries which largely deal with encounters between people relate more to the "personal skills" – and thus focus more on the challenges involving these skills. Perhaps these challenges are exactly what make employees experience meaning and motivation.

A lack of social skills is what the fewest employees experience across all industries – the biggest challenges are thus feeling professionally and personally adequate.



PROFESSIONAL GROUPS ARE CHALLENGED ON DIFFERENT SKILLS



Distribution of responses to the question: "What characterised the situation you were in on the last working day on which you did not sufficiently succeed in your work?".

Source: Job Satisfaction Index 2018

THE FEAR OF FAILURE VARIES

According to the study, challenges are also tackled differently depending on industry. In particular, employees in social and healthcare report it as being "very important" not to make mistakes – as many as 39 percent said this. Employees in other sectors are well below this level. Errors happen in any industry. But how errors are perceived and managed varies. In some industries, personal errors may have greater consequences than others. But in order for employees across industries to experience the greatest degree of mastering, it is also important that you can fail and still feel adequate in your workplace.

MASTERING WHEN TIME IS SHORT

Employees in social and healthcare and teaching and research also attach the greatest importance to a successful working day largely depending on whether you manage to get all your tasks done. This may be linked to the

sectors of healthcare and education often involving very clearly defined tasks. As described, these groups place the greatest emphasis on the importance of making a difference to others in their work. According to Job Satisfaction Index 2017, social and healthcare is also the areas in which employees experience the highest level of stress. One consideration for companies in this industry can therefore be whether the good experience of mastering one's work can be maintained when the ambition to make a difference is great and the time to perform tasks often short.

NOT EVERYONE IS EQUALLY IMMERSSED IN THEIR WORK

Employees in *teaching and research* scored highest as regards the experience of being immersed in their tasks. While 16 percent of the employees in this industry have had this experience on a typical day in the past month, less than 10 percent of employees in *public service and administration* and *office and communications* did.



The question is what this difference is. One guess might be that the motivation is lacking, or that employees feel that disturbances make immersion difficult.

WHO SEEKS OUT TRAINING?

"To a great extent," 22 percent of employees in office and communication experience having sufficient skills to do their jobs. In teaching and research, the proportion of employees perceiving their skills as sufficient is as low as 11 percent. To a lesser extent than people in other industries, employees in teaching and research experience having adequate competencies. At the same time, the employees in this industry are the most likely to seek out courses and training in order to improve their skills.

This indicates that the employees who feel that they do not possess sufficient skills are also the ones who wish to develop their skills. This shows that an important task for

the manager is to help ensure that all employees have a realistic view of whether they have the right skills to achieve the desired results.

Before we dive further into the study's findings about mastering at work, in the following you may be inspired by an article from the Happiness Research Institute on the phenomenon of life-skills, which is about how you can increase your mastering by placing e.g. maternity leave and leave on your CV. As it is, we also develop our skills when doing something else entirely for a period of time.

Mastering in all phases of working life

Life skills is a term for the abilities that we need through the various stages of life. It spans everything from understanding the economic mechanisms behind interest rates in the bank to how to cook pasta for the children and listening to the colleague going through a difficult time. The concept covers a philosophy that emphasises that mastering is more than professional skills and points on a resume. Mastering is practiced and used throughout life.

By: Meik Wiking and Isabella Arendt, Happiness Research Institute

UNICEF clearly points out the importance of Life Skills when we face the changing labour market of the future. None of us know what the future will bring. We do not know what skills we will need. UNICEF defines life skills as three broad categories of personal skills: cognitive skills to analyse and use complex information, personal skills to develop and lead oneself and social skills to communicate and interact effectively with others⁹.

WORKING LIFE IS NOT STOP'N'GO

Life Skills is about seeing life as continual learning – including working life. It is a break with the "stop'n'go culture" prevailing in some places in the labour market. It is a break with considering hard work, long hours and promotions as "go" and leave, continuing education, family and leisure time as "stop". We should start thinking about breaks from working life in a new way? Breaks are no longer just "stops" and expenses. They are qualifying and stimulating. Employees do not necessarily lose value to the workplace by taking leave or having

a break. On the contrary, it can give them new energy, new skills and new ideas that help develop both the workplace and the employee.

BREAKS CREATE MEANING, MASTERING AND BALANCE

A break from work gives you time to think further ahead than to the next deadline. Time for innovation and creativity. It gives you time to think about the important things in life. And learn to prioritise accordingly. A period away from work can mean that you come back with a deeper understanding of the meaning of the job and your own capabilities and clear priorities in relation to the balance between work and leisure. Both meaning, mastering and balance is important to good job satisfaction, which ultimately creates growth for the company.

“ We see being home with the family and kids as a competence. Both men and women who had stay-at-home periods return with a greater insight into many different things. They contribute something new to the company

Teresia Palm, HR Manager at IKEA Denmark
Berlingske 14-03-2018



A BREAK IS A GOOD INVESTMENT

In 2017, Pernille Bach Tengberg, who works as a nurse, took a longer occupational break from her job along with her husband and children. "It has given us peace in the family and time to think," Pernille says. The pause was used to strengthen the family and thus create a better balance at home. In addition, she had the opportunity to consider whether she would take up studying again. And in general just take the opportunity to review her working life and find out if something might need a different prioritisation. The inspiration for the break came from Pernille's brother-in-law, who spent three months in Africa to develop both professionally and personally.

REMEMBER LABOUR MARKET SECURITY WHEN YOU TAKE A BREAK

Pernille has an advice for others who would like to take a break: Make sure to be anchored in the labour market first. The professional foundation is linked to the importance of being confident in your own skills and feel secure about there being a job when you return.

GOOD RESULTS COME FROM THE COMPLETE PERSON

In order to reap the benefits of personal development, it is important that the workplace can talk about Life Skills and experience more broadly. And that you recognise that personal and social mastering is also important when we want to create high job satisfaction and good results. We are all people – all the time. Although privacy and the work place places different demands on us – we are not different people. This means that if at work, we are trained in e.g. conflict management, it probably makes us better able to handle a cross teenager as well. Or, if we volunteer in a nursing home, it might also make us better at listening to other people in other contexts too.

HAVE THE TALK AND GET CLOSER TO EACH OTHER

A beneficial side-effect of a culture in the workplace where Life Skills are in focus is that it becomes easier for employees to talk to colleagues about their personal life. Wanting to leave earlier on Tuesdays because you are a scout leader becomes easier. It is okay to go work less hours when you have kids or illness in the family. There is a greater chance that people will stay in their jobs if there is an understanding that breaks, parental leave or reduced hours are natural parts of the working life – and not gaps in it.



“You get a respite and an opportunity to think about whether what you do is what you want to be doing.”

Pernille Bach Tengberg, Nurse



PLACE PARENTAL LEAVE ON THE RESUME

Anne Sophie Sehested Münster started the network *Inspired Beyond Babies* while she was on maternity leave with her second child. Through the network, she gathered experiences from mothers and fathers on parental leave. She sees parental leave as an investment in the employee rather than an expense to the company. Learning to take care of another human being and finding out that there is something more important than one's own needs is qualifying. Whatever you spend parental leave doing, you return changed and can contribute new skills and ideas.

“What you get back is a no bullshit employee”

Anne Sophie Sehested Münster

PARENTING INCREASES PERSONAL MASTERING

When faced with the responsibility of a little child, you develop some personal skills that increase personal mastering. Many people experience becoming more efficient and better at prioritising tasks. According to a new study, this development which many women experience after having children can be measured the brain. Research indicates that the part of the brain¹⁰ that influences empathy and putting yourself in someone else's place develops in women who have had children. Something which can be used in the workplace when, for example, conflicts need to be resolved, or contact needs to be made with customers.

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR PERSONAL LIMIT

Those who have children know that, in the beginning, an infant does not always leave room for its parents' personal needs. When you return to work, you might have a new and better understanding of what your own limits are, and you may know more about what you can take. This kind of personal mastering can benefit both the workplace and the employee.

Workplaces can reap the benefits of parental leave and of having parents employed, if leaders understand how to see the whole person. To see what a parental leave can give the employee and the company. And thus work actively for a good balance between work and family, both before, during and after parental leave. "Something happens at 3 pm, where you start to get restless and experience a magnetic attraction to your family. That end time makes employees much more efficient," Anne Sophie Sehested Münster says.

Ann-Jeanett Foldager is a psychologist and author working with parental leave in the labour market. She also sees the benefits of a more positive outlook on parental leave and elaborates: "If the workplace offers pregnant women and parents of young children calm and flexibility in the first years, the foundation for a good balance which can prevent stress and benefit both the company and the employees for years to come is established."

We are good at our jobs

Our study shows that, overall, our experience of professional mastering is in a good state, and that the majority of Danes think that we work with is exciting. In this chapter, we will delve a bit more into professional mastering.

Generally, Danes have a sense of being good at what they do, and they also believe that it is important to be good at what they work with.

EXCITING WORK TASKS

In our survey, we asked respondents to answer which situation best describes their experience of a typical day in the past month.

According to our study, the vast majority thinks that their work was mainly exciting, while 9 percent think that the tasks were so exciting, they were completely immersed. At the same time, almost a fifth (18 percent) indicate that tasks were mostly trivial. The latter is not necessarily entirely negative. Maybe they thrive with mostly trivial tasks on the job and find energy and meaning in other contexts in life.

YOUTH IS IMMERSSED IN WORK

Zooming in on young people aged between 18 and 29, as many as 15 percent of respondents indicate that during a typical working day, they experience being completely immersed in their work. This result is interesting, partly because in other contexts we hear that young people find it hard to focus and frequently switch between different activities without really being seriously absorbed by anything¹¹. But our study indicates that young people aged between 18 and 29 are actually better at immersing themselves in their work than the rest of the workforce. Of course, there may be several explanations for this. One possible explanation is that young people are relatively new in the labour market and therefore want to show their worth by concentrating on tasks. Another possible explanation is that most people in this age group have yet to marry and have children and therefore may have more time to focus

on their work. As can be seen from the quote below, being engaged and immersed in one's work is, as a rule, positive.

DO NOT FORGET THE BREAK!

It is also important to take small breaks during the day. For example, the small break by the coffee machine might be where your social mastery is practiced, and perhaps this is precisely where a colleague can introduce you to other interesting tasks that you might also be able to contribute to and become immersed in. Tasks that you might not even become aware of, if you were only immersed in your current task.

YOUNG PEOPLE DO NOT WANT TO MAKE MISTAKES

In the survey, we also asked respondents to consider when they feel good in their work. Here, young people aged between 18 and 29 stand out as, to a greater extent than the rest of the workforce, they agreed "very much" with the statement "I feel good on the job when I do not make mistakes" and similarly with the statement "I feel good on the job when I learn something new." If we compare this result with Carol Dweck's theory of the two mindsets, the fixed and the developing, something might indicate that young people relate to tasks and requirements in a more ideal-typical way, from either a fixed or a more developmental mindset. This seems to fit well with young people being the group most immersed in their work.

“Flow made people experience the moment so intensely and gave them a sense of being so very much in control of things, that their sense of time, place and even ego disappeared.”

Daniel Pink 2015



CAUSES OF IMMERSION

It seems obvious that it is healthier to be immersed in your work because you are busy learning new things, than it is to be immersed in the work because you are afraid of making mistakes. In this regard, Dweck does not hide the fact that the developing mindset is more worthy of striving for than the fixed. Therefore, it is fortunate that, according to Dweck, our mindset is not unchangeable, and that we have the ability to influence and change an inappropriate mindset. The individual employee is not solely responsible for developing the

ability to master tasks in an appropriate manner. The leader also bears a responsibility for ensuring that each employee experiences challenging tasks.

In the next chapter, you can be inspired by Trine Yang Møller, who started playing the violin at age 3 and today is a violinist with the Danish Broadcasting Corporation's Symphony Orchestra. If anyone, she knows what it means to practice and get better at mastering your work.



Mastering is not a solo performance

Trine played the violin since she was three years and now plays in the DR Symphony Orchestra. Here, she invites us into a world where practice, mastering and apprenticeship plays a very particular role in the training and mastering of the profession.

To many of the greats in the world, the trainer played a crucial role throughout the process, from beginner to being among the best. Many other workplaces could learn from this. Much of the learning happens best when we learn from someone rather than something. The classical musician has their master, and the politician or business man has their mentor. Common to them all is that they get better with others.

MASTERING IS RELATIONAL

The whole idea of the apprenticeship is based on the master and the pupil having a relationship with each other. This leaves room not only for professional mastering, but also personal mastering. And that is at least as important. Trine Yang Møller says it is special to have a master, someone who followed you very closely through some important and formative years of life. The first year, her master only had two students, and at the end of her training, they were a handful. "We felt like a small select group."

YOU GIVE SOMETHING OF YOURSELF

Being a master's student means that there is an experienced person who you look up to, one who will get to know you very well. Trine Yang Møller tells us how initially, she stepped into classes with her master almost in awe. Sitting there, two people across from each other, to learn is a special situation. This means that the learning gets close. You cannot hide in a corner – but that is good. Because then you really learn something. Trine Yang Møller talks about the music passionately. "Music is having to show yourself. If you hide, the right things won't come out." The same can be said

about many other industries. As a teacher or social and healthcare worker, you cannot do your best without giving something of yourself in the relation to students or the elderly at the nursing home. Just as the graphic design or the good idea will not appear if you are not also willing to invest a little of yourself in the work.

THE MASTER STRENGTHENS PERSONAL MASTERING

Having to give some of yourself can make handling errors extra difficult. Handling errors is about personal mastering. Here the good master also plays a major role. The good master can see in their student whether the personal, social or professional mastering is what needs work. Especially with young people, the experience of a lack of personal mastering gets in the way of success. And that is something a master and a student can work on together.

APPRENTICESHIPS CREATE GREAT MUSICIANS

Many musicians get a master in childhood already. The master is with them for many years, during which the student develops as a person – and therefore has a great opportunity to guide the student in many aspects of professional life. And that is a great gift. Having a master who takes their time with you and generously shares their knowledge and experiences. The master gives the pupil their full attention and spends all their energy improving the student. Trine Yang Møller says that if you did not have apprenticeships as a musician, but was rather a part of large classes, you would not get as good musicians as we have today.



PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Popular science says that with 10,000 hours of practice, we can all become masters. That is not true. The number of hours is not what makes the difference for elite musicians, athletes or anyone else who mastered their subjects¹². The way you practice is. 20 minutes spent properly can have a far greater impact than an hour just repeating oneself.

PRACTICING IS NOT THE SAME AS BEING IN FLOW

In many ways, practicing differs from being in "flow". Flow is a concept from e.g. the world of art, where you lose all sense of time and place and allow yourself to indulge entirely in the work you are doing right now. Practicing is different. Here, the work is stopped all the time and you observe mistakes and challenges to then practice them again and again. If a musician is to become skilled at their music, days may be spent practicing the same little bit of a piece over and over again. There is no flow, and the piece is not necessarily played to the end. Each time an error occurs, the exercise stops, and the error is analysed – and then you

try again. And again. Until finally, you succeed and can move a little further through the piece – until you make a mistake again and is forced to stop.

DISCIPLINE AND MOTIVATION

Practicing requires equal parts discipline and motivation. Trine Yang Møller says that, through her life as a musician, she has seen three main ways to practice. As a young child, practice was a game and not something she was conscious about. As she grew older and got her first master, training became a matter of counting the minutes. The quantity of training came into focus. Like the popular scientific idea about the 10,000 hours. When she started at the academy as a young adult, the quality of the practice began to be more important. The decisive factor was not whether she practiced for four hours, but that she spent her time well. As an adult and professional musician, she typically practices for four hours a day. It is about finding the balance between discipline and motivation. As a teenager, she learned to practice because she was very motivated to learn. At the same time, she

was disciplined enough to invest the time that mastering requires. If you are not motivated to practice, you are wasting your time counting the minutes. And you will not progress from that.

EVERYONE CAN LEARN FROM MUSIC

The technique can be used in many workplaces in relation to focusing on the mistakes and leaving room for them for a while. Not to create frustration, but to master the hardest part, so you can "play" flawlessly the next time. In the philosophy of practicing, the many stops and the focus on errors and improvement is exactly what makes us better and creates mastering.

If you reach a helpless impasse with a certain challenge that you cannot overcome, the teacher, mentor or master plays a role and can help overcome the challenge. The master was the apprentice once, and made the same mistake. This gives experience to draw on, so that everyone will not have to solve all the challenges alone. And we do not have to reinvent the wheel ourselves.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN?

EXPERIENCE ALLEVIATES UNCERTAINTY

Many young people feel insecure when they start a new job. As a manager, you can address this uncertainty by giving each new employee an experienced colleague which they are particularly affiliated with. Thus, the young people know where they can go to ask questions. Without feeling that they are in the way or interfere with their colleagues.

UTILISE THE KNOWLEDGE OF SENIORS

The interaction between the new and the experienced is where senior employees can play a particularly great role in the workplace. Typically, senior employees have years of experience and can advantageously help new employees through the learning process. Spending the latter part of their time in the labour market passing on knowledge and experience to the next generation probably also feels meaningful to some seniors.

“ You learn to practice in a way that makes sense. For me, practicing the same thing 300 times in a day does not help. But maybe 50 times in a week. The brain needs to take things in over time. Rather than learning something at the last minute.

- Trine Yang Møller, violinist

In the next chapter, we zoom in on the results of our study related to social mastering and the importance of social relations to the experience of our mastering.

The Danes feel prepared to enter into social relationships

Mastering is about much more than our professional mastering. Among other things, it is about whether we feel adequately equipped to form social relationships with colleagues at work. Generally, our social mastering is in a good way. But how does it look when we zoom in on different age groups?

Our study shows that the vast majority of us feel well prepared to enter into social relationships in the workplace. Thus, almost 73 percent respond that they either feel "very well" or "well" prepared to enter into social relationships in the workplace.

"Sharing something socially is important. We have staff meetings and team building, where we get to know one another. It is important to get along with the others well."

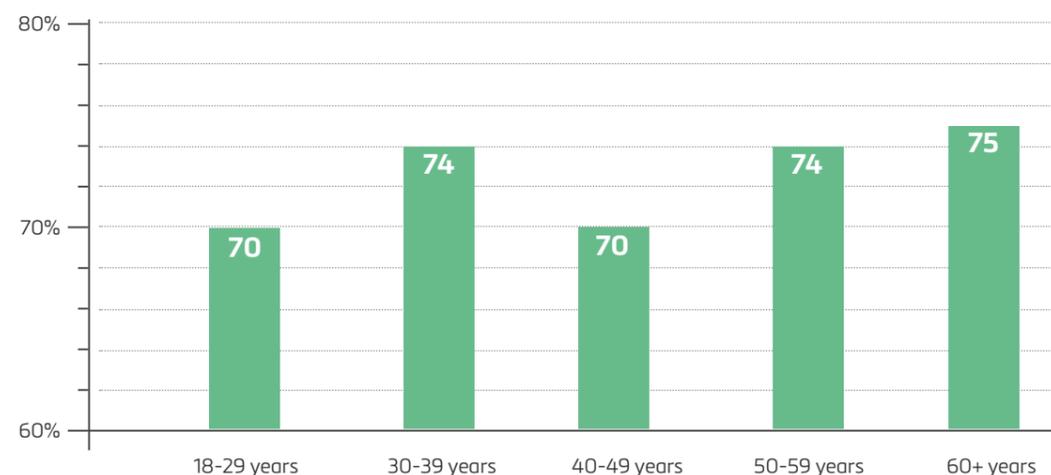
Woman, 24, check-out assistant

SOCIAL SENIORS

If we zoom in on the various age groups among the employees in the Danish labour market, our study suggests that seniors are a bit better at the social things than the young. Where 70 percent of the young people feel well-equipped to engage in social relationships, the figure for seniors is at 75 percent.

THE EXPERIENCE OF SOCIAL MASTERING

BY AGE



The proportion of different age groups which to a "great extent" and "a very great extent" feels prepared to enter into social relationships in the workplace.

Source: Job Satisfaction Index 2018



DO COLLEAGUES MAKE US PERFORM BETTER

AT WORK?



Distribution of responses to the question: "Do you find that your colleagues make you perform better on the job."

Source: Job Satisfaction Index 2018

The result seems consistent with our previous study of meaning in working life and with the *Job Satisfaction Index 2017*, which equally shows that seniors are also the group experiencing the greatest job satisfaction, the greatest meaning and the greatest commitment to working life.

COLLEAGUES CAN BOTH PULL US UP...

In the context of the issue of social mastering, we also asked Danes' about their experience of colleagues' importance to the individual's performance on the job.

The study shows that, in general, our colleagues seem very important to our experience of mastering in our working life. Colleagues can both make us perform better than we would have otherwise done, and they can make us perform worse.

As shown in the figure above, according to the survey 61 percent of us believe that colleagues make us perform better on the job. If we look at the figures more closely, we see that young people aged between 18 and 29 particularly find that their colleagues contribute positively to their mastering of the work. Thus, 70 percent of the young people answer that colleagues make them perform better. If we look at how the answers are distributed in relation to the most recently completed education programme, it suggests that the highly educated in particular experience that their colleagues make them perform better. Among the highly educated, 68 percent reply "yes" to colleagues getting them to perform better, while the equivalent figure is only 48 percent among respondents with elementary school as their most recently completed education level.

... ALSO DOWN!

However, the survey also shows that an entire 32 percent of employees in the Danish labour market have the perception that colleagues get them to perform worse in the job. 4 out of 10 experience having to solve tasks for colleagues because colleagues are not good enough on a weekly basis. In fact, 30 percent believe that their colleagues need continuing education. Zooming in on individual age groups, we can see that the young people aged between 18 and 29 stand out yet again. Thus, 54 percent of the young people answer "yes" to colleagues making them perform worse on the job, while just 25 percent of those aged between 50 and 59 say the same.

REQUIRES LEADERSHIP FOCUS

There is no doubt that social relations in the workplace are very important to our experience of mastering and that in this context, colleagues can both help further and inhibit our mastering. Social interaction at work should therefore also have management's attention and interest, if they want to ensure the best conditions for both the individual's and the team's mastering.

In the next chapter, we will dive a bit deeper into some of the survey results in personal mastering and, in particular, focus on the question of who we mainly blame when we do not feel that we succeed in our work.



We blame ourselves when we do not succeed

We go to work as complete people and our mastering thus depends not only on our professional and social skills, but also on our mental resources and personal mastering. Our study suggests that we have a tendency to look inwards and blame ourselves when we fail in our work.

When respondents in the survey answer whose fault it usually is when they do not succeed in their work, they largely point to themselves. More than one in three blame themselves. In comparison, only 7 percent point

to the immediate manager and 4 percent to colleagues. Nearly one in five point to other people such as customers, suppliers, citizens, politicians etc.

WHOSE FAULT IS IT

WHEN WE DO NOT SUCCEED?



Distribution of responses to the question of whose fault it usually is when one does not succeed in one's work.

Source: Job Satisfaction Index 2018



POINTING THE FINGER AT OURSELVES

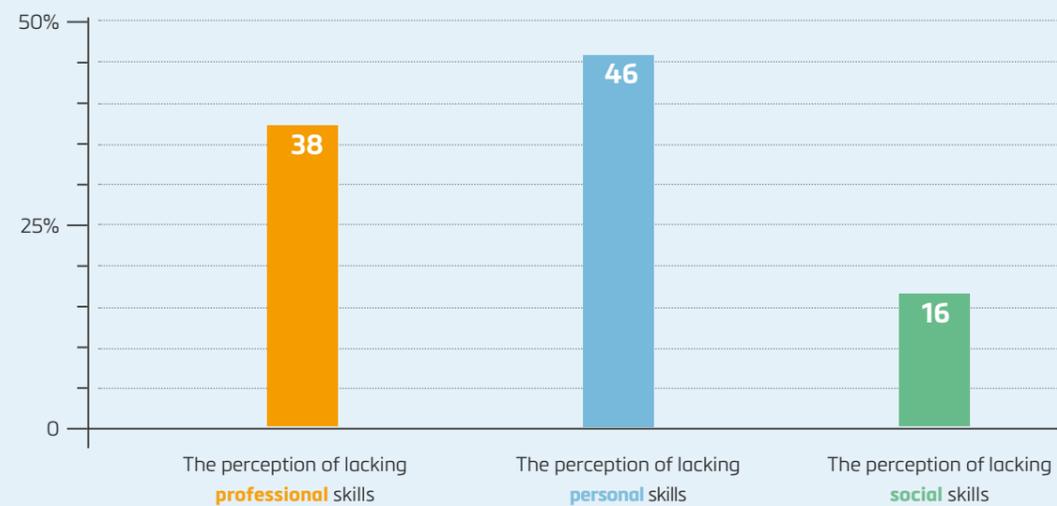
There is a clear tendency that we take great responsibility for things that do not succeed at work. When we dive a little deeper and zoom in on where we think we fall short, the trend is even clearer. We asked respondents to think back to a day when they felt that they did not really succeed in their tasks. We asked them to consider what mainly characterised the situation they were in.

As seen in the bar chart below, as many as 46 percent answer that they felt they did not have the necessary personal skills or mental energy to get through the workday properly.

As industrial psychologist Mads Lindholm elaborates in the chapter *"The art of mastering when not everything goes as planned"*, it is generally perceived as a personal and psychological problem when we do not succeed in our work. We internalise the issue, so to speak, and make it a matter of our own personal or psychological robustness. This makes it a responsibility which the individual is alone with.

WE SEE IT AS A PERSONAL PROBLEM

WHEN WE DO NOT SUCCEED



Distribution of responses to question about the cause of not succeeding sufficiently in one's duties in a given situation. Almost one in two indicates a lack of personal skills or mental energy as the primary reason. Slightly more than one in three points to a lack of professional skills, while just one in five points to the lack of social skills as the cause.

Source: Job Satisfaction Index 2018



“ Yes, it is my responsibility when I do not succeed in my work.”

Woman, 39 years old, social and healthcare worker

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE PARTICULARLY CRITICAL OF THEMSELVES

Regardless of whether we look at gender, age or most recently completed education, the result is the same. When we do not succeed in our work, a lack of personal mastering is given as the main reason. The young people aged between 18 and 29 seem particularly likely to point to a sense of their own inadequacy in relation to personal skills

when they do not succeed in the work. More so than other people. There are probably several explanations to this. For example, Mads Lindholm, who you can meet in the next chapter, indicates that the youth of today makes very high demands of themselves and perceive success in their work as an important part of their self-presentation.



The art of mastering when not everything goes as planned

The experience of being able to master life is central to our well-being and mental health as people.

By Mads Lindholm, industrial psychologist, Ph.D.

In the broadest sense, mastering is about being able to handle the challenges we are faced with. Throughout our lives, we develop different strategies we can use to cope with the tasks, demands and changes life offers. In our very formation as people, mastering is a focal point because our ability to master life is ultimately critical to our opportunities and, consequently, our life satisfaction and health.

Therefore, it is not strange that seeing our feeling of success in what we do challenged or experiencing outright failure has a great impact.

IDENTITY AND EXISTENCE IN WORK

Over the years, working life has come to play an increasingly important role to both our identity and our entire experience of having a reason for being. If we meet someone for the first time, one of the initial questions is often: What do you do?

What we are occupied with is closely linked to our self-esteem and self-worth. Therefore, it is only natural that the vast majority – 99 percent according to this study – find it either important or very important to feel that you are good at your job. In this way, success in work is a way to confirm that you master life.

CHANGES AND DISTURBANCES

In these years, working life is undergoing major changes. The technological development calls into question the foundation of many companies and industries. Globalisation creates new opportunities, but also much greater uncertainty and an experience of losing control.

The government has set up a so-called Disruption Council dealing with these very issues. At its core, disruption means a disturbance – and therefore, it might

not be so strange if, as an employee or manager, you feel disturbed in your usual sense of safety and control.

The changes and disturbances the world is currently experiencing, naturally challenges our sense of mastering. Because on the one hand, mastering is about the individual's abilities and life strategies – and on the other hand, it is just as much about knowledge of the reality you are in. The more you know about the world of which you are a part, the better equipped you are to master the demands and challenges it poses. And as the world can be experienced as increasingly complex, ever-changing and confusing – perhaps even disturbed – the feeling of mastering easily comes under pressure.

PERSONAL AND MASTERING UNDER PRESSURE

This study distinguishes between personal, social and professional mastering. And it is worth taking note of personal mastering being what is largely challenged at work.

In the study, 46 percent point to the sense of not succeeding adequately in your tasks as being caused by a lack of personal skills, including a lack of mental energy. Slightly fewer (38 percent) indicate that it is due to a lack of professional skills, while only about 16 percent point to social interaction with leaders and colleagues as the cause when they do not properly succeed with tasks.

In other words, it is perceived largely as a personal and psychological problem when you do not succeed in your work. And thus, it becomes a responsibility with which the individual stands alone – because it is naturally easier for the workplace to increase employees' professional skills and strengthen the community than it is to strengthen the individual's mental energy.



“ It is worth noting that the personal mastering is under particular pressure at work

WHEN AM I GOOD ENOUGH?

The result is well in line with my experience in my daily work as a business psychologist, meeting people suffering from stress. Stress is rarely about the amount of work alone, but far more often has to do with the feeling of inadequacy. As a woman once said to me: My biggest challenge is that I do not know when I am good enough.

The feeling of inadequacy can have a serious, adverse impact on health. Where the feeling of mastering is a critical component to the experience of job satisfaction, the opposite feeling – inadequacy and the experience of failure – is closely linked to job dissatisfaction and stress, and can spread to the rest of your life: When I fail in my work, am I even good enough as a person?

AGE DOES MATTER

Young people aged 18-29 particularly find a lack of personal competences to be the cause when they do not succeed in their work. There can be several reasons: For example, a number of studies outline a generation of young people who place very high demands on themselves and for whom being successful is an important

part of their self-presentation, which takes place i.a. on social media. To this may be added that today's youth have grown up with a global consciousness and a historically great opportunity to travel and communicate across borders. This can increase their perspective – but also the young people's experience of the demands and expectations to be met in order to succeed in life.

But beyond the particularities which characterise today's globalised youth culture, age itself is also likely to play a role. The life experience that comes with age can help create a sense of integrity and maturity that can confirm the feeling of being good enough.

MASTERING OF EMOTIONS

In psychological literature, a distinction is made between different forms of mastering. It can be about task-related mastering – e.g. to solving the task adequately and well. But it can also be about emotional mastering: How do I react when a project fails, or when it is unclear whether I am good enough? Can I separate my task solving from my self-esteem? Do I see what did not go as planned as a failure or as an opportunity to learn?

The distinction between mastering the task and mastering the emotion connected to the task is essential in modern working life, where change and changing demands is almost constant. What was good enough today, it is not necessarily good enough tomorrow. At the same time, each employee has gotten a significantly greater influence on their own work than previously, and is therefore also increasingly left to assessing themselves whether the job has been done well enough.

Being unsure about what is right is a feeling which modern working life makes it essential to be able to manage. On the one hand, mastering means being able to solve the task. But on the other hand, it also means being able to handle the feeling when the job went differently than you expected or hoped.

Creating increased robustness and experience of mastering in modern working life is not only a question of getting better at problem solving. Equally, it is a matter of mastering complexity, variability and uncertainty, without the uncertainty spreading to oneself.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT AND WHY

One of the keys to mastering change is that focus is not only directed at what needs to be done, but also why.

The first aspect is about what I need to: Did I answer my mails? Did I reach my sales goals? Did I provide the service I had to? All those things are about what you do. If the feeling of success is tied to these things, then figuratively speaking, the feeling of adequacy can easily fluctuate with the number of unanswered emails in the inbox.

The second aspect is about why you do your work. What kind of life goals do I seek to achieve through the work? What purpose does my workplace have, and how do I contribute to it? How do I make a difference to others through my work?

Questions like these create a longer perspective and makes it less imperative for all of today's tasks to go as hoped, as long as the work fundamentally contributes to the workplace's value creation and one's own life goals.



Zoom

Leadership and mastering

Do we generally feel appreciated by our leadership and find that our leadership is clear about the expectations he or she has for our work? Our study suggests that things are going well in this department, but that there is also room for improvement in terms of expectations.

The leadership has great influence on our job satisfaction. Among other things, we know this from *Job Satisfaction Index 2017* and the study *When leadership creates job satisfaction*¹³.

In other words, through their influence and responsibility individual leadership play a crucial role in the individual's experience of job satisfaction. In the study *When management creates job satisfaction*, we identified

four aspects of leadership that all affect each employee's job satisfaction to a varying degree. When in this study we are also interested in the manager in connection with employee mastering, it has to do with the leader playing a crucial role in employees' conditions and opportunities to experience both job satisfaction and mastering.

FOUR DIMENSIONS OF LEADERSHIP

INVOLVEMENT AND FREEDOM

The leadership involves the employee in the decisions that directly affect his/her work. The leader creates the possibility that the employee can plan their work and provides adequate freedom for the employee to carry out their duties, as he/she sees fit.

ATTENTION AND FEEDBACK

The leader provides adequate support and assistance in relation to the tasks, the employee has. The leader recognises the employee's professional efforts and provides appropriate feedback. The leadership sees the employee's individual needs and devotes the time to the employee which he/she needs.

MEANING AND DIRECTION

The leadership is able to create meaning and coherence between the workplace's overall goals and the employee's own contribution. The leader contributes to the work being perceived as meaningful. He/she expresses clear expectations of the tasks the employee must solve and sets the direction and establishes goals for when the team or department is successful. The leadership has an overview of how to work towards common goals.

THE LEADER AS A ROLE MODEL

The leadership is perceived as credible, and there is consistency between words and action. The leader is perceived as fair and is respected as a human being. There is confidence in the leader's way to lead – that is, his/her managerial skills.

The four dimensions of leadership which, according to Krifa's study on leadership, impact employee performance.

Source: *When leadership creates Job satisfaction*, 2017

GENERALLY, WE FEEL APPRECIATED BY OUR LEADERS

The study on which this report is based shows that most of us feel appreciated by our leader, both for our work and for the person we are at work. Thus, 65 percent of respondents respond either "highly" or "very highly" to the question of whether they feel valued by their manager.

When we look at age, we do not find the greatest of differences. But apparently, young people aged 18-29 feel slightly more appreciated for being the person they are than their older counterparts do. Conversely, seniors feel more appreciated for their professionalism than their younger counterparts. Perhaps this is not so surprising, since seniors have also had more years to cultivate a professional competence in the labour market.

CLEAR LEADERSHIP – WITH ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

We also asked whether employees consider their immediate manager to be clear about the expectations he or she has of the individual's work performance. Here, 50 percent respond either "very" or "greatly". But over one fifth, namely 22 percent, either responded "not at all" or "to a lesser extent". So, apparently there is room for improvement as regards managers' ability or willingness to be clear about the expectations they have of the individual's work performance.

from the study *When leadership creates job satisfaction* we know that clarity about expectations for each employee is crucial to the individual's experience of job satisfaction – and thus also to the individual's experience of mastering. A clear matching of expectations between managers and employees is an important prerequisite for the experience of succeeding in the work.

DIRECTION OF THE TEAM AND MEANING TO THE INDIVIDUAL

There can surely be several explanations why so relatively many employees do not find that their leader is adequately clear about the expectations he or she has for the individual. Being clear in relation to the individual, concrete employee is also touched upon in the aforementioned management study. To many managers, it is probably natural to plot a collective direction for a department or a team, where it might often be difficult to create a meaningful and clear direction for each employee.

THE MIDDLE MANAGER'S EXPERIENCE OF MASTERING

According to our study, the middle manager generally seems to experience slightly better mastering than other employees who do not have staff

responsibility. Therefore, we compared middle managers with other employees on four different parameters of mastering:

MANAGERS EXPERIENCE GREATER MASTERING THAN EMPLOYEES



Distribution of responses to four questions about mastering show that middle managers generally experience slightly greater mastering than "regular" employees.
Source: *Job Satisfaction Index 2018*

As shown in the graph above, middle managers generally deem their own mastering to be slightly better than regular employees. The middle manager thus experiences slightly greater professional satisfaction in their work, a slightly better match between tasks and professional skills, find themselves slightly more likely to develop professional skills on the job and generally have a sense of

being slightly better at their job than other employees. Perhaps this result is unsurprising. For example, there is good reason to believe that, to some extent, quite a few middle managers have a slightly better opportunity to organise their working day and prioritise the tasks that interest them than other employees without staff responsibilities.

In the next chapter, leadership consultant Jonathan Løw offers his suggestions on how the leader can better support employees' mastering through a clear matching of expectations. According to Jonathan Løw, the leader should begin by listening to their employees more.

Listening louder as a leader

On average, it takes 18 seconds before a manager interrupts an employee when they speak. 18 seconds. That is the sad lesson from Tom Peters' study of managers' ability to listen¹⁴.

By Jonathan Low, entrepreneurial, management and innovation consultant

ACTIVE LISTENING

As a leader, you should remember what experts have called "active listening". I.e. an awareness that you cannot listen only to reply, but should listen to listen.

When a leader actively listens to an employee, you strengthen your cooperation. The responsive management creates a space for an open and trustworthy dialogue, because the employee knows that they are actually listened to. This allows them to subsequently dare to act on dialogue rather than talk to the manager and still feel uncertain about their own tasks, responsibilities or abilities.

This contributes to professional mastering of the tasks ahead and to the personal mastering as employees understand that they are good enough and can get let go of the uncertainty when they know what is expected of them. A leader who listens actively will also create a culture where failure is not just the responsibility of the employee, but something handled jointly.

MASTERING AND MEANING LINKED

The fact that one in five employees experience that the leader does "not at all" or "to a lesser extent" give the employee the opportunity to work with something that the employee is passionate about is worrying. This appears from the survey behind this report.

Mastering one's field is very much about our skills being put into play. If we are not passionate about what we do, we lose our motivation and that makes it difficult to

develop and learn. In the end, it may harm the experience of meaning in what we do. The experience of meaning at work and our ability to master the work are closely linked.

If, as a leader, you succeed in combining this with continuously articulating meaning to the employee, it automatically affects the employee's view of the tasks he or she must perform in everyday life. In turn, this leads to strengthening the individual's understanding and mastering of the social role and tasks.

FROM CHANGE-READY TO CHANGE-CREATING

Change-ready may sound good and slick, but paradoxically, it is a passive state! When you are ready, you wait. This gives the employee a mindset that is more reactive than proactive. To create new things or learn something new, it is important to be active. You have to be change-creating. Knowledge becomes learning when we take it out into reality and use it in practice. Even if you do not succeed the first time. Learning is closely related to practice – and the value of practice is what you can read more about in the section "Mastering is not a solo performance." To learn, to master something new, it is important to know that managers and colleagues stand with you. We learn better when we feel safe. And you do not have security alone – security is something you share with others. That way, we can fail, learn and master together.



THREE CONCRETE PIECES OF ADVICE FOR THE LEADER

• Set aside time

For your own part, you must consciously devote time and space to reflect after the conversations you have with employees or management. Therefore, set aside little breaks in your working day for evaluating your most important conversations. In terms of supporting employees' mastering at work, ask directly about their experiences of the workplace, their colleagues and their tasks.

• Ask more questions than usual

The next time you catch yourself wanting to respond quickly to questions or defend yourself in relation to a critical comment from an employee, ask one more question instead to be sure that you understood them correctly. When you understand each other and can talk freely together, it underpins both personal, social and professional mastery.

• Ask strong questions

Do not simply ask about the tasks which are carried out, but also about the experience of performing the tasks. That way, you can talk about when mastering is perceived, when the employee succeeds, and where there is a need to address issues with advice and guidance.

Mastering – in the long run

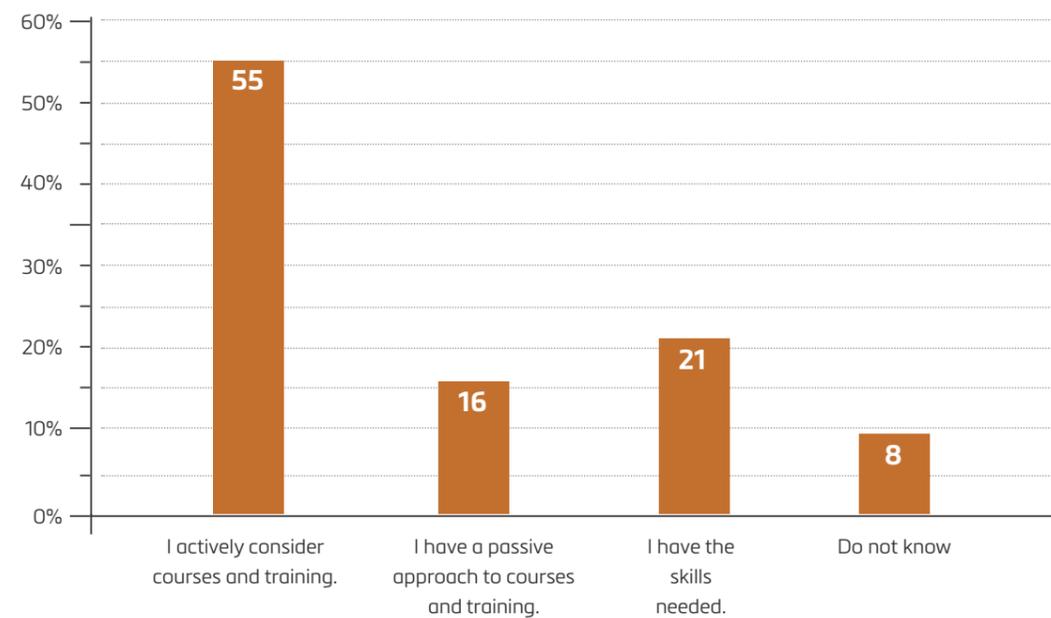
We Danes generally have a sense of being good at our work, and we also feel that it is important to be good at one's job. But how do we continue to be successful in our work, and what are we doing to stay updated and ensure that we have the right skills?

We asked the Danes what they are doing to ensure that they have the right skills to solve the tasks they are faced with in the workplace.

It is rather thought-provoking that one in five does not consider developing their skills necessary, as we know from other studies that a wide range of job functions we know today will either completely disappear or at least change significantly within the next few years¹⁵.

As shown in the graph below, roughly half of us actively consider courses and continued education that might be of relevance to us. At the same time, approximately a fifth of us indicate that we have the skills needed to solve tasks in a satisfactory manner.

THE ATTITUDE OF DANES TOWARDS COURSES AND TRAINING



Distribution of answers to the question "What do you do yourself to ensure that you have the right skills to perform the tasks that you face at work?".

Source: Job Satisfaction Index 2018



“Continued education is important. I want to develop. Preferably, you should not be cruising on autopilot and just disengage your brain. There must be an adequate amount of challenges and things to become familiar with. That way, you constantly get better.

Man, 38 years old, middle manager

SOME ARE IN HIBERNATION

The result seems consistent with a survey from 2016, when Krifa's Job Satisfaction Knowledge Centre studied the Danes' perceived job security. Among other things, we asked: "What do you do to ensure that your professional skills match the requirements and expectations of you in your job going ahead?". To that, 17 percent of respondents responded: "I do not feel a need to do anything in particular to secure my professional skills in relation to future demands and expectations."

This trend is also confirmed by a study conducted by Analyse Danmark for weekly newsletter Ugebrevet A4 in 2017¹⁶. The study showed that 84 percent of Danish employees believe they have the professional skills required for them to find a new job.

BARRIERS TO SKILL DEVELOPMENT

As employees, we are not deserted islands, but influenced by both managers and colleagues and the workplace's culture. Popularly speaking, it is about whether continuing education and skill development is "something we do around here." Whether continued education and upgrading of skills is something that management

appreciates and supports, or whether it is something you have to find out yourself as an employee, varies from workplace to workplace.

Among other things, the study by Analyse Danmark points to busyness and tight finances as some of the reasons why employees do not receive continuing education. One of the respondents in our own survey, a social and healthcare worker, puts it this way: "We are not offered much. A theme day at most. I'd certainly like more of it, but they can't seem to find the money for it."

In the example above, the social and healthcare worker expresses her desire for increased opportunities for training and continuing education, but feels that there is no money for it.

In our survey, a middle manager from the public sector tells us how he experiences the culture regarding skill development and continued education: "Many employees have their own wishes as regards courses. We say never refuse the employees' wishes. We would like to see employees use it a bit more."

THREE TYPES OF BARRIERS

In the quote on page 60, continued education and skill development is directly supported by management, and the 50-year-old middle manager from the public sector even says that he would like to see the employees use it a little more. The latter is interesting. Because why do employees not use the option of continued education more, when the manager says they rarely say no when employees request courses and the like? Of course, it could be about what our study also shows – that the individual feels that he or she already has the skills needed and therefore sees no reason to join a course or continued education. Another explanation could be the perception that, because of busyness, you will be frowned upon if you go on a course while the colleagues have to slog on. This explanation is linked to what several labour market researchers refer to as an institutional barrier (see the right hand box), where prioritising time in the classroom over the workplace community is frowned upon. A third explanation could be that the leader has not sufficiently made employees aware that he would actually like to see them take on continuing education and participate in courses.

Labour market researchers Mads Peter Klint and Morten Lassen from the Centre for Labour Market Research (CARMA) at Aalborg University studied the reasons for the lack of motivation for continuing education which characterises many – particularly unskilled – workers in the Danish labour market. Klint and Lassen define three types of barriers to continued education, which you can read more about in the box to the right.

BARRIERS TO CONTINUING EDUCATION

1. Way-of-life barriers – many employees are characterised by a work identity where work is the means and leisure time the end. Work, therefore, must simply be endured until they can go home
2. Resistance barriers – a lot of people had really bad experiences at school and only really became happy when they took up work in a workplace. They have no desire to return to school and the bad times
3. Institutional barriers – many find that there is a lot of bureaucracy associated with wanting to take up continuing education, and therefore give up in advance. In addition, the culture in many workplaces is that you do not stand out or opt out of the community, which you do if you suddenly want continuing education

Source: Klint and Lassen, CARMA, 2010

“Some are probably hibernating, and they would do themselves and Danish society a huge favour by waking up.

Hanne Shapiro, Head of Innovation, Technological Institute in the analysis from Analyse Danmark

In the next chapter, you can join us for a look into the future with futurologist Louise Fredbo-Nielsen and read her take on the trends she sees in The future labour market and what these trends will mean for our mastering.



A look into the future

Do you work with HR or people? Then you will become more important than ever, as the future brings artificial intelligence, blurred borders between disciplines and more and more demands on us employees in the workplace. This development represents a different approach to skill and mastering. But what does it all mean that we should be able to do? And how do you get started?

By: Louise Fredbo-Nielsen, futurologist

During my life, I have spent an unbelievable amount of time on becoming skilful. I have spent months on making assignment after assignment completely flawless, spent hours dreaming about getting them back all white and shiny – with no red lines and exclamation marks! Doing what other people expect. I was a classic model student.

But then I became a futurologist. And as a futurologist, you get to wear a pair of unique glasses that make you learn to see the future without the distorting baggage you lug around on a daily basis. My future glasses are zoomed in on the key competencies of the future, and I can now see that perfection is not what will be required of me – or you – in 10 and 15 years. You see, skill and mastering will be about something else entirely. And demand something different of you. What that is, we will get back to. But first, let us take a look at what trends in society and the labour market will drive this development.

TRENDS IN THE FUTURE LABOUR MARKET

A wide range of tasks and job functions, such as auditors, parking attendants and sports journalists will

disappear in the coming years, as artificial intelligence, automation and cobots (robots we collaborate with) enter the workplace. But the good news is that more new jobs emerge than are lost. We just do not know the job titles yet. In fact, we live in a very exciting time. We have every conceivable option. Of course, they just requires us to have the energy and strength for them.

FEWER GOLD WATCHES AND ANNIVERSARIES

Lifelong employment and 40th anniversaries will also be replaced by flexibility and micro jobbing, where you offer your labour to several employers in limited periods. And blurred disciplines where the brightest and most suitable performs the task – not the person who is trained to do so.

A third factor that will affect the future labour market is that more people live longer. Old age is not what it has been, and a lot of people do not grow old in the same way they did previously. This is one of the areas where we need to think radically new, so that we can ensure that the long life will also become a better one.

Now we outlined three trends, but what does this mean for the direction in which our skills must go?

“ It will always be important to stay curious and willing to be amazed by the world around us, so start by getting really good at that!



THREE CHARACTERISTICS FOR THE FUTURE

One of the best bits of advice I have been given is this: Allow yourself to be incompetent for a period of your life. Or at least be bad at something. Try to accept that you cannot be good at everything. Once you have allowed yourself to be bad, you have simultaneously opened the mental door that allows you to be good at something. And here are three characteristics you can start working on:

1. THE ABILITY TO REINVENT YOURSELF

When this study indicates that the main reason why we do not succeed in our work is that we do not have the appropriate personal competences, I see the contours of a great challenge. When one in five states that they have the skills they need, and a full 16 percent have a passive attitude to courses and continuing education, it probably sends a shiver down the spine of many a course provider. And sure, I get a nervous tingle in my crystal ball as well. What we need to be able to do, and what will be required of us, changes along with the entry of technology and artificial intelligence into offices, factories and roads around the country. So we cannot just sit on our behinds while the coffee gets cold and the exciting tasks are solved by a group of Ukrainian teenagers.

A lot of education programmes and much of what you learned in school will become obsolete over the course of your working life, and many of the jobs we know today will not exist in 20 years. I am sorry to say it, but you will be overrun if you sit still. Just think of typesetters who made a killing in the newspapers' editorial offices in the 70s, but do not exist as a profession today.

So, we have a duty to give ourselves a loving software update – and help each other to achieve it. The future is about being able to reinvent yourself and reinvent your competencies, and you will never get there, if you insist on simply handing in flawless assignments that you have been pottering with by your desk alone.

2. MAKE A FRIEND OF YOUR ANNOYANCE AND FRUSTRATION

In all learning, there is always an element of frustration where everything becomes difficult, and your brain throws a smokescreen in desperation that makes it almost impossible to see clearly. My little one-year-old son sets into a primal scream when he cannot get the square peg in the round hole in the box. When I had to learn fractions, I was so frustrated I just wanted to scream and run away, because I could not figure it out. How do you react when the going gets tough and you feel like giving up?

Rather than going into a deadlock of frustration, could you breathe and say "hmm, interesting" take a mental step back and observe what happens when you get frustrated. Use your curiosity, empathy, annoyance, laziness and errors as much as you can. Do you need to learn how to send unfinished things to your team, and be confident that they will find the mistakes that make you better? Or do you need to send a perfect product to your team, so you can reap the recognition? Perfection is boring and errors are the only way to mastering and qualification.

3. THE PURPOSES OF BINDING COMMUNITIES

Even if you are the world champion in mastering, something else is actually just as important in the

future labour market: The ability to enter into a binding community. A lot of companies are already beginning to go from headhunting, where they look for one good profile for a job, to team hunting, where they look for a team of skilled profiles which – hold on – are wildly talented at making each other better. It is like buying a flower with integrated fertiliser. Smart. The team's skills grow because they understand what it means to master mastering and enter into a binding, dedicated community, coordinate and work in partnerships with colleagues, customers, bosses, etc. In other words, social mastering becomes as important as professional mastering.

UPSETTING THE APPLCART OF COMPETENCE

A good solid barrier to becoming really good at something is the zero error culture and ambition to not make mistakes. In this study, young people aged between 18 and 29 years to a far greater extent than others say that they "very much" feel good at their jobs when they do not make mistakes. And that is a shame. Over time, much innovation has come from experimenting and failing. If it were not for big mistakes, we would not have the pacemaker or bubble wrap today, just to name two. My colleagues and I often tell one another: "Just make some shit the rest of us can relate to," and we will make it superb from there. In the quest to make everything so very good, we often spend too much time

in the workplace getting a detail so very perfect, only for it to later prove totally superfluous. Waste! So, do not be so afraid of making mistakes. You learn from failing – and your colleagues can relate to that, and you can do it better from there.

START WITH A BUDDY

Find a buddy that you can improve your skills with. You do not have to want to go in the same direction, but you must be able to give each other a loving smack and support.

Think about what you need to be really good at in five years. What would it give you energy to master and what would make you happier by the time you start the weekend on Friday than you were when you went to work on Monday? And then start practicing with your buddy today.

There is a need for mastering and being really good at something, but if you cannot make it all work with tasks and babies and dinner, just breathe. There will still be room for you in the future. Staying curious and ready to be amazed by the world around us will always be important. So, start by getting really good at that!

“ Perfection is boring and errors are the only way to mastering and qualification

Boreout - getting sick from boredom

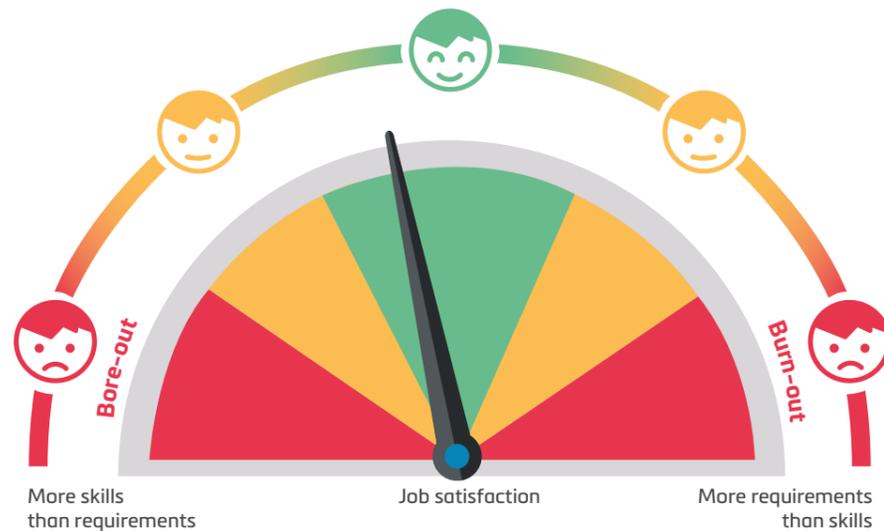
Being busy for a while and feeling that you really get things done is healthy – but being too overloaded for too long is dangerous. Likewise, it is healthy to be bored for a while, as in turn you get to think a little more about the bigger questions and use your creativity. But, if you are under-stimulated for too long, it may in the worst case lead to depression and anxiety.

Much has been written and said about stress. A widespread disease, unfortunately affecting a lot of people every year. What is less known is the counterpart of stress – boreout. Potentially, it can be almost as dangerous to the individual, although the phenomenon is much less common than stress and burnout. Boreout is a term that comes from the opposite of burnout and means having been under-stimulated for too long.

The figure below illustrates that achieving job satisfaction in daily life and in the challenges you face is about

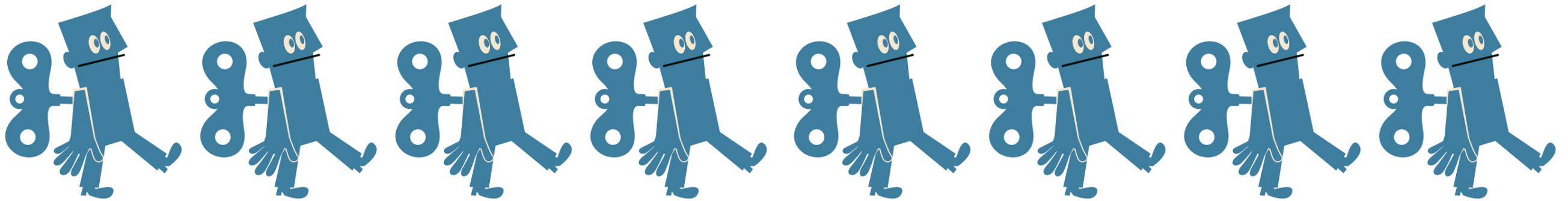
balancing skills and requirements. And in the worst case, being under-stimulated can be as dangerous as being overloaded. In short, it is about moving back and forth within the green box to keep a healthy mastering balance at work. It is important to emphasize that models are always a simplified version of reality. Boreout is very much the experience of not having anything to do. This can refer to both specific tasks, but also to the personal experience of not being challenged mentally.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SKILLS AND REQUIREMENTS



The figure illustrates the experience of the relationship between requirements and skills.
Source: Krifa's Job Satisfaction Knowledge Centre and Happiness Research Institute, 2018





BOREDOM IS TABOO

In a society where we celebrate success and everyone wants to be important, being busy has become a status symbol. When we meet friends and ask how people are doing at work, more than half of us will typically say that it is busy. We may even get anticipate each other's answer and ask: "So, busy at work these days?". In fact, with that question we ask whether our friend has enough to do. And if you are busy, it is often interpreted as being important. And that gives us status.

WHO WOULD NOTICE IF YOU DID NOT SHOW UP?

Therefore, it is often taboo and embarrassing to admit that you are bored at work. Especially if you have been for a while. That the colleagues do not need you. That the boss does not need you. And that you have not accomplished anything of value for a long time. In a society that values busyness, having nothing to do prompts a sense of failure. Especially when, to a lot of people, work is an important part of one's identity. If you have done nothing at work – have you lost your identity and significance as a person? Who would notice if you did not show up on Monday?

MEANINGLESSNESS IS ...

In our study, 32 percent of respondents say that, one or more times within the past week, they have been bored at work. In addition to the risk of being inefficient to the company, it also risks impacting the individual employee. Therefore, we should be aware of whether it is a trend that develops negatively for the employee. This is a shared responsibility at work; the employee must speak out if they are bored, and the leader should be aware if an employee exhibits signs of being bored.

BOREOUT COMES SLOWLY

Typically, boreout does not occur from one day to the other. If you take a frog and put it in a bucket of boiling water, the frog will quickly jump back up. If, however,

you put a frog in a bucket of cold water and slowly heat the water until it boils, the frog will stay there until it dies. The same image can be used when boredom becomes overwhelming at work. If all the exciting tasks and challenges disappear from one day to the other – most people will probably speak up. But, if the tasks and challenges disappear gradually over a period of time, we might not realise it before meaninglessness and boredom takes hold. Often, meaning and motivating tasks disappear slowly through new structures, new customers or new colleagues, slowly changing the expectations we have of the individual. It is important to be attentive along the way and jump out of the bucket in time.

SIGNS OF BOREOUT

Although 32 percent said that they are bored at work one or more times a week, of course this does not mean that they are all at risk of developing boreout. In the box below, you can see some of the signs that you should be aware of and which may be signs of boreout.

SIGNS OF BOREOUT

1. You handle personal matters during working hours, but simulate work when colleagues or managers pass by
2. You make it look like you are putting in a lot of hours at work
3. You divide small tasks into many chunks, so they last longer
4. You bring work home, but do not work on it
5. You tell others how busy you are
6. You are bored all the time and feel great dissatisfaction with your work

Source: Rothlin, 2007

HOW TO GET OUT OF BOREOUT?

It is normal to ask a manager or colleague for extra work once or twice. But it becomes humiliating if, again and again, you are faced with the feeling of having to beg for work and challenges.

Breaking out of boreout and creating a good balance is achieved by working with all three types of mastering. And it is not something that the individual employee can do alone.

PROFESSIONALLY: Have the talk with the manager and prepare by finding tasks and expectations that suit your skills and desires. It is important to remember that expectations and skills develop over time, and that professional mastering is continuously adapted to both the employee's and the company's expectations and desires. The research also shows that boreout particularly affects highly skilled employees who quickly acquire new knowledge and therefore also risk getting

bored and longing for challenges. Therefore, do not be afraid to talk to the manager. Most managers will welcome employees who are proactive in relation to their own mastering.

SOCIAL: Join teams so that tasks and expectations are not based on you alone, but is something several people share. This way, you help prevent that you or some of your colleagues are overburdened while others are under-stimulated. Through good collaboration between colleagues, tasks and expectations can flow between members of the team, and you can help each other.

PERSONAL: Remember why you work in this exact job. Rediscover the meaning of the work you do. Practice keeping focus and resist the temptation of procrastination and putting off tasks.

“ This is something to be aware of when talking about mastering – it is not always a matter of improving skills – it can also be a matter of raising expectations

Rothlin, 2007

The complete person at work

The experience of mastering is essential to our job satisfaction. That is true now, and it will be true in the future as well. In the future labour market, greater demands will be made – particularly for personal mastering. As a society, we have a responsibility to not excessively exhaust people’s mental resources, and to ensure that the individual is not responsible for its mastering alone.

To, Danes being good at our work is important. And we think we are doing alright in that department ourselves. So, all is well, one is tempted to conclude. But when, as has been done in this report, you work your way down into the individual dimensions of mastering and focus on how the labour market will look like in the future, there are things that call for reflection and action.

NEED FOR A BREAK WITH SELF-RECRIMINATION AND STRESS

The studies on which this report is based shows that many of us tend to blame ourselves when we experience not mastering our work. In other words, we largely point the finger at ourselves when we fail. Perhaps this reflects an individualised thinking, where we greatly internalise challenges and make them our own personal problems. The trend seems to follow a development that we already see in society, where more and more people set so high standards for themselves, they end up succumbing to poor self-esteem and stress. The Stress Society estimates that approx. 35,000 Danes are absent from work every day because of poor mental health and work environment, and that nearly half a million Danes feel burned out on the job. We cannot be satisfied with this, and we have to do something about it.

THE LEADER MUST BE PROACTIVE

We all have a responsibility to articulate that mastering at work is not just the responsibility of the individual. For example, managers and workplaces have a responsibility to ensure optimum conditions for each individual employee's experience of mastering. This can be done

by management really listening to the employee's mastering challenges and aspirations. Both as regards professional, personal and social mastering. Specifically, questions about the various aspects of mastering could be a regular item in staff development interviews. The leader must also create a space and culture of ongoing skills development and continuing education.

COLLEAGUES MUST BE BROUGHT INTO PLAY

As colleagues, we have a responsibility to support each other to a better mastering – not just professionally, but also personally and socially. In the community at work, we have a responsibility to improve and lift each other.

SOCIAL STRUCTURES CREATE FRAMEWORKS

Structures in society are very important to ensuring optimal conditions for qualification and continuing education of the workforce. In this context, politicians, managers and professional organisations have a special responsibility to influence and change frameworks and structures which keep the individual employee in a sense of guilt in which they have no real part.

THE INDIVIDUAL'S OWN RESPONSIBILITY

Of course, each employee is also responsible for their mastering at work. Therefore, we all have an obligation to upskill and continue to educate ourselves and approach ourselves, our fellow human beings and the world around us with curiosity and a willingness to be amazed.

RESPECT FOR BOTH POTENTIAL AND LIMITATIONS

The future labour market will look very different. Many of the jobs that we know today will be replaced by technological solutions. In turn, a wealth of new types of jobs will emerge. To a great extent, lifetime employment will be replaced by micro jobbing. There is no doubt that adaptability and a developing mindset is crucial to mastering work in the future. Demands of personal mastering will be greatly enhanced. But what are the psychological implications for the individu-

al when the mental resources come into focus even more? What about those who do not have the necessary psychological robustness? The future is exciting, but calls for us to both be aware of the potential of the individual and respect the limitations – physical, mental or competency-wise – of every human being. After all, we are human beings and not human doings.



EXTERNAL CONTRIBUTIONS



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Louise is a futurologist and author *Plot the Course*. As a futurologist, she gives lectures in both Denmark and the rest of the world. Louise is permanently connected to DR P1 and a former lecturer at Roskilde University and Columbia University. Louise holds an MSc. in International Business & Politics from CBS, Paris and Beijing.



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Jonathan is a lecturer, entrepreneur and the man behind the books *Listen Louder*, *THE GURU BOOK* and *The Disruption Book*. He was previously named IT Entrepreneur of the Year and received the e-commerce award and Computerworld's Edison Award. Today, he is the director of consulting company Listen Louder, where he helps small and large organisations create a true culture of innovation.



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Mads is an industrial psychologist, MSc., HD in Organisation and Management and holds an Industrial PhD in strategic decar from Aalborg University. He owns Wice Consulting and has many years of experience in advising individuals and organisations on leadership, job satisfaction and strategic decar. Previously, Mads collaborated with Krifa's Job Satisfaction Knowledge Centre – i.a. on the publication *What is meaning? (Hvad er mening?)*. *Meaning as motivation at work* in 2016.

CASE PERSONS

Anne Sophie Sehested Münster (Inspired Beyond Babies)

Trine Yang Møller (Danish Broadcasting Corporation's Symphony Orchestra)

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MORE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT JOB SATISFACTION

Krifa's Job Satisfaction Knowledge Centre continually strives to identify, develop and disseminate knowledge about themes in job satisfaction. Here is a quick overview of our latest releases.



2017:
Job Satisfaction Index 2017 – together we move the boundaries for Job Satisfaction in Denmark

When we get up in the morning to go to work, does it make sense to us? Do we feel like we have a say, and do we feel that we have mastered the job and its tasks? In Job Satisfaction Index 2017, among other things we explored the boundaries of Danish job satisfaction. The boundaries are e.g. the trip to and from work and what happens when job satisfaction is replaced by stress.



2017:
When leadership creates job satisfaction

The report is based on a comprehensive factor analysis of what various management dimensions mean to the job satisfaction of Danish employees. Results and points from the study are interpreted and put into perspective by a number of management experts and practitioners.



2016:
What is meaning? Meaning as motivation at work

This report is based on comprehensive factor analysis, where we further illustrate which dimensions meaning in work consist of and how meaning contributes to job satisfaction for employees at Danish workplaces.

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Krifa's Job Satisfaction Knowledge Centre and Happiness Research Institute:

- Job Satisfaction Index 2015
- Job Satisfaction Index 2016
- Job Satisfaction Index 2017

Krifa's Job Satisfaction Knowledge Centre and WICE Consulting:

- *Hvad er mening? Mening som motivation i arbejdslivet*, 2016

Krifa's Job Satisfaction Knowledge Centre:

- *Når ledelse skaber arbejdslyst*, 2017

Endnotes

1. See "Working With Mastering Makes a Difference", page 12
2. Dweck, 2006
3. Neisser et al., 1996
4. Netterstrøm, 2014
5. Netterstrøm, 2014
6. Bandura, 1994
7. Mead, 1934
8. Forrier & Sels, 2003
9. www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_7308.html
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11. See e.g. Giddens, 1999
12. <https://videnskab.dk/kultur-samfund/kan-man-oeve-sig-til-en-ol-medalje>
13. When management creates job satisfaction, Krifa's Job Satisfaction Knowledge Centre, 2017
14. Tom Peters, 2014
15. The World Economic Forum estimates that 65 percent of children who start school today, will be working in jobs that do not exist yet. See Job Satisfaction Index 2017, page 58
16. Ugebrevet A4, 17 January 2017
17. Rothlin, 2007

This report is developed by Krifa's Job Satisfaction Knowledge Centre based on their own studies carried out with the help of Kantar Gallup – and with the Happiness Research Institute and several external experts.

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The complete person at work

A survey of Danes' experience of mastering at work

Job Satisfaction Index 2018 is a study of the state of Danes' perception of mastering at work. The study builds on the knowledge that Krifa's Job Satisfaction Knowledge Centre has accumulated about Danish job satisfaction over several years and in cooperation with the Happiness Research Institute and Kantar Gallup. Mastering is one of seven factors which particularly affects the Danes' experience of well-being and job satisfaction. The other factors are meaning, leadership, balance, influence, achievement and colleagues.

This is the fourth consecutive year that Krifa publishes the Job Satisfaction Index, and this year we placed a special focus on mastering at work.

The report will provide an insight into:

- How good we Danes think we are at our work
- Who is the most immersed in their work
- Who gets the blame when we fail in our work
- The state of mastering in different industries
- How we feel about making mistakes
- How we feel about learning new things
- What it takes to master the work in the future labour market

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