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# HR'S SUPPORTS AND DEVELOP OR THE TEAM LEADERS

–Case Study Ikea Espoo



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# HR'S SUPPORTS AND DEVELOP FOR THE TEAM LEADERS

-Case Study Ikea Espoo

Leaders are essential to an organization's success. Having the proper support from HR is very important for them to lead effectively. Although HR tries to provide them with the necessary expertise and guidance, it is also important that the leaders take ownership of their teams.

The goal of this thesis is to find out if IKEA Espoo's HR department was able to successfully support the leaders in their position. This involves providing them with the necessary expertise and guidance, as well as sharing information with them. In addition, the study aims to Analyse if the task division between the HR and the leaders is clear.

The research was carried out using a mixed approach, focusing on the perspectives of HR and leaders. The findings of the study allowed the researcher to formulate recommendations to address the issue.

Keywords:

Human resource, leadership, leader, manager, support

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## HENKILÖSTÖHALLINTO TUKI JA KEHITTÄMINEN TIIMIJOHTAJILLE

- Tapaustutkimus Ikea Espoo

Johtajilla on keskeinen rooli organisaation menestyksessä, ja HR:n tuki on välttämätöntä heidän tehokkaalle johtajuudelleen. Vaikka HR pyrkii tarjoamaan tarvittavaa asiantuntemusta ja ohjausta, johtajien on ehdottomasti otettava vastuu tiimeistään. Tämän opinnäytetyön tavoitteena on tarkastella IKEA Espoon HR-osaston johtajilleen tarjoaman HR-tuen tehokkuutta. Tämä edellyttää tarvittavan asiantuntemuksen ja ohjauksen sekä tiedon jakamisen arviointia.

Lisäksi tutkimuksessa pyritään arvioimaan henkilöstöosaston ja johtajien välisen työnjaon selkeyttä. Tutkimuksessa käytettiin sekametodologiaa, jossa tutkittiin sekä HR-ammattilaisten että johtajien näkökulmia. Tutkimuksen tulosten ansiosta tutkija pystyi kehittämään ehdotuksia tunnistetun ongelman tehokkaaksi ratkaisemiseksi.

Asiasanat:

Henkilöstöhallinto, johtajuus, esimies, johtaja, tuki

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| <u>Abbreviations</u> | <u>Explanations</u>       |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| SSS                  | Sales, supply and support |
| HRM                  | Human resource management |
| VM                   | Visual merchandiser       |
| BR&C                 | Business resource center  |
| ID                   | Interior designer         |

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The thesis's inspiration came from my personal interests and professional aspirations. The topic was broached with IKEA Espoo HR manager, who convinced me to explore the possibilities of combining the leader's expertise and knowledge with the support of human resources. The eagerness to develop myself and become a better leader motivated the researcher to examine it.

The study's importance is that it raises awareness about the support provided by IKEA's HR department to their team leaders and how they view it. It also allows the researcher to suggest improvements to the organization. In operational management, focus is placed on the optimization of sales and the results. On the other hand, in leading, it is concerned with the success of the organization. People are more likely to prioritize their health and well-being when it comes to their work. They also prioritize reaching sales goals and motivating themselves. The concept of leadership is that it is meaningful and goal-oriented behavior that leads to results. Leadership is important in an organization and can achieve these results through their actions, behaviors, and support. However, it is possible that they can be achieved through illegitimate means, this raises questions about their ethical and moral outlook. Leaders are regarded as successful if they perform well. But it is not to imply that they are easy to measure or define. In fact, there have been many inquiries about the measurement of performance of leaders. (Manning & Robertson 2022, 6.)



## 1.2 Current role

My responsibilities include the efficient movement of products and goods within the IKEA organization. As a logistics co-worker, I have the opportunity to play a leading role in the company's supply chain management. In addition to receiving and organizing the company's stock, I also have the opportunity to oversee the delivery of goods and manage the warehouse's inventory.

As a part of the organization's assembly and shipping departments, I am responsible for ensuring that the products are of the highest quality. Furthermore, I work with other units within IKEA to improve the organization's logistics operations.

As a part of IKEA's logistics team, I have the opportunity to interact with various team leaders and HR personnel.

I can interact with HR to help new members of the logistics team get acquainted with the department's procedures and expectations.

HR can facilitate performance evaluation. I could talk about my performance and provide feedback, as well as receive suggestions on career advancement.

In the event of a workplace conflict, HR can mediate and help resolve the issue in an amicable manner.

## **2 Main Thesis Objective, research questions and scope**

The study looked into whether the HR department of IKEA was able to provide the proper support and guidance to the team leaders of the company's store in Espoo. It also tried to map out the needs of the store's leaders and identify possible issues.

The objective of the study was to identify the support provided by Espoo Ikea HR to their leaders.

The research questions of this bachelor thesis are:

1. What are the areas that leaders seek for help?
2. Is the HR department providing enough support to the leaders in their roles?
3. Is there a need for more support for the leaders in certain areas?

### **2.1 Motivation**

The thesis was motivated by the author's desire to improve his skills and knowledge in the field of human resources and leadership. This topic was brought up by IKEA Espoo's HR manager, who gave the author an opportunity to combine his interests and knowledge on one condition, which is all the information used should be already published on the net. The dynamics between team leaders and HR can be analyzed to understand how they work together within a company. HR professionals play a vital role in helping team members improve their performance by providing them with all the necessary support and resources. Since Ikea is a multicultural organization, our Hr department can help managers and team leaders by asking them what they want to be supported, developing ongoing education programs for them, and teaching them how to build trust with their team. This study provided the author

with an in-depth understanding of the workplace, such as its dynamics and communication. This knowledge can help him provide effective and relevant advice to his team members. In addition to being able to help them make better decisions, it also allows them to improve their performance.

## 2.2 Business Introduction

In 1943, Ingvar Kamprad established a mail-order business known as IKEA. The company only started selling furniture in 1948. Its first store was opened in 1953 in Älmhult, Sweden. IKEA's first store outside of Sweden was opened in Norway in 1963. It was followed by one in Denmark in 1969. The company expanded its operations to other European countries in the following decade, opening stores in West Germany in 1974 and Switzerland in 1973. During the decade, IKEA was able to establish itself as a leader in the furniture industry by opening stores in different countries. In 1973, it started operating a joint venture known as IKEA Corner in Japan. Unfortunately, the company was forced to close the business in 1983 and the reason was that IKEA furniture was often too big for Japanese homes, which was a major issue at that time. According to Karl Kerker, people in the city did not have cars, and they had to rely on the public transportation system. This made it difficult to hire a car and deliver IKEA goods. Also, the company's concept of doing it yourself clashed with the Japanese way of thinking about service. (IKEA Museum)

It then opened stores in Canada, Hong Kong, and Australia in 1975. In 1978, the company was able to expand its operations in the Netherlands and Singapore. During the 1980s, IKEA expanded its operations by opening stores in various European countries, such as Spain, France, Belgium, the UK, and the US. In 2010, the company opened its first branch in Latin America in the Dominican Republic. In 2018, it opened its first store in India in Hyderabad, which is located in the state of Telangana. IKEA's largest store was opened in the Philippines in November 2021. It measures 65,000 square meters. In 2019,

the company launched IKEA Place, a mobile app that uses augmented reality technology. Through this app, users can see how their products would look inside their own homes. (Kristoffersson, S. & Jewson, W. 2014) The app has already been downloaded over 31.3 million times and received a 4.6-star rating. IKEA has decided to stop publishing its annual catalogue due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The company was also forced to close one of its stores in the Philippines due to its shipping problems and stock shortages. (Pereira 2022)

In March 2022, IKEA temporarily stopped its retail operations in Russia and Belarus due to the invasion of Ukraine. In June that year, the company announced that it would sell its factories in Russia and close its offices in the country. (Pereira 2022)

IKEA Finland's first store in the country was opened in 4.9.1996 in Espoo (Figure 1). It has about 200 employees working in its various functions, including human resources, sales, restaurant, communication, and operations/logistics. The store's managers have varying levels of responsibility, and this study aims to identify the team leaders of the store. (Ikea.com 2021)



Figure 1 Ikea Espoo,2023

### 2.3 Organizational chart of Ikea Espoo

The chart shows the organizational structure of Ikea Espoo, with each position and employee represented by boxes it could sometimes contain contact details, page links, names, and email addresses. But according to company law it prevents releasing any information related to its employees unless the information is already published in the network (Figure 2).



## 2.5 The structure of the thesis

The introduction section of the thesis provides a brief overview of the case and the organization in question, as well as the objectives of the project. The thesis will then explore the various HR and leadership roles within the organization.

The results of the study are analysed and compared with the earlier theories. Some of the connections between the findings and the theories are also established. The researcher will then provide his conclusion and recommendations to improve the situation in IKEA Espoo.

The objective of this study is to enhance the collaboration among the various parties that are involved in IKEA Espoo. This will help them develop better ways of working and increase their job satisfaction. The researchers also clarify that the leaders and managers of the organization are leaders, not task managers.

### 3 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

#### 3.1 Human resource role

Human resources departments are responsible for hiring, training, and promoting employees. They also implement company procedures and manage the employee experience from the moment that an individual applies to a job until they leave. Human resources (HR) departments are responsible for administering compensation benefits to employees. They can add value to a company by providing objective advice to managers and workers on various people-related issues. This work can be done through the development of long-term strategic plans, support for employees, and project work. A well-run department can find the ideal individuals for the job and keep them focused on their duties. (Coursera 2022)

In Ikea Espoo, the (HR) department their part effectively every day from training and developing the employees, managers, and leaders. To make sure that the leaders are clear about the division's tasks, Espoo Ikea HR should make the necessary arrangements to ensure that the professionals are competent to lead their teams. This can be done through the use of specialized knowledge and skills.

#### 3.2 Leadership role

In an institutional context, leadership is a vital component of the success of interventions. It involves rules, regulations, and culture. Leaders can also improve the well-being of their followers by transforming their beliefs. Although leaders are responsible for the overall management of programs, they also have the necessary resources to make effective interventions. In addition to employees, recognize their talents, develop their teams, and assess their subordinates' performance. They should utilize disciplinary measures when necessary. Leaders must also deal with the various health issues that their



employees may experience, such as exhaustion and work stress. (Karanika-Murray & Gkiontsi & Baguley 2018.)

The study aims to find out if the executives of IKEA Espoo are getting the necessary support to enhance their performance in the areas of people. These include the development of their staff members, occupational health issues, and disciplinary actions.

The study's objective is to help employees cope with difficult circumstances, such as being issued a formal warning. It aims to pinpoint the factors that affect the maintenance and advancement of an alliance between HR professionals and leaders.

### 3.3 Differences between managers and leaders

#### 3.3.1 Managers

A manager is an employee of an organization who has the responsibility of leading, controlling, organizing, and planning the company's operations. Although most managers are highly regarded, only if they can properly carry out their duties would they be considered leaders.

#### 3.3.2 Various managerial roles regarding IKEA

IKEA has numerous managerial roles globally. To improve your abilities and knowledge, you must understand the responsibilities, skills, and functions of each position. This overview shows you how you can expand your scope of expertise.

- Store manager

The function of this position involves overseeing the day-to-day operations of IKEA's store. This position requires managerial skills and the ability to manage a team. It also involves overseeing the sales and appearance of the store. This position is focused on developing and implementing strategies to improve the sales and customer experience of the store. (Ikea.com 2021)

➤ Regional manager

A function that involves overseeing multiple stores within a certain region. The goal of this function is to establish regional goals, ensure consistency across all the company's stores, and collaborate with other departments. The expansion plan will discuss strategies to reach targets, establish partnerships with managers, and launch marketing initiatives. (Ikea.com 2021)

➤ Supply chain manager

The function involves overseeing various aspects of the supply chain, such as logistics, procurement, and inventory management. The ideal candidate should be able to manage a variety of tasks such as ensuring the smooth flow of products from vendors to consumers, as well as optimizing inventory levels. The candidate should also be able to implement effective strategies and techniques to improve the efficiency of the supply chain. (Ikea.com 2021)

➤ Marketing manager

The goal of this function is to develop and implement marketing strategies that will promote IKEA's brand and products. This role involves planning and executing advertising campaigns, as well as managing traditional and digital marketing channels. The expansion phase will involve launching fresh marketing initiatives, enhancing social media engagement programs, and positioning the IKEA brand in a prominent position to attract and retain consumers. (Ikea.com 2021)

➤ Human resources manager

The Human Resource function is responsible for managing the various aspects of employee relations, training, recruitment, and evaluation.

The primary duties of this position include ensuring that the company is following labor laws, fostering a culture of positive work, and resolving workplace disputes. The HR function is also responsible for developing and implementing programs and strategies that will help improve the skills and motivation of the employees. (Ikea.com 2021)

➤ Finance manager

The functions of this position include overseeing the financial planning and budgeting of IKEA's operations. This position requires the ability to analyze and monitor various financial data and provide insight into strategic decisions. This position is focused on developing and implementing strategies and procedures that will help drive sustainable growth and profitability. (Ikea.com 2021)

These include motivating and communicating with their employees, providing inspiration, and encouraging them to reach their full potential. Not all managers are good leaders. Some of them have poor leadership skills, and their subordinates tend to follow their orders. This is not because they are inspired by their superiors, but because they are obligated to do so. A manager's duties are typically described in a job description. They are usually focused on meeting the company's goals and objectives. Although they have the authority to hire and fire employees, they also must hold subordinates accountable for their actions. With the title of manager, comes the privilege of rewarding or promoting those who perform well. (Duggal 2015)

A predictable and consistent manager helps employees feel like they are not on edge, and they can ask for help if they need it. Unfortunately, many corporate collapses can be attributed to team members not being able to share knowledge because they are afraid that doing so could lead to adverse consequences. (Mackay 2015)

### 3.3.3 Leaders

Leaders are not necessarily appointed to a management position. They can be anyone within an organization, and they do not need to be an authority figure. Leaders are followed due to their beliefs, personality, and behaviours. They are passionate about their work and are usually invested in projects and tasks. They also take a lot of interest in their followers' success. A leader's formal power over their followers is not always tangible. A temporary power can be granted to a leader based on their ability to motivate and inspire their followers. (Duggal 2015)

It is particularly important that leaders can lead their teams. This thesis discusses the various positions within IKEA that are leaders. IKEA employs leaders and other staff members using a value-based method. It is important that everyone in the organization can work together and share the company's values by actions, decisions, and behaviours. Some of these include being kind to others and leading by example (Ikea 2018). IKEA's vision is to create a better living for everyone by offering a wide variety of well-designed products and affordable prices. (Ikea 2018). IKEA's leaders must be able to articulate the organization's vision and values to their followers.

## 4 METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Research design

There are two types of research methods that are commonly used: quantitative and qualitative. When it comes to choosing a method for a study, it is important to consider the advantages of the chosen approach. For instance, qualitative research aims to find information that will help the user understand the project's significance. On the other hand, quantitative research seeks numerical data. This type of research is useful for describing things numerically. In order to implement this type of research, the materials must be transformed into a testable and measurable form. (Vilkka 2021)

A qualitative research study is ideal if you want to understand how individuals behave intentionally. Also, it aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of their behaviours. The subjective nature of the research methodology is the initial point of research that utilizes this approach. (vilkka 2021)

The conclusions, interpretations, and decisions made in a study are affected by the researcher's own perceptions and beliefs.

Even though quantitative methods can give a comprehensive overview of a certain notion, they do insufficient depth to enable researchers to identify the factors that influence that subject. This study utilizes a qualitative research approach to gather data. (vilkka 2021)

The research will determine the factors that contributed to the managers and team leader's opinions to adopt all support they need from the organization.

An open interview is a type of research interview that does not follow a set of themes or questions. It is also referred to as an unstructured interview. Interview topics are ideal for researchers as they allow them to get first-hand experience with the individuals they are interviewing. One of the most crucial factors that a professional's identity can influence is how they support their subordinates in adopting new methods of learning. Through qualitative

methods, a researcher can gather data on a variety of subjects. In most cases, the data collected through interviews is used as the basis for the study. A qualitative research interview is typically conducted in three different forms: form interviews, open interviews, and theme interviews. The former is commonly used, while the latter is referred to as semi-structured interviews. (vilkkä 2021)

## 4.2 Data analysis

The study sought to identify the tasks and support that leaders receive from their organizations. It also investigated the types of tasks that were assigned to professionals who have recently started their careers. The interview was conducted in September 2023. The participants were the same individuals who were interviewed. They were chosen based on their experiences. this method was the best for the author to other sampling methods because it was the easiest way to collect data at Ikea as everybody has a limitation time

The primary data was gathered through in workplace session, email, internet, interview and Turun AMK:n Finna- search service, Taylor& francis page and Wiley library. The chosen data gathering methods were during break times and interviewing. By utilizing two techniques, the interviewer was able to provide the researcher with a more profound insight into their encounters.

| <b>ProQuest</b>           | <b>Taylor&amp;Francis Online</b> | <b>Wiley Online Library</b> |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Human resource, Hr</b> | Human resource management        | People support              |
| <b>Leadership</b>         | Team leader                      | Hr                          |
| <b>People support</b>     | Manager                          | leadership                  |
| <b>Management</b>         |                                  |                             |
| <b>Manager</b>            |                                  |                             |

Figure 3 Collection data

Before the interviews started, the participants were contacted by phone to determine if they would like to be part of the study. The study's purpose was unveiled during the call. The discussion began with an introduction that explained its objectives and the participants' role in it. One of the most important reasons why this study was conducted was to find out what kind of support they receive from the Hr department. Confidential and anonymous information was gathered during the meeting. The meeting objective was to identify the characteristics and skills of the personas and the factors that will determine their future success.

Post-it notes containing all the necessary details were placed over the character on the flip chart. Everyone was able to independently pick the number of papers they wanted to see. A discussion about the notes was then carried out, and the figures were then collected with the same notes. The two main characters were created based on the findings and the characteristics of the people involved.

In the previous explanation, we talked about the meaning of managers and leaders. Now, I want to discuss the areas that leaders look for help, such as Developing effective communication skills is a vital part of being a good leader. As a leader, it is important that you improve your ability to inspire and engage your team members. To acknowledge an outstanding performance, talk about it in a team meeting, email, or through one-on-one interactions. Your associates will appreciate talking about it in whichever manner you prefer.

After research and meeting the HR department providing enough support to the leaders in their roles and as a recommendation from the author is a better to meet once in a month with the leaders or communicate through e-mails about the any situation happened and how to resolve.

Now there is no need for more support for the leaders in certain areas except more communication, patience, motivate the teams all the time and lastly but not least the leaders must send the co-workers to certain courses for improving their skills as well.

They were then analysed to determine the most crucial factors that affected their success at work (Figure 3).

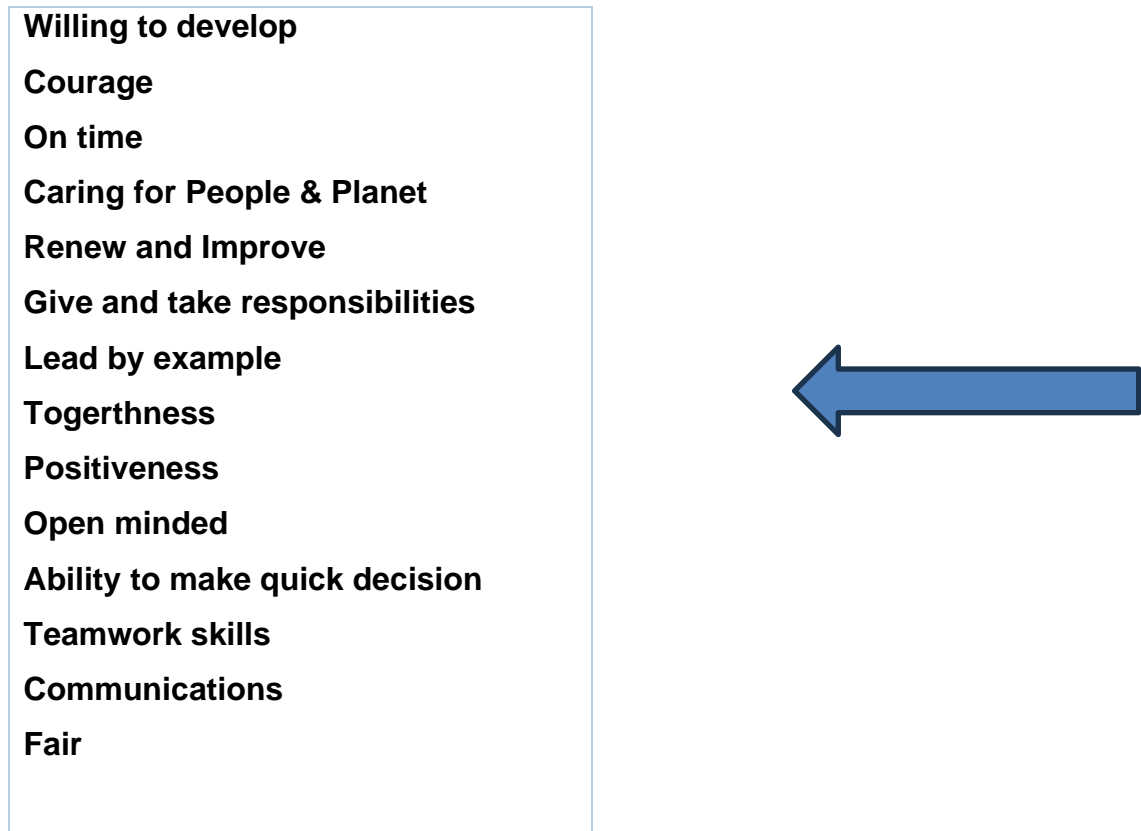


Figure 4 Characters were created based on the findings

The four individuals who were interviewed have roles in the organization. Three of them are team leaders and work in the logistics field as well as human resources manager.



| Persons  | Work Title  | Experience in the field | Contact method |                 |
|----------|-------------|-------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| <b>A</b> | Team leader | Logistics               | 5              | Email & Meeting |
| <b>B</b> | Team leader | Logistics               | 3              | Email Meeting   |
| <b>C</b> | Team leader | Logistics               | 2              | Meeting         |
| <b>D</b> | Manager     | Human resource          | 3              | Meeting         |

Figure 5 Participants in my thesis

### 4.3 Research data reliability

The quality of a research study is evaluated by the two factors known as validity and reliability. When it comes to assessing quantitative research, it is important to note that the methods are relevant to the study. Besides the data analysis, it is essential to maintain the validity of a study by accounting for the sources and data it draws from.

The degree to which a given answer can be replicated when applied to a separate set of circumstances is known as reliability. For instance, if a study is regarded as exceptionally reliable, other researchers can carry out the same level of analysis is carried out using the same methodology. (Research methodology 2018).

According to Heale and Twycross research, the quality of a concept is determined by its validity. This measure is the extent to which a quantitative study thoroughly appraises a given subject. (Heale & Twycross 2015).

The validity of a research study can be measured by various factors such as the time scale, the type of methodology used, and the appropriate sample method. It is important to remember that there are always risks associated with conducting research, but it is also important to minimize them. (Research methodology 2018).

The reliability of a quantitative study is a measure of its accuracy and consistency. For instance, if the study is conducted continuously in the same manner, its results will remain the same. This thesis aims to analyse the various aspects of this type of research.

The materials used in the study came from various sources, such as e-books, articles, and the Ikea website as well. The theoretical data was gathered from secondary sources.

## 5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the most critical skills that a leader should have been effective communication. This involves being able to articulate both their goals and vision clearly, as well as being able to listen to and act on the feedback from their team. HR professionals can help develop leaders by providing them with the necessary skills to listen to and act on their subordinates' feedback.

A behavioural profile can help them define how they can communicate with their employees. Recognizing the members of your team is one of the most crucial factors that a leader can consider improving their performance. It can help them maintain a positive environment and motivate their team members. As an Ikea HR professional, you can help your team members become better leaders by teaching them about the importance of being recognized.

HR professionals can help managers adopt a coaching approach, which involves providing their subordinates with support and guidance. This method can foster a more trusting and collaborative atmosphere and help boost productivity and satisfaction.

As an HR manager, you should support and equip your leaders with the resources and training they require to excel. By fostering a productive and collaborative atmosphere through coaching, recognition, and communication, you can contribute to the development of a favourable work environment for your staff.

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## EMAIL INVITATION

Hello,

My thesis aims to analyse the current HR practices of IKEA Espoo and how are supporting its leaders on personnel-related subjects. I would like to enlist your assistance in this research.

In today's constantly changing environment, managers need help. HR professionals must make sure that they have the support they need to lead their organizations.

As leaders, they play a vital role in preventing turnover and providing employees with the best possible experience. They also need to ensure that workers are productive in a world where distractions and bad news are constantly happening. This is a delicate balance, and HR plays a vital role in helping managers develop the skills they need to succeed.

Since you are an IKEA Espoo leader, I am asking you to participate in this study by October 31.10.2023.

With your experience as a leader within IKEA Espoo, would you like to describe in your own words how the HR department can support the organization's leaders?

Thank you for taking time to answer the question and being part of the research!

FYI according to Ikea law your names will not appear in my research.

Best Regards,

Hiddig Mohamoud

## Meeting with the leaders

