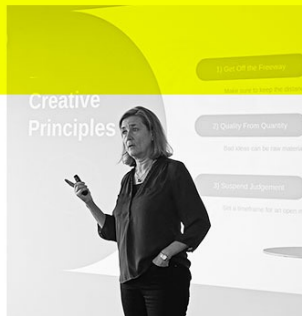




Innovation Pioneers

**THIS DOCUMENTATION INCLUDES KEY
TAKE-AWAYS FROM TANK MEETING NR 47,
THE THIRD IN 2019, HOSTED BY
VASAKRONAN ON “HOW CAN WORKSPACES
SUPPORT INNOVATION?”**

The Tank Meeting took place on September 11th, 2019 at Vasakronan in Stockholm.





PARTICIPATING COMPANIES & ORGANIZATIONS

Alfa-Laval, AstraZeneca, Castellum, CGI, Claremont, Cybercom, Dentatus, Digpro, Ekan, Evry, Ework, Frontit, Googol, HM, IKEA, Ideon Open, Innovationscenter Arbetsförmedlingen, Karolinska, Lindab, OKQ8, Reitan Convenience Sweden, SKF, Spendrups, Steelcase, StoraEnso, Ledarna, Swedish Space Corporation, Vinnigroup, White Arkitekter.

PURPOSE

The Tank Meeting focused on how workspaces, people and tech can enhance innovation. The aim was to build common knowledge, share good examples and explore existing and future workspaces of excellence. How do we create a culture of innovation with the help of the workspace as a strategic tool for change?

VASAKRONAN – ABOUT THE HOSTS

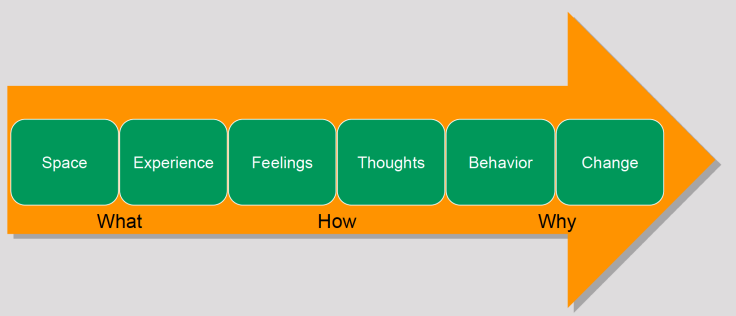
Vasakronan is the leading property company in Sweden, focusing on the major growth regions Stockholm, Uppsala, Gothenburg and Malmö. In total, the company has 174 properties with a total area of 2,300,000 m² (as of June 30, 2019). Vasakronan is jointly owned by the First, Second, Third and Fourth Swedish National Pension Funds, and today employees over 300 people.

Henrik Eriksson, responsible for strategic and long-term relations in the workplace arena at Vasakronan, Peter Östman, SVP Corporate Communications at Vasakronan, and Britt Lindqvist, Head of Business Development at Vasakronan, hosted the Tank Meeting together with Liza Rudolfsson from Make Progress.

Henrik Eriksson opened the Tank Meeting by talking about the property industry as a whole. It's a conservative industry that has long focused on the storage of people in buildings. However, several property companies are now trying to provide more value to the customer. At Vasakronan, they are hoping to get more people to start to look at the workspace as a strategic tool for change. The workspace is not only a space to work in but also something that provides an experience, along with feelings, thoughts and behaviors. The workspace could be viewed as a bringer of change, among people and groups, if positioned in a different way. So how should Vasakronan go about approaching their clients in a new way?



A STRATEGIC TOOL FOR CHANGE





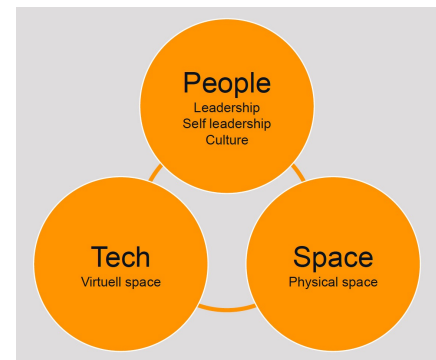
HOW CAN WORKSPACES SUPPORT INNOVATION?

In recent years the interest in workspaces has increased drastically, not least as a key component of employer branding. However, quite often it's more about being flashy, cool or representative rather than adequate and smart. The modern workspace should also provide the opportunity of mobile ways of working. But, if it does, what impact will that have on corporate culture and innovation?

PEOPLE, TECH, SPACE

Peter Östman presented how the workspace consists of three parts:

- People – leadership, self-leadership and culture
- Tech – virtual space
- Space – physical space



The workspace has transformed in recent years and is now more about sharing resources and knowledge among people. The workspace journey started with focus on the individual (separate rooms) – then moving on to the group (open landscape) – followed by the organization (activity-based workspaces) – and more recently also to networks (co-working). Today, many companies are at the 'organization' phase, looking at how the workspace can support the whole organization. Activity-based workspaces are becoming more common.

There's been an interesting mindset change in the past ten years. A recent study on workspaces with over 2,3 million respondents shows that 40 % sit in individual rooms, 55 % in open landscapes and 5 % in activity-based workspaces. Ten years ago, 95 % sat in traditional, single-room offices. It's also interesting to look at what people answer to be their ideal workspace: 60 % today still say they would prefer their own room. Therein lies the challenge. People tend to look at their individual needs and preferences, and not view themselves as part of an organization. When you start talking about activity-based workspaces, many people protest.

The resistance to activity-based workspaces is one often caused by emotional reasons. People are afraid of change, and not used to being in an activity-based space or aware of how that space could affect their everyday at the office. This is why the physical environment is such a strong tool if you want to bring about change.

THE CHALLENGE

When Vasakronan meet with customers the focus is usually on what the customer wants. The problem is that the customer might not always understand their needs, or the benefits that a modern networking office could bring to their organization.

At the same time, the workplace is an issue that engages people. Everyone has an opinion. That's why it's important to find a way to present workspace solutions that



speak to the whole organization, and that also touch on the emotional thoughts connected to the workplace. But how can Vasakronan make the transition to be the property company that helps their customers look at and use the workspace as a strategic tool for change?

TECH SHIFTS – THE TRANSITION TO THE MODERN WORKSPACE

Liza Rudolfsson from Make Progress went on to introduce the workshops for the Tank Meeting by making an introduction to tech shifts.

One hundred years ago when the first washing machine was invented, it consisted of a claw that washed cloths against a washing board. The first movie was a filmed theatric play. E-learning still often consists of filming a person in front of a whiteboard. These are all examples of how we tend to look at the things we know when introducing new tech, before we can open up to all new ideas. The same goes for the workspace.

When it comes to how we work, many things have changed in recent years. Yet, the workspace still looks the same. Our brains are pre-programmed with conceptions of how things should be. It makes it difficult to imagine new possibilities that arise, for instance in conjunction with new technological advances. That is the main challenge – getting passed ‘filming theatrical plays’ when it comes to how we view the office.

CREATIVITY PRINCIPLES

Our brains try to prevent us from being creative. We have two ways of thinking: quickly (effectively) and slowly (more creative). There is an enormous difference between how much time and effort these two ways take. We have physical tracks in our brain that make it easier to think the same thought twice. It's like the brain is building ‘freeways’ connecting different dots. When an impulse comes into a brain cell, the brain will send it down the easiest path – the freeway – where it goes quicker and takes less time.

The ‘freeways’ are so effective that we hardly know when we use them. When we have learnt that $10 + 10 = 20$ we can go on and learn more advanced mathematics. When we build freeway networks in our brains it is possible to focus on higher education.



Our mental 'freeways' help us to associate noon with lunch directly.



There are three creative principles to help us come up with innovative new ideas:

1. Get off the freeway – and make sure to keep the distance. We need to be far away from our normal thoughts and associations to be able to think in new ways.
2. Quality from quantity – bad ideas can be raw material. To find interesting ideas and fragments of ideas, you need a lot of raw material to work with. The more raw material you have, the better the quality of the creative idea will be. You need a lot of raw material because it is unusual to find the best solution straight away.
3. Suspend judgement – set a timeframe for an open mind. Allow yourself not to criticize what's good and bad for a period – suspend judgement – to let the ideas flow.



Photo by Florian GIORGIO on Unsplash



SUMMARY OF THE THREE MORNING WORKSHOPS

During the day, each participant had the chance to take part in six separate 30-minute sessions on innovation; three in the morning and three in the afternoon.



HOW CAN TECHNOLOGY BOOST INNOVATION?

- Draw the space between tech and human

The groups were asked to think of the space between tech and human. The two don't always go seamlessly together. If focusing on tech and the physical space, like furniture, how can tech be used to boost innovation?

Each participant was asked to draw an image of their thoughts around tech and people on one card. And then draw another card with an image around tech and place. After that, the teams discussed their different ideas to build a bigger idea together.

Some ideas revolved around creating hubs for innovation and transferring knowledge from one hub to another. The workplace of the future is a destination, not just a space.

HOW CAN A PLACE BOOST INNOVATION?

- "One white box in the kitchen" – rethinking the refrigerator (and workplace)



At Electrolux, a team was asked to innovate around the refrigerator. To do so they used the common conception of the refrigerator “one white box in the kitchen” and were asked to find the opposite of each word. For instance, instead of one, what if there were five refrigerators. If not a box, what other shape could the refrigerator have and so on. After doing so, they were asked to compare the original sentence to the new one they came up with and compare the pros and cons of each.

In this workshop, the groups were asked to do the same exercise but with focus on the workplace. First, think of what we take for granted in the workplace. Second, write it down in a sentence. Third, find the opposite to each word in that sentence. Discuss why the opposite would be better or worse.

Following the exercise, some topics of discussion were: does the workplace have to be a physical place? Do we really need laptops? Is it possible to build your own tables and chairs? Do ‘we’ need to be in the workplace, or could it be something else? Would it be possible to work from several workplaces instead of one? Could we climb on the walls and sit up-side-down?

HOW CAN HUMANS BOOST INNOVATION?

- Transition from one box to another

Using a chart, each participant was asked to think of and mark the boxes representing where they were today and where they wanted or needed to be in their organizations. The participants were then asked to discuss how to make the transition from one box to another.

The groups started discussing the current state of work in the different workplaces. Some discussions revolved around how the culture can be very different across different departments in a larger organization. A sense of mental stability is important and requires trusting all employees. The brain often focuses straight away on solutions instead of the problem – it should be more prioritized to look at data first, and to create an environment ideal for testing.

Each group was asked to discuss how it is possible to ease the transition between different steps. Some ideas were:

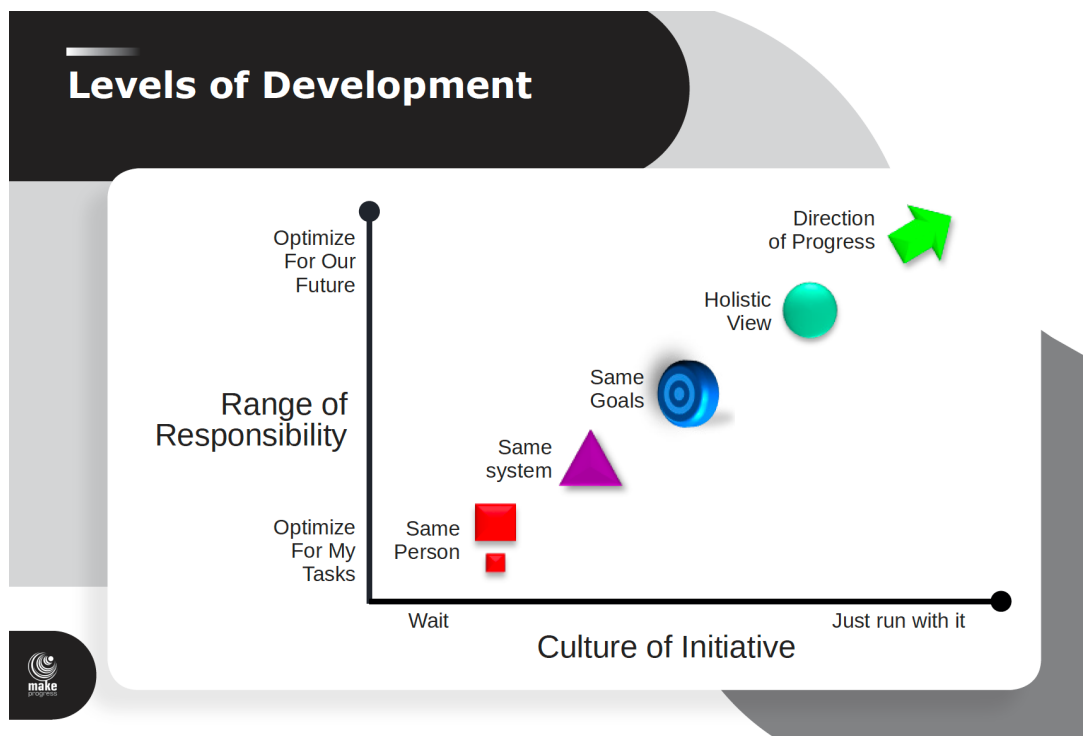
- Use storytelling to talk about change, to make it easier for an organization to understand changes in the workplace.
- Co-creation is key – between teams and also between the organization and its customers.
- Pave the way for true innovation – by moving away from the mother company. Learn from a different place to let new ideas grow on the outside for a while. Before bringing them back.
- The challenge often lies outside the company’s control – it’s important to dare to think new and to challenge the current status quo of the workplace.
- Maybe the supplier can initiate a change instead of the customer? Maybe the customer organization doesn’t know what they want or need.



CULTURE OF INNOVATION

Following lunch and a lunch walk around Sergels Torg, Liza Rudolfsson opened the afternoon session by speaking about 'Culture of Innovation'.

She explained the 'Levels of Development' based on a model of different organizations, ranging from smaller organizations revolving around a single person or a few people, up to organizations for the future that are more focused on values than specific work tasks.



There are two axes on the 'Levels of Development' model: Range of Responsibility and Culture of initiative. The Range of Responsibility shows how much responsibility each individual has for the whole organization, and the Culture of Initiative shows how self-going individuals are when faced with different problems or possibilities.

Looking at the model, there are five distinct organizational models. The red square is built around one or a few people, for instance in a dentist office everything revolves around the availability of the dentist or dentists. This works for organizations up to 70 – 80 people but becomes difficult in larger organizations. The purple triangles represent an organization with a clear hierarchy. This works well for organizations that perform the same processes all the time, like a government agency, but presents a problem when it comes to innovation. The blue, targeted organization is more adapted for a quick changing world. This is a classic lean organization, where all employees are expected to act on what's best for the end-customer. The green circle represents a holistic organization, where everyone is expected to be engaged,



equal and care for the end-customer. The fifth level, the green arrow pointing upwards, is more focused on progress, where people don't have clear work descriptions anymore but are rather driven by strong values. There are few, if any, organizations where the whole company works this 'green' was.

What happens is, the further along the axis of 'Culture of initiative' that you come, the better the organization is set for change.

SUMMARY OF THE THREE AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS

QUESTION QUESTIONS TO FIND THE RIGHT QUESTION!

- Solving the real issue

When tenants within an office building complain about too slow-moving elevators, instead of focusing on the expensive task of making the elevators run quicker, the property owner can explore *why* the tenants feel the elevators are too slow. The answer could be boredom. So instead of expensive re-engineering, the problem can be solved by putting up mirrors in the elevators and putting hand disinfectant at each floor to give people something to do while waiting for the elevators.

Start off with asking *why* to find the real problem, not the first problem. As another example, many employees complain that there are too few meeting rooms. But maybe there is a culture of too many meetings? One company has put up meeting cubes where it's only allowed to have ten-minute meetings as a solution.

The groups were asked to think of different problems with the current office, and then question what the real problem was and how that could be solved. For instance, could we have a gamification element to get people to recycle or clean out the dishwasher?

HOW TO EXPAND THE RANGE OF RESPONSIBILITY?

- Drive inner motivation among employees

How much responsibility does each individual within an organization have? How do you get people within the organization to start looking past themselves and their work tasks to also focus on the organization as a whole? If people are asked to take on a bigger responsibility, they need to be motivated to do so. There are outer factors, like more money, status, etc. and also inner factors, like an inner strive to do something meaningful.

A model by Thomas 2009 shows that there are four factors that drive inner motivation: Choice (I can decide by myself) / Competence (I am competent) / Meaning (the work I do is meaningful) / Progress (what I do brings about progress or change).



The groups were asked to discuss different actions that could make people within an organization feel motivated to take on bigger responsibilities. Creating a safe environment was one topic that was discussed, for instance that there is an acceptance for failure when trying new ideas that does not for instance affect one's bonus. No more silos – change the territorial mindset and make people open to think and act beyond their own department. Management teams often feel that they support a culture of responsibility and trust, but employees often feel that they are not trusted enough – important to find a bridge to close that gap.

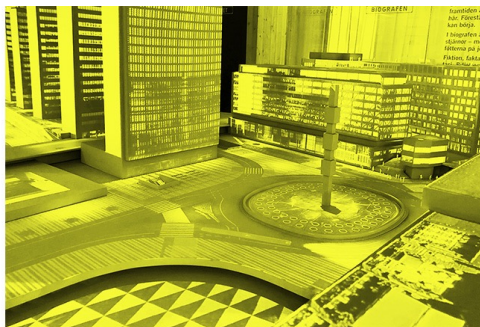
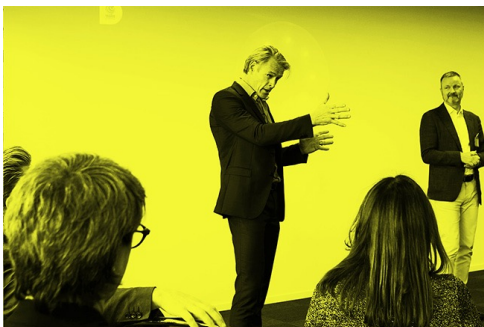
HOW TO MAKE IT SAFE TO FAIL?

- A safe mental environment in the workplace

Fear can sometimes be viewed as incompetence and negativity. If the work environment is not accepting of failure, it will become more difficult to innovate and bring up new ideas. It's important to create a safe environment for mental security, where employees feel safe to learn.

The groups were asked to come up with ways in which the workspace could create a safe mental environment. As an example, our sense of security is different in a church compared to a prison. How do we create safe environments where everyone feels a sense of responsibility?

Discussions from the groups revolved around whether it is the physical space or the management team that creates a sense of security, or if both play in. A negative corporate culture cannot be solved by a cozy office alone. However, if an organization is planning a cultural transition, using the workplace as a tool to show that change could be a strategy. Using different markers to indicate belonging among different departments could be a strategy, for instance wearing the same color lanyards. Some companies have different color rooms in their activity-based workspaces that represent what mood you are in: one color for social, one color for in the need of silence and concentration.





LEARNINGS & REFLECTIONS

The purpose of the day was to look at the modern workplace and to rethink how space, tech and people can co-exist in new ways to better support innovation. The Tank Meeting started and ended with an open discussion on ways in which the workplace can boost innovation, but also how Vasakronan can start positioning the workplace more as a strategic tool for change.

- Instead of talking about the space, start off by focusing on the process. Discuss what you need the space to do for your organization rather than how many square meters, chairs and meeting rooms the customer needs.
- We are heading towards a future with more room for meetings and co-creation and less traditional office spaces. We are learning to become more productive in meetings, and also to trust that everyone works in different ways. Today we accept that someone sitting on a sofa is also working.
- What's the next big thing? Instead of 'filming a lecture and calling it e-learning' we need to redesign the workspace in a way that questions what work actually is.
- Organizations today need many different types of spaces to support different working styles and processes – labs, offices, maker spaces.
- One participant spoke about how they have twenty smaller offices within one city, and that one can choose which office to go to based on what task is at hand for the day.
- Unfortunately, the conception of the activity-based workspace has become a negative one. In reality, activity-based workspaces are all about collaboration. It's about creating a space that supports all different types of working, and where each person within an organization can find the best fitted place to work for the day.
- Maybe property agencies should start acting more like management consultants, helping customers understand the true value of workspace design.
- Is there any other ways to utilize the space? Shared work and living accommodation. Co-living is on the rise. Young people are happy to pay high rents to live in bunk beds while getting access to an office, sauna, communal living room. A modern collective, powered by tech.
- We are heading into the platform economy – and content is becoming more important. How can tech support smarter use of a space for both work, free time, living accommodation etc.? Stockholm is becoming a 24/7 city, like New York City, and our spaces should adapt to this change.
- Combine workspace with childcare and dog-sitting.
- Make the workspace accessible through Bank ID.
- Is it possible to offer other automated services on top of the space, like bookkeeping?



CLOSING THOUGHTS

There were 50 participants at Tank Meeting #47, coming together to discuss how the modern workspace can boost innovation. The participants represented a mix of research companies, corporates, public organizations and startups.

From the lively discussions during the day, it became apparent that the workspace is something that affects everyone. How and where we work is a topic that anyone can relate to, and share insights and experiences about.

Vasakronan ended the day by saying that over 90 % of companies in Sweden still have traditional workspace solutions. We are in the middle of a disruption, where Swedish companies need to be transformed into accepting and using other types of workspaces. At Vasakronan, they now hope to make their clients into better buyers, with a bigger understanding of how the workspace can support an organization. Because the workspace is personal and something that affects each and every one of us every single day, it is also outmost important to not only focus on new tech but also on people and their emotions when designing the workspaces of tomorrow.

Thank you to the team at Vasakronan and Make Progress for a day of corporate culture, modern workspace tech and a deep-dive in how the workspace can enhance innovation when combined with the right tech and mindset.

SHARED DOCUMENTATION (IN THE NEWSLETTER)

PRESENTATIONS

Presentations from Vasakronan & Make Progress

TEMPLATES

Inno Tank Mtg WS cards

Inno Tank Fridge

Inno Tank Levels

FURTHER READING

Make Progress blog: makeprogress.se/bloggen



UPCOMING DATES FOR 2019

12 – 13 November 2019, Innovation Pioneers Summit, Stockholm

3 – 4 December 2019, Tank Meeting #48 – Vinnova, Stockholm

17 - 20 December - Innovation tour to Seoul, South Korea with Business Sweden

CONTACT

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