Startup Culture
– A case study of organisational culture in a startup

Master Thesis
Nichlas Kvist Jørgensen

Copenhagen Business School
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Abstract

This master thesis projects aims to investigate whether classical organisational culture theories can be applied to a startup. It does this by investigating the organisational culture of a high growth startup. The reason for choosing to investigate a startup is based the current focus in the economy on innovation and new technologies and where entrepreneurs plays an important role. The reason for choosing to investigate startups and culture is based on real life findings by the author that turned the question of startup culture into an academic paper.

The case that has been chosen to have classical organisational culture theories applied is the startup company ChurchDesk. They sell church management software and have had steady growth for a couple of years and has turned into a fairly large startup after they raised venture capital funding.

The theoretical framework is built upon two different paradigms such as functionalism and symbolism. The reason for choosing two different is that they cover the main findings in the analysis and provide another perspective to each other.

In this paper, the analysis will show that the organisational culture of ChurchDesk is effected by the artifacts that empower the feeling of working in a startup. The values at ChurchDesk are focused on providing an agile work environment with no procedures and a high individual responsibility leads to ensuring high quality of work. The basic underlying assumption at ChurchDesk are a snapshot of the current situation but might be potential assumptions in the future.

The employees at ChurchDesk are afraid to end up working in a corporate culture but at the same time it is also the direction they believe that they are heading because of the growth that they have.

The analysis does also show that the theory of classical organisational culture theories can be applied to startup organisation but there will need to be adjustments for conducting more investigations. One of the main findings is that it is difficult to analyse the basic underlying assumptions in a reliable way as it can be questioned whether it is only an instant picture of the organisation.
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1.0 Introduction

The need for innovation and technology development have never been higher, and these days, the private sector of the economy are looking at what goes on at the scene in Silicon Valley and all other innovation hubs. Buzzwords such as “Disruption” are being shouted out by consultants and in the media to make the large organisation aware of what is happening.

Digitalisation is one of the key reasons that have enabled a whole new economy and rapidly changed consumers’ behaviour and possible business models. One of the elements that symbolizes this new era is the growth of entrepreneurs and startups that via new technologies are revolutionizing old industries and creating new services and new business models that were not possible a couple of years ago.

This growth of startups working with new technologies and solutions has created a whole new generation of huge companies such as Google, Alibaba, E-bay, Amazon and Facebook that, in a few years, have become billion-dollar market leaders. This new “gold rush” of business opportunities within startups has made many people interested in the financial outcome of creating a startup but also the belief of working in a high growth innovative company that is different, fun and an adventurous in itself, compared to other regular giants in the field.

“Culture eats strategy for breakfast and technology for lunch and then ...”

To compete with these new industry competitors, many larger corporation are facing the problem of changing the culture to become more innovative when they have a big internal machine going on and an identity that the world and its employees believe in and experience on a daily basis. The organisational culture is important in order to attract the right employees and make sure they don't leave the company. This is especially the case when looking at innovation and creating new products. Without having an innovative and entrepreneurial culture, there is a very little chance that a company will create unique products and services that will grow the company in a new digital era.

For startups, it is a different case when we look at organisational culture because there is a very limited established corporate identity and a lack of heritage that people fell attached to. Furthermore, a startup is an “Organization formed to search for a repeatable and scalable business model” (Blank, 2006). This search for a scalable business models makes it difficult to predict revenue streams and therefore the overall strategy because it is fundamental for startup to be able to change if and when they see a market fit. The only thing that really enables a startup to create success is the ability to create the unique culture of people that are together searching for a scalable business model.
However, creating a strong and innovative culture is a difficult discipline that even large corporations with big HR departments are falling behind. In a startup, you as the founder have the responsibility of a whole set of different areas and culture is one of the intangible assets that is difficult to plan and measure. Culture can then be one of the less important elements to follow up on a startup CEO agenda.

A key element for startup success is hiring the right employees to search for a scalable business model. Dealing with employee attraction and retention in startups is a complicated matter as a potential employee takes a large risk working in a startup – the salary is low, benefits are limited and the potential risk of being out of job and involved in a failure within a short time can seem as a very risky options for a skilled person.

The dilemma is that startups need talented employees to become successful, but have difficulties in attracting these talents and providing them with what they need. It seems that building up a culture that people want to be part of can be a critical aspect in building a successful company. This is why this paper finds it interesting to investigate how startup culture creation takes place.

The expression of “Startup Culture” is a fairly used word in the startup and innovation scene where people talk about how cool it is to work in a startup in many ways. The expression of startup culture seems to have gained an interest in the younger generations and aims for having a higher impact and less regulated hierarchy and less procedures. It seems to be a space for creative souls and innovative go-getters where there are no boundaries for success.

This paper is going to investigate how culture creation is taking place within a startup on a strategic and operational level. The case chosen for this paper is a Danish startup company called ChurchDesk, which sells church management software. The customers are the churches, and even though it seems like an old and not very techie industry, their business is growing. This growth has led them to raise $2 million in venture capital funding and expand their business to Germany and the United Kingdom. The paper finds this case interesting as it is fairly new business but has been on the market for some time in order to create best practice and grow into a size where the transition into more structure seems relevant.

There is no academic concept of startup culture, and therefore the paper finds it interesting to look at more classical organisational culture theories in order to determine what fits and what not.

In the early 80s, there has been an increased focus and interested in the concept of corporate culture within management. One of the reasons was the famous book “In Search of Excellence” by Peters & Waterman (1982) which described why companies were successful – with corporate
culture being one of the main reasons. They explained that corporate culture is an essential part of a company where the purpose of a company is to create a culture where employees and the management are aligned on values.

This was a new change of view as opposed to classic scientific management theory where it was only the job of management people to improve the company, and the employees were only a necessary evil in order to achieve that.

The new paradigm shift in organizational theory was appealing to many organisational researchers as an opposing to the quantitative and formalistic view of organisations. Organizational theory and culture went towards a more symbolic and interpersonal aspect that focused on qualitative studies of organisations and has, in the following years, been investigated within management literature.

The new paradigm explained that employees were CO-workers. Thereby, the goal of organisational culture is that employees and management work together on a common goal and move forward in the same direction.

New culture theories and literatures emerged within different verticals of culture in organisation that researchers found important for company success. These areas were related to change-oriented culture, innovation culture, learning culture, project-oriented culture, etc. Research within organisational culture has been an interest area for many and has led to a large amount of literature in this area and with a good reason as the culture has become an important organisational discipline to master in order to create effectiveness and growth.

This was further developed by Edgar H. Schein in his work “Organizational Culture and Management” that introduced this relationship as being dynamic. Culture is something that a group of people create as a common belief system which can be transferred to future people in the group. In that sense, the culture went from a fluffy concept to some tangible.

It seems relevant for the modern industry of innovative startups to focus on how they build their organisations in terms of culture and not just on organisational diagrams. The power of creating adventurous cultures where people strive for greatness is certainly possible. The need for investigating the organisational culture in startups is relevant and interesting for the current economy of technology and innovation and will have an interest to both corporate innovation teams and startup founders.
2.0 Methodology

In order to further investigate the organisational culture in startup organisations, this paper finds it necessary to highlight the methodological framework.

The methodology will include a section about the scientific question and an explanation about what is meant with the purpose of this paper.

The whole section shall help the reader understand the methodological considerations that the investigator has had in the process of structuring the paper and the scientific question. These considerations are made to ensure the reader about the different considerations that have been undertaking in order to make a profound investigation.

The paper finds it relevant to shortly introduce the research philosophy that the paper could have included in order to answer the scientific question. The research philosophy will provide a baseline of methodology that will lead to how to approach the scientific question. The approaches that the investigator of this paper could take, as well as limitations of the paper will be discussed, while the scientific question will be highlighted.

The paper also finds it relevant to introduce an explanation of case studies and the argumentation behind why the chosen case is relevant. A definition of what the chosen case in this paper should be about will also be included. The case chosen for this paper is the foundation of data gathering which were conducted via interviews.

Finally, some reflections about the methodology will be conducted in order to summaries the sections but also provide the reader some thoughts that the investigator has put into the paper.

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2.1 Scientific Question

In the introduction, it has been highlighted why startup culture is an interest research area and shortly why a case such as ChurchDesk is relevant to further investigate organisational culture. ChurchDesk is a startup company that has been going for 5+ years and is well-funded by angel investments and venture capital. It has a mix of both old employees who have been working there from the beginning, as well as new employees joining the company on a later stage. It is an organisation that is growing very fast and has high expectations for future growth, both from a management and investor perspective. The case of ChurchDesk is used to established a general hypothesis about startup culture.

This ever growing hunger for growth and to some distinction established organisation is therefore an interesting research point. It is interesting to investigate the difference between new and old employees, different departments, management and non-management levels in a fast growing culture. There could be many different points of view to investigate and analyse a culture but the it is important in this case to create the right scope. In this paper, there will be a broad and open perspective to the analysis in order to create an understanding of the general dynamics in the organisation. In that regards, it also influences the scientific question to be broad, but broad in the terms that a startup is a small organization and is within the studies of organisational culture.

Scientific question:

How is the organisational culture in ChurchDesk? How can classical organisational culture theories by Edgar Schein and Majken Schultz be applied to analyse the organisational culture of a startup?

By applying classical organisational culture theory to a startup company there is a need to structure the theoretical framework a bit different, according to the analysis as some of the elements in the theory that defines an organisation are not present in a young startup (e.g. heritage). Startup company is a fairly young company working with new technology in a fast growing market. Further description about this will be explaining in the case section.

Organisational culture is a high level and intangible concept, as mentioned in the introduction. The choice about using classical organisational is thereby relevant as this is used previously to make the concept of culture more tangible even though the theory is built for large organisations. In this perspective it is interesting to look at how this relation is in the analysis where the theory is built upon another type of organisation than the case investigated.

In the following section, the paper will shortly explain some of the theoretical standpoints to organisational culture studies that the paper is going to use, as well as some problems within these theories. The reason for doing this is to give an insightful knowledge into why the scientific questions have been raised.
There is a difference within organisational culture in how researchers are investigating culture which will be split up into two different paradigms. The one area is called the functionalist paradigm where an organisation *has* culture. This functionalistic paradigm explains that culture is a sort of variable in an organisation that you can work with and change for the better or worse. By being a variable it means that culture can be twisted into such an extent that it is key to map the culture according to a given value.

Researchers that look at culture believe that it is something that the management team can use as a control mechanism to push and move the organisation in the desired direction (Hatch 2004; 16). The paradigm believes that organisations can be analysed on an objective level. The investigator within this paradigm is impartial and can describe objectively the reality which is occurring (Hatch 2004; 23).

The second paradigm is the symbolistic which is looking at culture which is something that an organisation *is*. In this paradigm, the organisation is a system of people and not something that can be used by the management level or something that has a mechanic effect on the organisation. In the symbolistic paradigm the interpretations are the key force in understanding organisational culture. The culture is a much broader term and cannot be limited to a few phenomena, but is rather looking at patterns of interpretations and opinions which the people in the organisation have developed together. In this paradigm, a cultural analysis is made upon how the people within the organisation are understanding and interpreting their experience in the organisation (Hatch 2004; 17).

The symbolistic approach is a subjective way of analysing the reality and also organisational culture. It is not enough to have the observing analysis of the organisations and its people. Interpretation is needed in order to understand a given opinion from a person in an organisation. Alfred Schutz is one of the researchers within the symbolistic approach and believes that any social interaction happens based on the experience that the people have developed over time. He believes that social science should look at how people interact in the real life based on a subjective interpretation of the person’s actions and the environment that the person is living in.

Schutz believes that even though a person has its own conscious and its daily life is being perceived through it, that is not reflecting the reality because the real life is being perceived by the person as a common reality (Schutz 1994, 31-35). In that perspective, Schutz believes that the world is intersubjective as people are existing in a world together with other individuals and are connected with them through families, friends, work, etc. Living in an intersubjective world means that different groups of people can interpret the world and its surroundings in the same way due to a common mutual understanding (Schutz 1994, 31-35).
As these different paradigms have different standpoints and are within the theory of science oppositions to each other, it may seem difficult to structure an analysis of organisational cultural with the functionalist and symbolistic approach.

Mary Jo Hatch and Majken Schultz (2004) believe that combining paradigms in a cultural analysis is the preferred approach because, in their opinion, you can’t ignore the different perspectives in an investigation as a cultural analysis. In fact, they believe that the combination will enrich the cultural analysis.

In this perspective, the paper will argue that the investigation regarding the scientific question will be more comprehensive by combining the two different paradigms in the analysis of culture in ChurchDesk, instead of diving into one single theory.

The scientific question will, in the following section, be further investigated as the rest of the methodology section will explain the reader about the choices made in order to investigate the scientific question.

2.2 Research Philosophy

As the foundation of the paper has been outlined in the scientific question section in regards to what is going to be investigated and what theoretical framework it is going to utilize to do so, the paper finds it relevant to include a basic understanding of research philosophy the argumentations behind what direction the investigator has taken.

Research philosophy is a discipline about the studies of scientific methods, norms and background. Research philosophy looks at whether the scientific study is evolving to a truth of reality or is it the researcher inventing the theory.

The paper will describe phenomenology, social constructivism and hermeneutics as useful philosophies for the scientific question. The paper also describes why hermeneutics was chosen as the research philosophy.

<table>
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<th>Research Philosophy</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Social Constructivism</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpreting culture can be intangible and then the choice would be not to focus on framing it as a startup culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phenomenology</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phenomenology would fit the theories but the analysis would be too vague and descriptive.</td>
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</table>

Hermeneutics as the chosen philosophy

Hermeneutics will help answering the scientific question as there is a need for interpretation in relation to the data and the topic of the culture.
2.2.1 Social Constructivism

Social constructivism describes that we can’t state whether something is false or true or that one way is better than another. There is no universal or objective standpoint on which we can concur something to be the truth. There will always be different perspectives on a given case (Jacobsen, Lippert-Rasmussen & Nedergaard, 2010; 230-231).

Social constructivism could be used in the paper as the research philosophy because the definition of what culture is and how people interpret culture is intangible. The focus would then be not to focus much on the culture and lead people to the concern that there is a startup culture. In this paper, it is more relevant to look at another research methodology.

2.2.2 Phenomenology

Phenomenology is interested in all the events that appear, as they appear to the consciousness. It helps the researcher to set aside all assumptions and theoretical understandings and focus on what is occurring (Jacobsen, Lippert-Rasmussen & Nedergaard, 2010; 161-162).

As this paper does not include quantitative data, then phenomenology would be a useful method. Interviews and case studies are good sources of data for phenomenology and thereby it could be a fit for a cultural analysis. The need for a strong interpretation in this kind of investigation would also lead to an argument for phenomenology.

This paper, however, chooses not to use phenomenology as the methodology. The reason for this is that the theories of culture can be understood as vague and descriptive, which is supported by phenomenology, and thereby there would be a risk of having an irrelevant investigation of the scientific question.

2.2.3 Hermeneutics

This paper has chosen to include the research philosophy of hermeneutics as the method for using the data in the analysis. The main concept of hermeneutics is to express, interpret and translate (Jacobsen, Lippert-Rasmussen & Nedegaard, 2010; 149). The point of hermeneutics is to interpret opinions and make it more accessible.

This paper finds it relevant to describe an argument about why hermeneutics is included. It is relevant that the paper is interpreting both theory and data to the distinct that it is accessible and understandable for the reader. The research philosophy methodology that the paper has chosen to follow is the three steps in the interpretation process of understanding, to construe and to apply (Jacobsen, Lippert-Rasmussen & Nedegaard, 2010; 149).
The hermeneutical circle is used in the methodology as a tool to interpret the data via a circle between a fraction and the whole meaning. This should be understood, as in the analysis there will be different extracts of the data that would not make sense if it was not part of a whole meaning about the organisational culture in ChurchDesk. In that regards, the understanding of the analysis becomes a part of a whole meaning where the goal is to understand the depth of the scientific question.

It is relevant to use hermeneutics as the analysis will look into the perception of each individual data source that creates the understanding of culture within. It is difficult to claim what the culture is, but it is possible to view it through the way people understand and interpret the culture. Interpretation will be necessary in order to perform the analysis of symbolism and the basic underlying assumptions which the theory section will describe.

2.3 Research Paradigm

To build upon the research philosophy and the choices made in regards to the hermeneutics direction, the paper will highlight the ontological and epistemological thoughts which are part of the research philosophy but have gained a section for itself to highlight the choices.

Ontology and epistemology give an insight into the foundation of the research. It is a part of the pre-work in relation to the chosen methodology in order to answer the scientific question. Ontology is looking at what kind of reality you need to look at to investigate and get the knowledge that you seek. Epistemology, on the other hand, looks at how the researcher can obtain the necessary knowledge that he/she wants to find. In the end, it is important to look at the research approach which states how the researcher is relating to the scientific object.

<table>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ontology</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The concept of culture is true and people believe that they are part of a startup culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Epistemology</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We know that culture is important to understanding in order to investigate it.</td>
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2.3.1 Ontology

Ontology is the question about the reality and it helps create a research strategy. Ontology is important because it makes the researcher aware of what the researcher will allow to be the reality. In an investigation, certain assumptions have to be made in regards to what is reality. Next,
the ontological question needs to be raised to learn what elements of the reality need to be chosen and then investigated in order to gather the needed knowledge. The reason for answering this question is that the researcher will have a much clearer understanding of what kind of data is needed to obtain this knowledge (Jacobsen, Lippert-Rasmussen & Nedergaard, 2010; 16).

The reality of this paper and the needed knowledge to answer the scientific question is to learn what people in a startup company believe to be the organisational culture. This is a certain kind of knowledge that is not visible and that people might have difficulties in grasping. The need to look at something very intangible, such as the culture in companies needs to be an assumption of the reality of this paper.

2.3.2 Epistemology

Epistemology is the question about knowledge. This is the step after the ontology where the researcher needs to look into how he/she will be able to gather the knowledge. Scientific knowledge can be gathered in many different ways (Jacobsen, Lippert-Rasmussen & Nedergaard, 2010; 17). The importance of raising the epistemology question is that it makes the researcher aware of whether it is possible to go directly out in the real world and observe it without a theory in mind or the investigation demands some thoughts behind it to find what is relevant to work further with.

This paper finds it relevant to obtain a level of knowledge within the field of organisational culture in order to spot right knowledge in the field. It seems relevant to have the findings from the research philosophy about hermeneutics and the ontology in mind to be focused on the gathered knowledge. In a rationalism point of view, this paper finds it relevant to have a theoretical understanding of organisational culture before making the investigation.

2.4 Research Approach

There are different approaches to investigate a scientific question. The methods use the data gathered in different ways in order to reach an analysis. The methods that can be used to answer a scientific question include deduction and induction (Jacobsen, Lippert-Rasmussen & Nedergaard, 2010; 30-32).

The paper argue that it is difficult to state that there is one choice of research approach and do see the inductive and deductive approach as being able to work together.

The paper has an inductive nature as the primary research approach but it does also contain elements of the deductive approach.

The inductive approach of this paper is that even though theoretical frameworks of organisational culture have been presented, then there is not a clear idea of how to analyse a startup. In that
case it becomes explorative as there is no cases or theories to hold it up against. The paper does also have a deductive approach as there is a theoretical stand point which have been used as a base to investigate out from. It is argued that the researcher of this paper do not want to be prevented from benefiting of existing theory but only using a deductive approach may prevent development of new knowledge. The model below shows that the research approach is built as a circle.

![Research Approach Diagram]

2.5 Limitations

The paper finds it necessary to make some limitations in the methodology section as there could be different elements taken into consideration for answering the scientific question. The research behind this paper did have time and resource restraints to some degree that constitutes the chosen angle of startup culture investigation. This is not to state that the research behind this paper is not adequate in order to make the analysis – it is to show the reader that other elements could be included which would have given the paper another perspective.

Considerations made in regards to the methodology are how to actually be more able to dig into the area of startup culture. There have been many classical organisational culture studies of which the researcher has gained inspiration from, but there are still some areas that are new. Many limitations will occur during the different sections in order for the reader to have a close link to the thoughts behind the paper.

The general thoughts and concerns for the researcher were in regards to having to get the most knowledge created for the business world and balancing the academic degree that this kind of paper has to have.
The paper is limited in any kind of external perspective that could influence the analysis. The paper has only gathered data internally and the few external data points that have been used is only to make the internal point even stronger. The paper could have gained a deeper perspective by including external data on the matter of organisational branding in the industry. The paper does however see the data as adequate to perform the investigation.

It would be interesting to learn more from other cases, and not only from the one included in this paper. It could have been a parallel analysis of two different organisations, but the comparisons would be too difficult to make as the cases would need to be very much alike. This could be a very difficult situation as startup organisations are very different in terms of industry, technology, business model and organisation structure. Therefore, the most relevant case has been chosen; thereby the paper limits itself from taking other startup organisations into perspective and does not conclude something general about startup culture, but rather provide a pre-investigation for an upcoming, larger investigation of this domain of startup culture.

Having a qualitative investigation of a case study would be the best option to get the most value. The choice of using a single case study did affect the paper, but also provided some structure to the theory and the analysis.

2.6 Case Study

Based on what is described in the introduction and the scientific question, the object of investigation in this paper has become clear. In regards to making this investigation in a scientifically proper way, the paper has to create a research design of case studies for the scientific question.

The purpose of this research design is to guide the reader through the process of which the researcher has been collecting and analysing the gathered data.

In this paper, the gathered data will largely consist of interviews, a few websites concerning articles about the organisation and on site observations.

As the researcher will, in this paper, only investigate one organisation, the paper takes a narrower approach but as the topic of culture can have different perspectives, the paper also sees the possibility of different variables in the investigation that the researcher needs to look out for. Looking at the approach that this paper takes in regards to the research design, it will be a case study investigation because the researcher is only going to investigate one organisational culture. There are pros and cons by having a case study perspective for the scientific question but this will be explaining more in dept.
Case studying is the investigation of a single organisation/unit with the goal of establishing a key features and from there on draw generalisations and thereby it fits with the purpose of this paper. In the recent literature it has become difficult to make a clear interpretation of what a case study should include. Robert K. Yin (2014) states that other research strategies have much more developed research behind and that there still needs to be developed a clear research design guide for case studies.

Case research design might be fairly early developed but the most important is that the investigator will include relevant argumentations for the choices and limitations. Furthermore, it is important, in a case study, that the investigator will build a logical and clear structure between the gathered data and the scientific question and investigation purpose. This means that the scientific question outlined needs to have a strict relation to the culture in the chosen case of ChurchDesk. Yin believes that there is no need for a specific model for investigating a case study, but there are still some factors that need to be taken into consideration.

Case studies can be highly useful when studying organisations such as in this paper. It could be argued that it would be necessary to make a comparable study of two organisations. The problem will, according to Yin, be that it is much more resource demanding to conduct two investigations (Yin, 2014; 45). In this situation, the paper finds it relevant to only include one case study, such as the one with ChurchDesk.

The paper finds the case chosen relevant as it has the organisational description that is being looked for in a case. Therefore, the paper will not include a comparative study but concentrate on one case study.

The paper could also have included other offices in the ChurchDesk organisation, such as the ones in Berlin or London. This would alter the data, the analysis and, finally, the scientific question. The author believes that making an internally comparative case study analysis would be a whole other type of thesis as the culture could potentially be much more different than only focusing on one country office. The different offices are also much smaller than the headquarter that has been investigated. The investigation would then have had the focus on finding the organisational cultural differences between the offices and not finding the overall organisational culture.

Even though all the offices are not interviewed, only focusing on the headquarter would give a better answer to the research question as this is the oldest office and it is where the best mix of different departments is located. It could be argued that there was a possibility of investigating the cultural differences between the technical and sales department as most of the interviews are from these departments. The paper finds it more interesting for the reader to look at a more general level, and as the two departments are the two largest and dominant departments, then this will represent a strong sample of the organisation.
This have showed all the reflections and arguments for and against the chosen research design of a single case investigation.

The reason for choosing a qualitative method is based on the chosen theoretical framework of Edgar Schein, as he believes that the organisational culture is best interpreted through qualitative investigations. It was through his own experiences as a consultant for organisation that he found that qualitative investigation was more efficient than other methods. It is important that the investigator is good at getting the employees in the organisation engaged in the investigation in order to find the organisational culture together. In the symbolistic approach, we also see the same patterns as they believe that culture is created in collaboration with other people, and therefore the quantitative methods would not be able to gather via a survey or so.

To gather data for the analysis, the author has decided to use interviews in order to use the method that the chosen theories support and what fits research design. The author finds it relevant to further describe what is behind a good case.

### 2.6.1 Definition of a good case

ChurchDesk is the single case study of this paper and used to answer the scientific question. But why is this the case, or rather – what is a good startup to investigate in terms of culture?

The startup organisation must be developed to some distinction where it has multiple departments with multiple employees within. The startup must also have some employee size that makes it more difficult to have a culture; the size is not that relevant as they are all small, but the author considers at least 25 people to be sufficient.

An interesting success parameter is the venture capital funding that many people look to if they want to judge the success of a startup. The paper wanted to have a case such as this as this might affect the employees in the company. There should also be a good mix of old and new employees to see the difference from the start to where the startup is now.

The case of ChurchDesk was within this scope of what would be defined as a good case. Furthermore, the investigator had connections to the startup, which enabled a clear entrance point for collecting the data.
2.7 Data Collection

This paper will use interviews of the founder and employees within two different departments of the chosen case. The interviewees will be both on a management and regular employee level. Using management personnel will help understand the leadership culture and using regular employees will help understand how they experience the culture in the chosen case.

The paper has tried to use a few interviews, but at the same time making sure that the gathered empirical material is enough to conduct a fulfilling analysis of the culture within the chosen case. In the paper, semi-constructed interviews will be used where the interviewer will collect data of the interviewee experiences and perceptions of the answered questions. The purpose of this is to conducted qualitative interpretations of the answer (Kvale, 2001; 218). In other words, the researcher of this paper will seek through the questions to get an overview of the world that the interviewees live in and the organisation they take part in (Kvale, 2001). The questions that has been chosen to ask at ChurchDesk are made by creating an interview guide that is constructed for one interviewee.

The semi-constructed interview has its starting point by the researcher via the interview guide, and it will control the areas which are being treated in the interview situation. This leads to a need of control of the researcher to make sure the interviewee is on the right track but still allows new types of questions in the actual interview situation (Kvale, 2001; 133). Furthermore, the intention is not to be too strict during the interviews as they should be more open and allow the conversation to take its own direction. Instead, the aim is to interact if the interview is stopping or taking a wrong direction. The researcher of this paper sees a potential for getting valuable information and still be in control of the interview situation.

In regards to the interviews that will be conducted and used in the analysis, it is the responsibility of the researcher of this paper to validate the answers, as in an interview situation there can be many reasons for not being totally honest. For example, the interviewee might think that the honest answer will bring harm to the organisation or themselves or the interview has made a mistake which he/she do not want to share. Furthermore, in the chosen case, the researcher is interviewing different people with different power structures and some might be biased to answer honest. The paper will later on reflect about the validity of the interviews based on the conducted interviews.

There are three parts of the interview that are included in this paper: Introduction, Questions and Debriefing. In the beginning of the interview, the researcher had the focus on making the interviewee relax and feel good. This was undertaken by making some small talk and then leading to simple questions such as what the person's role was and how long they have been in the
company. This is something that the interviewee is very well aware of and familiar with and creates a natural transition to the more complex questions.

Before conducting the interviews, the author had to create some easy understandable questions that, at the same time, had to lead to the chosen theory. The researcher of this paper has tried, to some extent, not to make leading or closed questions because these situations can question the legitimacy of the investigation. In some situations, the researcher had to make leading questions with the focus on gathering extra data. The researcher of this paper has been paying attention to these statements made from the interviewees, which have been used to transcribe the interviews for a helpful analysis (Kvale, 1997;129-161). The interviews are the main data for the analysis later on in this paper.

2.8 Methodology Reflections

The author finds it relevant to make some reflections about the methodology section. The reflections are at the chosen case, the data collected, and its reliability and validity.

The reflections are mostly based on the fact that the researcher of this paper has a previous knowledge of the chosen case due to an internship two years ago prior to this investigation. It was here that the interest of investigating the culture was made as the observation of a table tennis board that no one used was interesting. It was interesting because they saw themselves as a startup but did not use the elements that they believed made them a startup. The need for coming back and investigating what the culture was seemed relevant for an academic purpose, such as this paper.

The chosen case of ChurchDesk can be questioned in relation to the prior knowledge of the researcher, but the argumentation for this paper is that the company has rapidly expanded and opened two new international offices, while raising a venture capital investment. They hired many employees and many old were gone. This does also lead to the reflection about data collection. The data collected for this paper was made via interviews which a reflection upon could question the need for this and whether it was best not to talk to employees with the previous knowledge of the researcher.

The interviewees that the researcher had prior to the investigation were only with the CEO and CTO, which is the management level. The argumentation for having these included is that the management level would anyhow describe the situation as to their job description and not as an ordinary co-worker.

The validity of the data gathered is within the frame of what was the original purpose of this paper and is valid for the scientific question. The argumentation for the validity is that the data comes
from different sources, both management and employee level, and that people are from different
departments. The researcher did not know most of the interviewees beforehand as many were
new to the company.

The paper finds it interesting to reflect over the use of qualitative instead of quantitative
approach. The framing of the paper would have been completely different, but in order to
understand startup culture this is a perspective that would be interesting to look at.

The methodology section outlined here had the purpose to show the reader what the thoughts
were on how to structure the paper and make sure that the academic level of research was
withheld in the best possible way.
3.0 Theory

In this chapter, the paper would like to show the reader what is intended to be the theories chosen for answering the scientific question. The chosen theories will be highlighted and describe the relations between the two chosen theories.

In relation to the theories, the researcher behind the paper will only include the theory that is found relevant to the analysis of the paper. Therefore, some theoretical elements from the theories might not be included because it is not found critical to include it in the analysis, and thereby the paper limits itself from this.

The theories have the purpose to create a deeper insight in organisational culture and how it takes place. The central concept for both theories is the organisational culture aspect and therefore, it will be described what the theories are about as well as which elements are chosen to be used in the analysis.

The author will, in the beginning, use Schein to investigate the functionalistic perspective of the chosen case and will provide an in depth insight on how the culture looks like. Schein will be followed by Schultz and the symbolistic approach to explore how people within the organisation experience the culture.

The theories chosen for this paper can seem to be descriptive and the relevance sometime becomes questionable. It is important to remember that the scope of an organisational culture study is something where the researcher does an investigation of the organisation. This means that the theories will start by examining what might be considered as introduction to the analysis for the reader. The most important about organisational culture theories is that it starts broad and goes narrow in the end. Thereby, it is important to include a lot of descriptive analysis.

The paper will try to simplify the theory in order for a non-expert within the field of organisational culture to be able to understand everything.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>-</th>
<th>The chapter will start by looking at general culture</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theories</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>An introduction to rationalism, functionalism &amp; symbolism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functionalism</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Edgar Schein with artifacts, values &amp; basic underlying assumptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolism</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Schutz &amp; Schultz – Majken Schultz is the main symbolist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory crossing</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>A general sum-up of the theories and their connection</td>
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</table>
3.1 Culture

The author finds it relevant to include an introduction of the concept of organisational culture. On a historical perspective, the concept of culture had a mixed history as a term. The term has been used to explain “cultural” as something intellectual. The word culture has furthermore been used by anthropologists to look at the rituals and customs in our societies around the world that have been evolved.

Management talks about creating and maintaining the right culture and to define a quality culture. Finding the right culture for an organisation can, in that perspective, have influence on how efficient the organisation is. Organisational culture is mainly being created by the leadership in a company and it is one of the most essential management tasks (Schein, 2004; 13).

The concept of culture is presupposed to have important factors. One of them is the element of which that culture is something that creates a structural stability in a group. The second element, which provides the stability, is the structuring and integration of elements to a greater paradigm which combines the elements. The concept of culture makes sure that rituals, values and behaviour is combined to a coherent whole. This is the core concept of the culture (Schein; 18-19).

To look into the description of how organisational culture can be emphasized in the best possible way, the definition by Schein is going to be included:

“a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaption and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members at the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.” (Schein; 12)

Culture is relevant for leaders and companies to understand because it explains the dynamics within an organisation (Schein; 2). The culture analysis is necessary in order to understand how new technology will affect a given organisation, and thereby it makes sense to investigate how tech startups, working with technology, are working with culture.
3.2 Theories

The author finds it relevant to introduce the theories of functionalism and symbolism to the reader and explain why the concept of rationalism is not part of the theory. To highlight which kind of theoretical standpoints this paper could use, I will, in the table below, show the difference between a rational, functional and symbolic perspective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspective</th>
<th>The organisation</th>
<th>Organisational culture</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rationalism</td>
<td><em>The organisation is a mean to effectively reach a goal.</em></td>
<td><em>Culture is a tool to reach a given goal.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functionalism</td>
<td><em>The organisation is one collective that seeks to survive through important functions.</em></td>
<td><em>Culture is a pattern of common values and assumptions that handle the functions regarding external and internal matters.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolism</td>
<td><em>The organisation is a system of people that expresses complex symbolic actions.</em></td>
<td><em>Culture is a pattern of socially created symbols.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Schultz, 1995; 19)

The author chooses not to include rationalism in this paper as the author finds the theory outdated, which is supported on an academic level (Schultz, 1995; 22). This is in terms of looking into newly established organisations such as a startup and the functionalist paradigm will manage to have a strict approach to culture. The organisational culture in rationalism looks at culture as a tool for reaching a given goal (Schultz, 1995; 20). The approach of seeing culture as only something you use for reaching a goal is not relevant when looking at startup organisations, and the paper argue that the functionalist approach will manage this perspective as well.

In the functionalistic perspective, the author has chosen Edgar H. Schein who is a popular organisational and cultural theorist. Schein is conceived as being functionalistic because of his way of looking at an organisation as a living organism where each organism is maintaining a specific function.

Schein explains that he sees an organisation as a human being and believes that the culture is the brain that controls the body. In this perspective, organisational culture becomes important for how it will lead an organisation and its members to stability and growth. Management and leadership are important for Schein and he considers them to be the key to culture. This notion is relevant in the analysis of culture in startups where the founder(s) will have a high influence on culture. Schein describes the role of the leaders in an organisation to be important where it is necessary for them to create, control and perhaps break down culture (Schein, 2004; 9).
In the symbolism paradigm, the author has chosen to include Majken Schultz as the main theorist but also included perspectives from Mary Jo Hatch and Alfred Schutz. The reason for including multiple researchers in the theory section of symbolism is that the symbolism is not a structured theory and thereby the other researchers will give a perspective and greater understanding.

Symbolism explains that organisation can be interpreted as a human system. The action that these humans take is not based on mechanical reasons, but is taking from social reality about what influence a given action has (Schultz, 1995; 21). The organisational reality, thereby, becomes a symbolic construction where the real and physical world becomes a symbolic universe. The symbolistic perspective is less developed than the rationalistic and functionalistic approach and can seem a bit vague in relation to academic literature compared to the functionalistic perspective. This is also why the author has chosen to include two different researchers in order to strengthen the position.

The reason for including functionalism and symbolism in the analysis is based on the way these cultural interpretations are contribution to each other. Organisational theories are competing for the right way of understanding organisational culture. This is why it makes sense to include more theories in the analysis because one theory would only seek one truth (Schultz, 1995; 22). These two different theoretical standpoints can be used in an effective manner to concretise the difference between culture as a variable and a metaphor. The functionalist approach rises from a variable way of looking at culture. The symbolistic approach is from the metaphorical way, even though it tries to break different cultural phenomenon (Schultz, 1995; 22).

The precursor to validate and compare a functionalistic and symbolistic approach on organisational culture is that these theories are used in terms of the same empirical reality. If not, then it would be difficult to see the difference in the theories and the difference in the organisation. Thereby, the two different perspectives are used in a cultural analysis of the same organisation.

The paper has now highlighted the importance of both theories in the analysis and proved that it would be much more capable of answering the scientific question.
3.3 Functionalism

This section will describe the organisational culture from Edgar H. Schein (2004) and his views, and include his belief system. Functionalism is the first theoretical standpoint of this paper and then symbolism will follow.

The interest of Schein in culture grew through consulting large organisations. During these consultancy jobs, he was closely linked to the organisations and that is why his research is based on qualitative research methods. The theory behind Schein is known as functionalistic, and therefore this paper is going to use Schein as the functionalistic view of the chosen case.

Schein view himself as the neutral observer in his theory, especially in beginning of a study and investigation (Schein, 2004: 34-37). He is not forcing his opinions or beliefs upon members of a certain organisation, but is trying to highlight their own ideas and opinions in order for the members to realise what is working and what is not in a particular situation. Schein is fundamentally trying to create a distance between the object and the subject and on that note become the neutral observer (Schein 2004; 9). Schein is working with a view of the human nature where the individual person is not being attributed to many characteristics but is going to be formed. Thereby, the individual is formed by the system, the structure and the organisation which it is part of. Whether or not an organisation can be described as having a culture is dependent on the size of it. In the definition by Schein, it does not state how large an organisation should or could be to actually have a meaning.

Schein believes that if you look at organisations and find certain assumptions in common across multiple units in the organisation, then you are able to justify an organisational culture. Even though that there might be an overall organisational culture, within the organisation there could arise minor subcultures which developed their own culture and heritage (Schein, 2004, 237). Subcultures in an organisation can be supportive or directly in conflict with each other (Schein, 2004; 257).

Schein is looking at his own theory and trying to verify it by gathering data from his work in the different consultancy projects for organisations in order to test his hypotheses.

Schein sees the organisational culture as a split of three levels which are closely linked together.

The levels of culture in an organisation are Artifacts, Values and Basic underlying assumptions (Schein 2004).
3.3.1 Artifacts

Artifacts are the simple layer of the way Schein looks at the organisational culture. Artifacts could be how the building or office looks like, the language they are speaking, the products they are selling and creating. In other words, artifacts can be described as all the elements you, as an external observer, would feel, hear and see when meeting the organisation (Schein, 2004; 24).

This level of organisational culture is very easy to observe, but on the other hand it is very difficult to analyse. This means that it can be easy for an external person to observe an organisation and its artifacts, but it is difficult to actually analyse and conclude something in regards to what it means for the people in the organisation or whether it actually shows some basic underlying assumptions.

Schein thinks that it can be misleading to use this level of culture to analyse cultures because analysing artifacts can often lead to a wrong analysis of the culture in the organisation. This is based on our ability to use our own experience and knowledge in the particular situation observed within an organisation.

It is only when the person that is going to observe and analyse an organisation is staying within the organisation for a longer time that a more precise analysis can occur.

3.3.2 Values

Values are describing as the visible values that can be examined through processes and structures such as mission, goals, philosophies and strategies (Schein, 2004; 26-28). The relationship with the artifacts level can be both weak and strong because many of these values can be interpreted in the way that it would look on the artifact level.

The values in an organisation describe something that is visible for everyone, but is still not as visible as the artifacts.

An example of this could be a strategy paper that everyone can see and read but not everyone will have the same interpretation of this. Another example could be something that everyone talks about and know is going on. The differences here will be in the understanding of the data. If it is something that no one can see and no one understands the same way, then it becomes a much deeper level cultural phenomenon, which is called basic underlying assumptions.
3.3.3 Basic Underlying Assumptions

Basic underlying assumptions are the core of organisational culture and how Schein believes culture is embedded in a certain organisation. It is the last level and therefore the assumptions are based on the values. If these values are being repeated until success appears, then they become embedded and form the basic underlying assumptions.

On this last level, the values have been repeated and tested so many times that people in the organisation do not think about them anymore as a value and they are taking them for granted (Schein, 2004; 28-33).

By taking the values for granted, the different people in the organisation will have the same view of organisation culture and reality.

The basic underlying assumptions are thereby the foundation of how to analyse and understand the cultural behaviour of people in an organisation. The people in the organisation believe that basic underlying assumption is the truth and shows the real world, which means that questioning another belief system or interpretation of an organisational culture will for these people be extremely difficult. According to Schein, it is these basic underlying assumptions that control how people will react in certain situations.

Schein believes that the basic underlying assumption is the one that determine the artifacts and the elements that we can see and experience (Schein, 2004; 33).

The basic underlying assumptions have a huge impact on organisational culture in organisations. These levels are trying to explain how culture is taking place in organisations and it is a theory that looks at culture as a structural phenomenon.

It is important to remember that basic underlying assumptions are difficult to analyse for anyone as they are not outspoken and would, in many cases, be a guestimate of a cultural asset.

3.3.5 The role of the founder

Schein is looking at the role of the founder/co-founders in an organisational cultural context and see that typical problems are that these early stage organisations need to survive and thereby forces different kind of external adaption and international integration problems (Schein, 2004; 222).

According to Schein, the organisational culture rises from three important sources:

1. The founder/co-founders
2. Experiences gathered from people working in the organisation
3. New experiences created together in the organisation
Schein believes that the founder/co-founders of an organisation is one of the greatest influences because it is also him/them that chooses the first people in the organisations that are going to influence it. Furthermore, it is also the founder’s/co-founders’ norms and values that will have the highest influence on an organisation. That means that the learnings within the organisation regarding values and beliefs will be something that the founder/co-founders has initially initiated (Schein, 2004; 215).

The founder/co-founders is the first leader in an organisation and Schein believes that the leaders in an organisation have a great influence.

“Organisational cultures are created in part by leaders, and one of the decisive functions of leadership is the creation, the management, and sometimes even the destruction of culture” (Schein, 2004; 5).

Schein believes that leaders need to create and lead the culture within and that it is the talent of the leaders that needs to be judged based on their capability to work with the culture (Schein, 2004; 14). Understanding the culture is for everyone something that will be useful, but it has a devastating effect if the leaders in an organisation do not understand the culture (Schein, 2004; 23).

The paper has now outlined the functionalistic perspective and the view of Schein. This is going to be used in the analysis of the paper where the analysis of this theory will be built around the three levels of culture. The analysis will then look at the artifacts which will be more descriptive, then the values with more data, and finally, the basic underlying assumption will be the analysis of the investigator of what is found out in the culture. The other elements of the theory of Schein will be included as the theoretical background information and some elements will be within the analysis of the three levels.

The paper will now turn to the symbolistic approach and explain how it will build up the analysis after the functionalist analysis.
3.4 Symbolism

The paper will now discuss the theoretical standpoint of symbolism as the second part of the theoretical framework that will constitute the analysis. The theory can be difficult to have a clear view of, which is why the author has chosen to explain the theory with the help from other symbolists.

The symbolistic approach and theoretical standpoint are often viewed as a critic to the functionalist theory and less as a fully developed theory in itself. In that regards, symbolism is mix and match of different researchers in the area of symbolism. The one factor that makes them symbolists is their view that humans take an active part in creating their own reality. The main researcher in this paper is chosen to be Majken Schultz because she is including different theoretical views within the symbolist paradigm.

Symbolists look at the humans but also what they describe as phenomenon’s. Phenomenon’s are social definitions where the human is acting from its own definition of phenomenon’s (Schultz, 1995; 70). Because the human is looked as an active player in creating its own reality, then it becomes important to look at and understand the processes that create sense making and why humans act as they do.

Alfred Schutz looks at humans as thinking creatures that participate actively in changing the social environment and takes their surroundings for given. Schutz thereby believes that we, humans, have a natural way of looking at this and thereby gives this skill the name of common sense (Alfred Schutz, 2003; 82).

Majken Schultz is another researcher within symbolism, and as Alfred Schutz, she also believes that the symbolistic paradigm is made upon that people are creating their own reality. Phenomenon’s are not facts but are rather defined as social definitions where the human act as its definition of that given phenomenon (Majken Schultz, 1995; 69).

Organisations and organisational culture are systems created by humans, which means that actions are not occurring based on a functional system but are rather being made out of social conceptions about how much an action will influence the people in the organisation. Having that in mind, we can see that an organisation and its culture are understood as a symbolistic construction where all the physical elements translate into a symbolic universe.

The symbolism believes that the organisational culture has multi-dimensional opinions about how the culture takes place and that the culture in itself is based on a lot of different small truths about the culture (Majken Schultz, 1995; 72).
Schultz views symbols as a key term in her theory of symbolism and these symbols reflect different signals and are given an extra meaning. Symbols can be an object, an action, an event or an opinion. Symbols can be divided into other physical, action or verbal based symbols.

Physical symbols can also be called artifacts and describe many of the obvious elements that one may encounter when experiencing and investigating a culture. This could be the architecture, the way the office is decorated or how people dress (Majken Schultz, 1990; 74).

Action symbols are something where a given action a person is conducting will have a meaning in the organisation, such as rituals or ceremonies. The actions are symbolic and have been made and systemized to make sense in given situations. Rituals are described as minor traits of the actions in an organisation that are normally informal, such as rituals in relation to meetings, management, or different conflicts (Majken Schultz, 1990; 74).

3.4.1 Verbal symbols

Verbal symbols are when something occurs where there is a verbal use or expression with a symbolic content. It is the action of the chosen verbal use that is the symbol. These actions can be stories about myths, sagas, metaphors, histories or expressions. The myths can be defined as common everyday explanations that serve as a norm of how to take actions. Myths can be described as to legitimate to the different actions and choices the people in the organisation make and by that the actions work toward a socialisation in the organisation. Basically, myths provide a central understanding of how organisational culture affects the organisational behaviour.

The sagas in an organisation are based on the history of the organisation and they help people in to create a common understanding and identity in the organisation. These sagas are stories of the organisation (Majken Schultz, 1990; 75-65). Symbols, myths and sagas are all something that creates a common trait and pattern and are the foundation of how you look at an organisational culture.

The verbal symbols are the most interested for this paper to analyse as this will build upon the analysis of the functionalist view. Thereby, the main part of the symbolistic analysis will consist of the findings of verbal symbols. There is no clear way how to structure this part, and therefore the researcher seeks to dig into the core findings one by one.

According to the symbolic paradigm, it is difficult to conduct an objective analysis and map the different elements that occur in an organisational culture. In order to dig into the core of the culture, the researcher has to actively participate in the different events taking place in the organisation and has to include his own experiences (Majken Schultz, 1990; 80).
3.5 Theory Crossing

“By definition functionalism and symbolism differ in the key question they pose to the study of culture and their key assumptions about the nature of culture.” (Majken Schultz, 149).

This section finds it relevant to include some thoughts about the differences between the two theoretical stand points in order for the reader to have insights into the structured analysis. As outlined with the functionalistic and symbolistic paradigm, the different perspectives of culture differ in many different ways. This section will dig into the key differences and how this will affect the analysis.

The different perspectives in the cultural analysis have been mentioned by Hatch & Schultz (1996, 530) as an Interplay. The interplay is a paradigm-crossing that is not only taking a single view of a culture but includes other perspectives. Culture is an abstract term and a single view would not be sufficient to show a realistic view of the organisational culture. In the interplay analysis, it is important not to mix the theories too much together, as a negative result could be a polluted analysis and devaluation of the theoretical key findings.

Interplay recognizes the differences and connections between the perspectives as the researcher will constantly work in between two different perspectives.

The paper will look closer at the major differences and comparisons in the following section in order to be ready for the analysis with an interplay strategy. The analytical framework of analysing with the differences perspectives is keen to understand in order to work within the interplay strategy.

Analysing with functionalism is to some degree straight forward as functionalism has a more predefined framework of the way the culture works, like in regard to cultural levels and their functions. Culture in an organisation will always be shown in the development and relation to the functional areas of the organisation. The analysis will be conducted from looking at the obvious elements as the artifacts and then further into values and underlying basic assumptions.

Analysing with the symbolistic perspective is different from the functionalist as this is not near as strict and predefined. Symbolism does, however, work with different sets of predefined concepts. The symbolic perspective and its application should be a reflection of the studied organisation (Majken Schultz, 1994; 151).

The paper will investigate the key differences and comparisons of the paradigms in order to know more about our application of the analytical framework within the interplay strategy.
The key differences between a symbolic and functionalist perspective rise if you look at the ways that each of the perspectives argue that you need to investigate in order to analyse an organisational culture.

The main difference is that the functionalistic perspective relies on a predefined approach on different levels and dimensions of an organisation. The symbolistic perspective views the organisation more openly and has a less rigid defined set of concepts (Majken Schultz, 1994; 160).

It is important to mention that the symbolistic analysis is best used when it’s performed as a spiral with constant interpretations. This constitutes very well with the hermeneutical philosophy that this paper has outlined in the methodology chapter.

Looking at the similarities of the functionalist and symbolistic perspectives, there are a few key elements to highlight. The main notion of similarity is the concept of culture development over time as many other cultural researchers have had a slightly less focus on this area (Majken Schultz, 1994; 164). Furthermore, both perspectives see that there is a strong connection between the objective and visible cultural artifacts and all the invisible and underlying elements in the culture.

The analysis will be performed with the start of the functionalistic approach and then moved to the symbolism. A direct line to interplay will not be included, but it will be in the mind of the researcher of this paper. The interplay is used to let the reader know the connection about the theories and that it is a good fit a cultural analysis study.

Before venturing into the analysis, the paper finds it relevant to highlight the case of ChurchDesk and the most important background knowledge of the persons in the culture.
4.0 Case

The author finds it relevant to dedicate a whole section to the case of ChurchDesk. The case has been mentioned briefly in several occasions but has not been investigated in depth. Thereby, this section will explain in details the case in order for the reader to have a deep understanding of a startup company and be prepared for the analysis.

ChurchDesk is a startup company located in Copenhagen and is founded by a Christian Steffensen. Christian is currently the CEO and Founder of ChurchDesk, which is a Software Service (SaaS) startups that delivers church management software. He got the idea in 2012, when he saw that his mother that works as a pastor was in great need of optimising many processes. In 2002, he had already started building websites for churches but had to let it go due to his obligations at the University. When he graduated in 2012, he realised that not much had changed since the websites he built 10 years’ prior that time and the whole industry lacked technology services for its members.

Churches are often seen as something boring and old-school in terms of the way they are managed and deliver a service to its users. However, in the recent years the trend has begun to change and the church needed to adapt further for the growing technology behaviour that people are interaction with. No industry can just neglect the growing technology development, and the churches are not an exception.

ChurchDesk is a church management software tool that enables the pastor and people in the church to communicate regarding internal processes and tasks, as well as coordinate and organise external events for its members. The system has been developed over time and started with only a few features, but quickly developed into the most comprehensive software systems for churches.

Today, ChurchDesk serves over 1000 churches in all their markets and have more than 100.000 church members in their system that each month interact with the churches through ChurchDesk.

ChurchDesk is located in Copenhagen but also has offices in Berlin and London. The first office they opened outside Denmark was in Hamburg, but they decided to merge the office into one
central in Berlin. The London office opened in 2016 as a result of a successful venture capital investment round where they raised €2 million in a series A-round.

Prior to the investment from the venture capital firm they were part of the accelerator programme called Accelerace where they received training on customer journey and business development. The programme turned out to help ChurchDesk receive seed funding from Accelerace and an investment from the current chairman Klaus Nyengaard. Klaus used to be the CEO of Just-eat, which is a global public company that connects local fast-food shops to its customers. This strong profile also helps set the direction of the company and provides support for Christian.

ChurchDesk employees 32 people from 12 different countries around the world. The different departments in ChurchDesk are within IT-development also called “the tech team”, Sales, Customers Success, Marketing, Finance and then Christian as the CEO.

The largest team is the tech team and it has its own space for 10 people. This is also the place with most international people as they are able to work on the same project as they are not binded by local language needs.

The sales department in Denmark is rather small as they have had up to 6 people in the team last year but now they believe it is difficult to grow in Denmark. Instead, the customer success department has grown into 3 people and a newly established department, such as the marketing department, ensures that they get more inbound leads. The finance team is only 1 person and that person sits close to the CEO of ChurchDesk.

The CEO is mostly travelling to the different sales offices, talking to managers in the different departments, creating PR and stakeholder management.
4.1 The data

In this section, a short introduction to each of the interviewees will be given in order for the readers to get an insight into the story behind the data gathered and with what the employees in a startup are working with.

1. **Christian Steffensen, CEO & Founder**

Christian is the founder of ChurchDesk and has been the CEO (Chief Executive Officer) all the way through its lifetime. Christian uses his everyday work to ensure that the company is growing and following the strategy set by the management team. He makes sure that the different offices in Berlin and London are up to speed with the rest. He plans town hall meetings which are monthly get-togethers for everyone in the company to hear about the news about the product and from the management team. Christian has the responsibility to ensure the company is financially on the right track. Therefore, a need for constantly talking to potential investors is necessary, as well as having meetings with the board members. Christian is also the face of ChurchDesk as his background and story about coming from a family of pastors is great for getting PR in newspapers or use in direct marketing for the customers. Christian plays a large role in the culture creation in ChurchDesk as he is the one that has a final saying in recruitment of the senior personnel.

2. **Matthias Haamann, CTO**

Matthias is the CTO (Chief Technology Officer) at ChurchDesk and ensures a great product and team building. His daily job is about fixing bugs, prioritising tasks, developing the product, developing new features and then handling all the personal stuff in the team. This means that he will need to recruit the right talents in order to provide the right solution for their customers. This is the task that takes a lot of time and energy for a person that is used to focus on IT Development “… and then handling all the personal stuff in the team which takes a lot of time. I hope that in the future we will have a HR person to handle most of it, but right now I take care of everything and hire people myself. It is very much taking care of everything (Matthias Interview). Matthias has been at ChurchDesk since the early days as a student assistant and taken the big steps of becoming a CTO.

3. **Christian Jul Jensen, Senior Tech**

Christian Jul is one of the most recent hires in ChurchDesk and has a senior position as the lead technical architect in the 8-man technical team. This role ensures that the IT infrastructure that all the developers are building is scalable enough for the future growth. In the past, they have been building software as fast as possible, but now they want to think a bit on a longer term. Due to his senior position, he spends a lot of time to talk with the developers on various coding dilemmas. Christian Jul is together with the CTO Mathias the one in charge of the whole technical team. He helps Mathias with different management decisions on a daily basis.
4. **Carlos Weckesser, Tech**
Carlos is a Brazilian developer at ChurchDesk. His title is more of an average developer and his job is mostly to fix bugs, encode new features and work on the production servers. He works both independently and in small tech teams on the different tasks. He spends a lot of time coordinating with the rest of the tech team in order to make sure that he develops the right things. He is not involved in business activities of any kind.

5. **Daniel Massot, Head of Sales**
Daniel is the Head of Sales in Nordics and makes sure that the sales of ChurchDeck are growing each year. The sales department used to be much bigger but due to stagnation in the home markets they cut a bit back on key account managers and focused on customer success and business development activities. Such business development activities have involved in creating an independent salesperson in another location in Denmark that function as a distribution channel with a high degree of local knowledge.

6. **Maja Schakenda Kaldahl, Sales and Customer Success**
Maja is a recent graduate from Copenhagen Business School and has been at ChurchDesk for 6 months. She is responsible for half of the customers in the Danish market and that title is called “Customer Success Manager”. Her position is about nursing the current customers with customer service and up-sale, on boarding of new customers on the platform, retention and everything within the job framing of classical account management. She is responsible for 600-700 customers and shares this with one other colleague.
5.0 Analysis

This chapter will constitute the analysis of this paper and will go in depth with the investigation of the organisational culture of ChurchDesk. The analysis of ChurchDesk will be used to investigate how classical organisational culture theories apply to a startup organisation.

The analysis will be structured as it will try to go from a simpler analysis with the functionalist perspective and then move to the symbolic perspective. The structure of the functionalism analysis will follow the order going from artifacts to values and end up with basic underlying assumptions. The symbolistic analysis will follow a less strict structure as the theory in itself does not explain a certain approach. The paper will, thereby, include its own structure to provide the reader with a better guidance through this part of the analysis.

The theory of Schein and functionalism can be seen as rather straightforward a without deeper analytical understandings. This paper finds it relevant to look the theory of functionalism and tweak it a bit in relation to what is interesting in the case example. Within the section of values and most of the symbolic analysis the theoretical concepts have been twisted in order for the analysis to create value for the reader and the scientific question.

The analysis is thereby not a plug and play analysis where the data have been put into boxes but the researcher of this paper have made clear chose in regards to how the analysis is conducted. The paper will argue that this stretch of theory is for the greater good in relation to answering the scientific question of what the organisational culture of ChurchDesk is. The stretch of theory is not farfetched as it is within the overall idea of the theoretical stand points.
5.1 Functionalism

This section will analyse the functionalistic perspective of ChurchDesk and will go from a more descriptive to an analytical analysis. The functionalist analysis will consist of the three parts: artifacts, values and basic underlying assumptions. The artifacts will briefly investigate some of the visual values that you will experience at ChurchDesk. There could be a lot more artifacts included, but the paper finds it relevant only to choose a few to create relevance for the reader and highlight what is argued to be important.

The following will be the analysis of the values that the researcher of this paper has found based on the interviews and observations at ChurchDesk. Key values will be highlighted that the people at ChurchDesk possess and see as a cultural value.

Finally, the researcher of this paper will conduct its own analysis and reflection about the findings of artifacts and values in order to create what is found to be the basic underlying assumptions at ChurchDesk.

5.1.1 Artifacts

As artifacts can be seen as descriptive, the paper finds it relevant to only include the most interesting that are relevant for this paper and the further analysis. The artifacts analysis will dig into some of the main findings that were observed as the researcher was visiting ChurchDesk several times for the interviews.

Artifacts at ChurchDesk are summarized in the below table and followed by a deeper explanation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artifacts</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>ChurchDesk findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Startup Village</td>
<td>The one startup hub in Copenhagen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>Startup Office</td>
<td>Fish-bowl, startup accessories, techie sales screens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>Global startup</td>
<td>10 nationalities, transition from Danish to English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Nickname culture</td>
<td>Everyone has a funny story behind &amp; casual language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subcultures</td>
<td>Invisible visible walls</td>
<td>Fish-bowl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The founder</td>
<td>The founder is the startup</td>
<td>Christian (CEO) has a strong influence on the company</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first thing you will experience when arriving at the doorsteps of ChurchDesk is the exciting environment at Islands Brygge in Copenhagen called Startup Village. Startup Village is an area of an old warehousing that was rebuilt and offered to innovative and new companies.

The area is approximately 14,000 sq. m and consists of 4 large old warehouses and two office buildings with 7 floors each and all are occupied by either label companies, design agencies or startups. This creative environment is uplifting and you will notice that different people around the buildings are all digital natives, creatives or just people talking fast on the phone regarding a business matter.

Startup Village is known to host some of the recently most successful startups in Copenhagen, such as Vivino, Autobutler, Graduateland and Planday. Today, it hosts more than 40 startups and growth companies that all together are employing over 500 people. All these successful startups are the frontrunners of how Startup Village has turned into this striving environment.

ChurchDesk is part of the Startup Village culture and identify itself as part of the Copenhagen growing startup scene.

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1 http://startupvillage.dk
The office space of ChurchDesk is a classical Startup office where you will see sales, marketing and technical teams. On the walls they have sales progress screens that show how it is going regarding customer sales, retention and how many people are using the platform today.

When you enter the room you won't see a reception or something like that. It will always be a random person that looks at you at the door and asks what you would be looking for. You then just leave your coat at the overfilled wardrobe and you place your shoes where everyone else have put theirs. The meeting rooms are casual and the big one is mostly used by the CEO for investor meetings and the smaller meeting room is for sales calls.

Another element is the use of gaming activities (e.g. football table right in the middle of the office) and as well as a PlayStation with a large screen in the hangout area. In the hallway you also have a shared table tennis that all the offices can use.
There are also marketing materials as roll-ups in many different spots at the office and you can see flyers on the tables.

In the back of the room you can see another room that is screened off with a large glass wall. That room is called the fishbowl by everyone and is where the tech team is located. As a special gimmick they have a Pulpit from a church where they sometimes go up on if they have a special announcement to make.

5.1.1.3 Global Startup

ChurchDesk is an international workplace with employees from 10 different nationalities. Besides having its headquarter in Copenhagen, they also have offices in Berlin and London. In 2015, they decided to make a tough transition for many of the employees.

The need for creating an international environment and a global culture made the management take the decision to go from not being able to speak Danish in public meetings but focus and force English as the one communication language when speaking with multiple peers. This transition has taking some time and still a lot of people talk native languages when possible, but you can feel that English is the main language in ChurchDesk.

This was also made when they decided to rebrand from the Danish name “kirkeweb” to ChurchDesk. Besides having the transition from Danish to English, a lot of different nationalities in ChurchDesk also experience a whole new and different kind of work environment; “... I believe that it is many different ways such as how the work should be conducted or how we talk to each other, it is special for the people coming from another country that experience this kind of directness that we have in a Danish work culture” (Mathias Interview).

In this perspective, we also see that the culture is affected by many different nationalities as they also need to take care of the different newcomers with not only different company cultures and value sets behind, but a whole new and different societal culture. As mentioned by Carlos that “Having a very open relationship with my boss, we can talk pretty much about everything and in a very relaxed way” (Carlos interview) was a huge difference from the work environment and culture he is used to in Argentina.
5.1.1.4 Nickname Culture

The stories they experience together through events and tradition also tend to create a certain language among them. This is seen as most of the developers have nicknames for each other; “One of the guys at the office was always getting here late, so I just looked up a video where there is someone, a reference to someone never getting in town, or never getting to the place he is supposed to go, and based on that, we started calling this guys with a specific name because of what they say in the video. So let’s say I call him a nickname. He’s the chosen one” (Carlos).

This was also the case for Carlos himself and others in the tech team. The tech team is also the most international and most closed group compared to the rest of the departments and thereby they also create a special vibe and language together “They also laugh a lot because I have some weird accent, like someone who speaks Spanish and is trying to speak English, but they will mock me that I sound like Italian. It’s a joke I get and a joke I make” (Carlos). The paper has highlighted the tech team here as it was clearly based in the interviews and observations that there is a unique and different kind of language going on.

5.1.1.5 The visible invisible wall

In the back of the office room you can see another room that is screened of with a large glass wall. That room is called the “fish-bowl” by everyone and it is where the tech team is located. The reason for this is due to the tech team working in different hours and therefore needs more collaboration with each other and less with others. They are a special unit in ChurchDesk and have found their own subculture in the company as with their many small rules and rituals; “If there are deadlines, then we have made it such as there is mandatory work until 20:00 every day because people are not good enough to know when to start when we are developing a huge project and have a deadline” (Mathias Interview).

The developers will only come out if they need to go to toilet or for lunch; “We’re not interacting a lot. In the beginning, I wasn’t, at least, with the people of the other areas” (Carlos Interview). It is a clear distinction in the architecture of the room as you will not have a specific reason to go into that room. It is easier to get access to the CEO who sits closer to the main entrance at an open desk than a developer in ChurchDesk. This architectural aspect leads to a divided organisation with the developers and the rest of the organisation. “We really try to leave tech alone as they are very busy” (Maja Interview). The sales employees mostly talk to the Head of Product Development who sits outside of the fish-bowl.
Christian is the founder and CEO of ChurchDesk and is the face of the company. Being the only founder of the company and having a strong story behind why he created ChurchDesk has granted him with a special position within the company. In many ways the employees talk about Christian as ChurchDesk or ChurchDesk as Christian.

As described by Schein, the founder has a large influence on the culture, and that is the case with ChurchDesk. At the about page on their website, it is Christian that describes personally about the company and less in an objective way of how the company looks like; “I grew up in Denmark in a family of pastors, which has always given me a natural connection to the church”.

Christian is also in that belief that the culture is something that the management team must create and maintain: “We have chosen not to have an HR person nor do we have such a culture person... Sometimes I see the most junior people getting hired to be the culture of people. I see there are a lot of practical things to be done but I do not see that you can outsource the culture-related area” (Christian Interview).

The artifacts found in this section show key elements that are important for the culture of ChurchDesk but also as general startup cultural aspects that would be interesting to investigate or gather more data on. The paper will investigate further within functionalism and will start the analysis of the values at ChurchDesk.

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1. https://techcrunch.com/2015/08/20/churchdesk/
2. https://www.churchdesk.com/about/
5.1.2 Values

As the artifacts have analysed the visible elements of an organisational culture at ChurchDesk, the author wants to dig deeper into the less visible elements.

The values, as described in the theory chapters, explain that these are visible but they are less equally understood, which means that the analysis of values is based on the investigation of the researcher.

Values can be difficult to describe as they have to be visible, but the author has chosen to include three key areas that have been found as core values of ChurchDesk.

The first is the culture strategy, which is called “Hashtag Culture” because the cultural manifest is based on three different hashtags that they have developed and try to introduce to the employees. The hashtags are called “Join the ride”, “Challenge” and “do good business”. The hashtags were introduced by the management team at a Townhall event and from there on they have been used in many different ways.

The next value is “No procedures” and here the author would like to further explain the story of how employees are being introduced to the company and how they find balance between structure and agility.

The last value is a dominant factor in all the interviews and is the great “Responsibility” that all the employees believe that they have and that the management team uses as both a tool for productivity and employee retention.

The paper has included what is argued to be the values of interest to this paper that can help answer the scientific question. The reason for including these values is because the researcher of this paper sees these as relevant to the scientific question. The author has chosen to introduce three key values as something that is interesting to the reader.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values at ChurchDesk</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hashtags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

= Management tool & empowering people
5.1.2.1 #Hashtag culture

“Our culture paper is not even a 1-pager, that’s just three words” (Christian Interview).

ChurchDesk used to talk about startup and tried figure out what they wanted to become as a company in many different stages of their journey. In the beginning, it is very unclear about what it is but also very easy to manage with a company of four to five people.

When you grow and employees move to other companies and other employees join, then you need to figure out how to maintain a healthy culture. Some time ago ChurchDesk had a longer culture paper with different phrases but was not really successfully implemented and the management team thereby tried to see how it could be implemented as simple as possible. They tried to implement three core keywords that could be used often and be visible for people in their action. “It is a difficult exercise because the culture must be lived and experienced. Yet in a business with high turnover and large diversity it is important that it not only lived because someone cannot understand it if it is not explained” (Christian Interview).

The purpose was to create the key words simple and thereby they created them as hashtags as this was something that everyone could understand “We have such a few words that explain our culture and we try to preach and use” (Christian Interview). The cultural keywords described through hashtags are: #JoinTheRide, #Challenge, #DoGoodBusiness.

Picture above is a screenshot from LinkedIn that shows how ChurchDesk not only internally uses the hashtags but also externally in order to brand the startups in relation to recruiting.
“We want people to buy into these hashtags and use them on our internal communication channel” (Daniel Interview). The hashtags will take some time for newcomers to understand and get under their skin in order for them to use the words on an everyday basis. “When we are recruiting, then we think about whether that person can join our ride and can fit in our social environment – do we have a person that can be ChurchDesk-ified” (Daniel Interview).

In sales they use the keywords when something occurs, such as closing a new lead or if they are inviting for social events, it is always finished with a Join the ride hashtag for people to know that they are included in the social environment: “there is someone behind all this and is putting resources into it and you should come and join us” (Daniel Interview).

Join the ride is something that has been used from the early start of ChurchDesk and is a bit of teenage-like word describing the journey and the future (Christian Interview). The word has been kept during the years but is considered as a good framework for what the company is and that people are part of something that other people have invested in personally, the word “is a relic of the past” (Christian Interview).

This hashtag has been, from many people in the company, seen as a bit unserious and they have had an ambivalent feeling towards it because the hashtag could be seen a little corny. Instead of forcing people to use it and like it, they have tried to use it with a bit of irony in different situations “It is perfectly fine to make a little fun of the things we do as long as it is in a good way” (Christian Interview). As Daniel from sales points out, it’s a clear task for the management team to use the words in their own work and then step by step it gets grounded into the culture and everyday life of the employees (Daniel Interview).

When looking at the tech team, a word like “join the ride” could be seen as a joke but in many ways they have merged the word with “Challenge” and see that many tasks and projects in the development process are about a challenge and a special ride: “we know this looks really difficult to do but it is part of the journey, hop on and you may be part of doing it better because it is not perfect” (Mathias Interview). Carlos, one of the developer in the tech team, believes that join our ride is meant to push people in order for them to achieve their goals and overcome difficult things: “since we are a startup company, there are a lot of things we have to achieve, and a lot of challenges to overcome” (Carlos Interview).

Challenges and join the ride is for many kinds of the same things but the distinction is clear from the founder of the hashtags: “We want that all here think it’s fun to challenge what all it entails, the uncertainty, hard work, to think about, to have fun, you win and you lose” (Christian Interview).

Do good business is a very open and that is intentionally from the management team because what is really doing good business as they claim? The definition is made from the management that the decisions that people take have to be good for the company in both the short and long term: “In fact, it is a question of how you can empower people so far down in the chain as possible, I think that’s a great culture” (Christian Interview). Rules in a startup are not always efficient due
to the need of being open and more agile if needed in certain situations. It is clear that even though ChurchDesk has had the time to develop more rules and procedures, it is a clear management decision to actually be less strict and empower people in a simple way while still uniting in a culture – a hashtag culture.

“I am not sure whether people can relate to these words.” (Mathias Interview)

During the interviews people had the tendency to quickly state that the key words did not mean that much for them. For example, Maja started with “I don’t believe that I use the words in my everyday life” (Maja Interview), while Carlos said that “most people are constantly naming those mottos, I don’t” (Carlos Interview). After some more in-depth conversation about the hashtags people started to light up in different ways and it was clear that the words were something that people remembered and used: “But I do think I am up for the Challenge ... Doing good business is also a part of it” (Carlos Interview). Maja later explained that the hashtags actually have meaning in terms of how the company created a more family related culture “For me it is about that we are together in one company and have a huge challenge ahead with what we do” (Maja Interview).

The hashtags will have different meanings from person to person and different interpretations may occur as some will see them as mottos, while others as principles.

In the early days of ChurchDesk they used to use a lot of “tacky startup words” as Christian would refer to it. Beside join the ride, a phrase they used a lot was “work harder” but this word has faded since the company have grown and gotten more serious in their recruitment of people but also the procedures they have. The startup is turning into a real business and therefore a need for sustained professionalism is what the founder and the rest of the management team are seeking. Even though the maturity of the startup is developing and more formalised elements are being implemented, there is still a long way to go for formalised procedures.

Hashtags are something that describes a very modern company as hashtags were not used before the era of social media and represent something international, which is what ChurchDesk would like to have as an image – Smart, Modern and International.

The first part of the value analysis has investigated a visible part of the culture such as the hashtags. The next part is investigating something that is not visible, such as the lack of procedures, which is mentioned often as a value.

5.1.2.2 No Procedures

“At first it was pretty cool because I got here and one of the guys in the development department was also leaving, so I just got his key and his desk, and I also was invited to, one of the guys just moved to a new apartment and threw a party. And it surprised me that they would just invited me without knowing me. That was pretty cool and important” (Carlos Interview).
ChurchDesk is a fairly young startup company and therefore a lot of different organisational systems, such as figuring out processes, procedures and rules are an ongoing development process. The onboarding process of new people will be used as an example of what employees are encountering when starting in a startup such as ChurchDesk.

When Carlos started working at ChurchDesk he quickly found that this was something different from what he has encountered at other regular corporate workplaces: “It was a fast learning curve. I got into doing things quite fast and it was good” (Carlos Interview). The need for bringing people quickly into developing and execution mode is important for a startup as they often have a long list of things to develop and a financial burn-rate of their investment. Carlos came from the corporate side where the focus was on structure and hierarchy and here he tried to see the opposite where his boss was his new friend and that there were very few clear rules.

Having a flexible workplace in a startup such as ChurchDesk can be highly efficient when you can get people to work immediately on the things that matter, but if the onboarding of the person is not clear, then that could have fatal consequences such as developing the wrong product or burning good leads due to bad training. An example of how this can be difficult for a startup company such as ChurchDesk is when a more senior person joined the company.

“I believe that it was difficult to join the company, people were super friendly and hard-working and so on, but there are so many implied elements in the organisation. There is just a lot of elements that are in a certain way and that people kind of know how it is but these things are not something that you know as a newcomer in the organisation and you have to figure these things out by yourself” (Christian Jul Interview).

When new employees start at ChurchDesk, the introduction to the company and work processes is mostly based on how the product works, what features it has and how the customers of the product are actually using it in their everyday life. This onboarding process is mostly focused on the business side of ChurchDesk which is also important for employees and newcomers. The problem is more on how the organisation actually is functioning and that is not in focus when you are on boarded: “It was pretty difficult for me to navigate and find my way around the company in my role” (Christian Jul Interview).

What is difficult in a startup such as ChurchDesk to know is based on the different workflows and decision making abilities that there are in an organisation. In the case with Christian Jul, it was very much about if they wanted to develop something, whether they were able to make the actual decision in the end and what were the process and procedure regarding taking a decision. This could also be seen a bit of cultural shock as he directly came from a large telecommunication company but he also had startup experience; “I understand that a company this size does not have strict procedures and maybe it does not make sense because things are constantly floating” (Christian Jul Interview).
It seems like a startup company needs a great balance between structure and freedom, but in the end employees need to know what decision they can make for themselves or if they can’t make them, then who shall they ask in order to get it done. The growth speed of the company is yet to neglect in this kind of example as they have been growing 50% in terms of employees.

When an organisation grows at this speed, it can be tricky to maintain the culture and organisation and create the right fit for the employees. Christian Jul has an experience from previously being part of an early stage startup and believes that he had made these observations as it reminded him about what it was like in the other place. It can seem that having a mixed background of startup and corporate experience can lead to a better reflection about the different cultural processes in a startup.

When a startup is growing, it can be difficult to manage everything and can lead to people not knowing what is going on – but having a structured organisation on every level may not be the right answer: “I don’t believe that the solution is to create a lot of different processes, procedures and organisational diagrams. In fact, I believe this would kill a lot of that agility that we have” (Christian Jul Interview). The need for a better communication seems to be the right way to go if you want to have a balance between high information level and still an agile organisation.

The management team sometimes tends to believe that the employees know about the things going on, but mostly they don’t, and the need to specify the prioritise seems important. A situation occurred when an unstructured process was formalised a procedure was conducted at ChurchDesk and the response from the management team was that they did not have to think about that anymore “it is naïve to believe that you can make a process for something and then don’t have to look back at this when you have an organisation type like this where everything is moving constantly” (Christian Jul Interview). The point with this statement is not to claim that it is impossible to make processes, but it is a claim that when an organisation grows this fast then there will constantly be stuff to fix and when something is solved, then something new will appear and when that is solved then the element from before will need to be fixed again. This also means that the management team needs to be much better at organisational and cultural tasks related to improvement and shaping a stronger organisation as roles are changing when new people join the company, while the processes are also changing all the time.

Employees feel much more empowered with being able to be closer to the actual decision making process. In a startup company such as ChurchDesk the process is much shorter than in larger organisation, and empowering this process of decision making also means empowering the employees: “I have pretty big influence on the things, even the things I can’t take a decision about I can have an opinion about that I can’t do in a large company. There, you can’t just go up to the CEO and say that something does not work” (Christian Jul Interview). ChurchDesk does not have
regular systems and processes defined – they have to be more agile in the way that they test things in the sales and marketing department. This is due to a need for idea iteration and feedback from few customers before launching the real marketing initiative. The need for learning from mistakes and finding out what works is also something that strives well in a more unstructured work culture: “well if I get an idea then I just walk over to the marketing department, it is a very open place and there is not a perfect formula on everything. So if someone has a good idea, it is easy to test it out” (Maja Interview).

As this semi unstructured process of having procedures and being agile leads to greater employee empowerment, it is also something that leads to the increase in responsibility. Balancing procedures and agility seems to be a great management discipline in a startup in the growth phase such as ChurchDesk.

5.1.2.3 Responsibility

“People work hard, they care for it, they show up at work because they want to and not just to be here from 9-5. You can call each of them on a Saturday at 4 pm and if they are in the supermarket they will go home if they need to fix something. This is what I believe describe it in the best way. It is the passion for the product and the responsibility you have even though you are not the CTO or the architect behind, it is everyone who cares for it. If you are on a holiday and the team calls you, you will find your laptop and help out.” (Matthias Interview)

It was clear during all the interviews and the observations at ChurchDesk that responsibility for the one individual is a key value at ChurchDesk. This responsibility also seems to be a key management tool of the culture, but especially for how to get maximum output of each employee.

ChurchDesk does not demand people to be at the office x amount of time and does not check up on whether they have worked 37 hours a week. If they need to go to the Dentist or something similar, then they don’t do extra hours: “I don’t have to be sharp and on a specific schedule of time in the office. I do it because I am used to that, but here we can be more flexible” (Carlos Interview).

The management team has made the strategy to trust the individual and then hopefully they will care for the project and the task they need to perform and then use the time necessary. This is not something they talk about in their everyday work life but the strategy is something they made in order for them to push the employees to put in more hours than expected. They want to empower a kind of freedom for people so they can come in at 10 or leave early if they want; “we developers could sit and develop in the evenings and it is actually fine if someone just tell us in our Tech-channel in advance that they will be working all night long and not come in the next day” (Mathias Interview).
As with procedures, there are no clear rules set for this. The tech team has arranged two weekly morning meetings that take place Monday and Wednesday. This is something that people need to attend and they want to do in order to keep up with the rest of the team. By having some very important regular meetings, the rest of the organisation becomes more flexible and increases employee responsibility.

Another cultural responsibility factor in the tech team is the individual responsibility for a certain feature or a product. The rule is not to send it to the CTO for approval but to find another random employee to have a second look at it. When accepted, then they can push it directly out to the server and the customers. This is for one thing to automatize the process and make it faster but also to let the one employee become responsible: “It gives a huge responsibility because they can’t rely on the CTO to check it out. If it crashes, then it’s their responsibility” (Mathias Interview). They have different monitoring systems that track errors in the system and if an error occurs then it is the developer behind it that gets notified. There is a focus on high responsibility that leads back to the developer. This means that even though they are empowered to work faster and have a flexible life, the responsibility of this also comes with the prices of having errors directly linked to them if something happens. This is why ChurchDesk gets assured that the developers put in more hours than normally in order not to get too many errors in their development process.

It seems like the type of person that joins a startup like ChurchDesk is also someone that values responsibility as an organisational value. In this case, we also see that employees want to take more responsibility “There is no one sitting and just taking tasks from a list as monkeys” (Mathias Interview). The tech management team also encourages people to give tasks an extra shot than usually to create something good and they don’t pay people to stay until late. They believe that the employees can see the importance of doing it and they can track the estimates that they put together and the rest of the team can then follow the one employee.

The team sits together when they need to develop a new project and set the milestones as a team and also for themselves in order to create accountability. “Tech becomes motivated that it is great team with social activities and that they get responsibilities, a lot of responsibilities, and that they don’t end up as robots that just fix bug after bug, a place where they can become part of developing the product themselves and define how they should solve the different tasks” (Mathias Interview). The management strategy is to lead the team by setting some overall goals and then nudge the developers into actually coming up with the right solution for the problem.

In the sales department they also feel a lot of responsibility and goals to reach each year and as the newly graduated employee Maja mentioned: “if you don’t take responsibility and deliver then a lot of colleagues will not reach their goals for the year as well” (Maja Interview). This size of a
startup company that ChurchDesk has is still where tasks and roles are very much dependent on each other.

This visual kind of responsibility leads to pressure on the employees as it is possible to actually see the work that a person is contributing to the company and also that you will not let down your colleagues. This creates a team feeling but also a pressure as the startup is in a stage where venture capital investment leads to management pressure and very ambitious goals they need to reach in order to survive as a startup company. “This is something scary, but at the same time this is also what drives me to go the extra mile and that I believe is really motivating” (Maja Interview).

Responsibility is a key value for employees at ChurchDesk. The responsibility comes from the flexible environment and the size of a growing organisation. The responsibility empowerment is a strong strategic management task that can lead to employees micro managing themselves in a much better way than tight micro management would do.

Values at ChurchDesk have showed that it empowers employees, processes and the international feeling that they want as a startup.

The values do however risk to be changed with the growth rate that the organisation is currently in. The same goes with the change of new employees and how they contribute to the culture. Based on the visible and less visible organisational culture values of ChurchDesk, the paper is moving towards the non-visible cultural elements – the basic underlying assumptions.
5.1.3 Basic Underlying Assumptions

“I mean, it’s not a written rule we have, it is something we have developed over time” (Mathias Interview).

Investigating and analysing the basic underlying assumptions in a young startup company such as ChurchDesk can be very difficult. One of the key reasons is the lack of heritage and history. It seems like some elements in ChurchDesk have become more or less basic underlying assumption and the paper will try to conduct the analysis of these and furthermore what is believed to become future basic underlying assumptions.

The paper sees that ChurchDesk is on the move to establish more and more basic underlying assumptions as quotes from the interviews suggest that: “You come to some point where you make these small rules that are embedded and understood in the team and everyone has been part of making these rules” (Mathias Interview).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Underlying Assumptions at ChurchDesk</th>
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<tr>
<td>Moving forward!</td>
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5.1.3.1 We are a global startup that is moving forward

“We are not very far from success or failure – it can be a matter of days or weeks. A young company goes very up and down. There are many who can very quickly think "uh now it gets a little uncertain, we do not know what's going to happen”. So it is important to try to put into perspective some things; for example, we will say “hey it's been tried before”” (Christian Interview)

During the time at ChurchDesk where the interviews and observation were conducted, the researcher of this paper found the culture to have many traits of what is believed to be on the road to the basic underlying assumptions.

The researcher of this paper found all the interviewees proud of the place and proud of being part of the journey they were on. The hashtag culture seemed like something funny and they all believed that they had a critical distance, but the hashtags show a basic underlying assumption of ChurchDesk that has been developed over the years and was part of the culture, but is now being transferred into physical words and actions. These words and actions are not able to become communicated by the management team and the employees as well and are only strengthening the bond to the hashtags. The basic underlying assumption of being a born global startup that is
moving forward, means that it is a place full of international employees that all have a high level of responsibility and are working in an environment with very few procedures.

This affects the employees to that degree where everything is possible and the only way that ChurchDesk can move at is forward. It was clear during the interviews that setbacks were not really the case, no one was afraid of cutbacks or that growth would slow down. The focus is on getting to the next level as a company, even though they don’t know the road.

5.1.3.2 We don’t know how tomorrow looks like but we will be ready

Moving forward and growing in a startup means that it is difficult to cope and predict the future path for a startup company such as ChurchDesk. The hashtags like #JoinTheRide and #Challenge allow the management team to communicate an unclear strategy, but the supporting cultural hashtags explain employees that things will change. It seemed rooted into the employees that they did not know where the company was going beside forward.

How it was going to do this could be in many ways and the need for thinking innovative and doing experiments seemed like an important part of the task. The responsibility that they all possessed was given that they all did not know about the future, but it was their job to be ready and handle whatever obstacle they might face.

5.1.3.3 Everyone is unique and have a direct impact on the business

To only move forward and have an uncertain futuristic plan for how to grow leads to a high pressure on the employees and the responsibility that they need to cope with. This is an interesting reference to the introduction as where the culture seemed like the most important to focus on when strategy in changing economies can become obsolete. The responsibility everyone possesses at ChurchDesk empowers the employees to feel more valuable, appreciated and passionate about their work.

This is highly necessary in order for the departments at ChurchDesk to deliver ambitious goals. The author of the paper finds it as a basic underlying assumption as everyone believe they are unique to the company and have a direct impact on the business. This is given through a great management of the culture but also the family feeling that the employees will get when being at the company for some time. Everyone is together on this journey but it also seems like even though they need to be together, they have to focus on their own performance.

The analysis of basic underlying assumptions argues that ChurchDesk is in the direction of establishing some deeper cultural attributes to the organisation. Some of these basic underlying assumptions would be interesting to test out, if they were specific for the case, or more general for the industry of startups.
5.2 Symbolism

The functionalistic analysis has gained the reader a broader analysis to the organisational culture of ChurchDesk and the symbolistic analysis will highlight what the theory of functionalism is not capable of, in order to provide a more holistic view of the organisational culture.

The symbolic analysis will constitute of an application of the action based, physical and verbal symbols followed by a more general symbolic analysis of the important key points to conclude. This general symbolic analysis will be within the verbal symbol section as they are all within the verbal symbol area, but it is difficult to group symbolistic analysis elements and thereby the structures go as it does.

As stated in the theory section, the symbolism is kind of vague described in terms of how strict the application of the analysis should be performed. The paper has tried to analyse more openly in this section with the based foundation of symbolism in order to extract key symbols that the researcher of this paper sees as something interesting at ChurchDesk, but also interesting in a general perspective of culture in startup organisations. The paper sees that the previously found elements in the functionalistic analysis are a great foundation for how symbolism can build upon the analysis and not be contradicting.

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<th>Symbolism at ChurchDesk</th>
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<td>Action Based Symbols</td>
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5.2.1 Action based symbols

By having an international environment with many different nationalities and different offices in other countries, it can often be difficult to be aligned on the strategic matters. The department of ChurchDesk is working with various types of activities, such as marketing, sales, finance or IT development, which also leads a need for getting everyone on the same field going forward. Startups tend to grow fast and this is the case with ChurchDesk as well, and thereby information is difficult to cope with and come up to speed with.

ChurchDesk has developed a monthly meeting event for strategic and social alignment throughout the whole organisation. This monthly meeting is called the Townhall and is referred to by the many employees as the place for getting the recent information from the management team. The
Townhall usually takes place at the Copenhagen headquarter but also tends to move to the London and Berlin offices in order to help people understand what they are part of.

The purpose of the Townhall is to align everyone in ChurchDesk regarding the different matters and the directions it is going: “That is one of the things that has changed over time where we used to be two persons and you knew what everyone was working on, now you don’t” (Mathias Interview). They also do a lot of social events in the tech team and typically once a month they organize a board game night, burger night, etc., in order to make people more social and “create a stickiness so that if you leave the job, then you somehow also lose a family.” (Mathias Interview) ChurchDesk believes that the startup culture they raise is like being part of a family.

This factor can be seen as with the many international employees only a limited network in Copenhagen and thereby a greater need for having good relationships at work. Traditions are one of the key influences to get people closer. The Townhall meetings are monthly and make sure that the employees get the necessary information.

The yearly skiing trip, which is all paid for by ChurchDesk, is one of the most important discussion points when the lunch is on. The whole company goes on a prolonged weekend in the spring to a skiing resort with a rented bus. This is somehow an expensive initiative by the company but is also seeing as valuable as this tradition enables people to create stories together and allows the culture to live on in a social content.

People from both the tech team and the sales department also believe that the workplace of ChurchDesk is special as it creates a feeling of a second family. The high level of politeness and how everyone welcome newcomers are actions that contributes to this family feeling.

5.2.2 Physical Symbols

As the transformation from a small Danish startup to a high growth international startup, they shifted from speaking Danish to English at the office. Beside this cultural symbol they also decided to do rebranding in regards to their logo. The previous logo was a symbol of something that was made up pretty fast from the early days where the logo was not in focus and more important elements, such as sales and development had the priorities. The logo was a symbol of the old days and change was about to happen and this
is why a brand identity shift was in order to create a new international startup company. The logo was more of a symbol of simplicity and that the company had become more clear about their core services. Instead of a whole Church, it was a working clip that symbolized that it is management tool and with a small flame on it to symbolism the candles in a Church.

The brand identity did not only include a new logo, but also changing the name from Danish to English for all customers, including the current Danish customers. This led to a bit of struggle with the customers that thought the company was going to neglect the Danish market and needs and focus on the international customers. ChurchDesk was out with a press release that stated that the change was beneficial for the Danish customers because that more knowledge sharing would happen. In the after period, it has seemed that the customers believe it is fine if just ChurchDesk keeps delivering a great service and product.

The physical symbols at ChurchDesk are not that interesting as they are mainly covered in the functionalistic analysis, but the change of logo was a clear physical symbol and build upon the functionalistic artifacts analysis. The following section will dive deeper into the interesting findings of the verbal symbols.

5.2.3 Verbal Symbols & Startup Culture Perception

This section has the purpose of creating a more symbolic understanding of the overall culture perception of ChurchDesk that the interviewees had provided during the interviews. The culture of ChurchDesk is “something that is enshrined and so it is something we try to use and talk about. It is in our language...” (Christian Interview) and Christian talks about how it is something they try to focus on when communicating internally and also discuss at management meetings.

To implement new elements in a culture, you have to be patient as it is a process that takes time and it’s not something the management team has to abuse. The reason for Christian to create an open culture strategy is that there will be different interpretations of the meaning of the words and thereby it is “intentionally a way to let people take ownership of their words” (Christian Interview).

Working with culture and people in a young startup seems to be difficult as their needs vary a lot and the competencies that they need to have. In the beginning, it is much more “work hard”
attitude that takes the product to the market and then it changes to an increasingly more serious organisational structure. As Christians puts it, it is inherently difficult for them when they are recruiting.

The reason is that they find it very hard to know what the roles are now and the given role that it needs to change to. Thereby, it is difficult to find a person that fits the job today, but also in the future: “Success depends on having the right people for the right things, so I use a lot of my time on this” (Christian Interview).

The term culture can mean a lot of different things and have different meanings for the individual interpreter. People at ChurchDesk have hard times describing the culture as it seems to be difficult.

“I think it is difficult to describe culture and put words on it. It is something that has evolved through the years. I don't know what it is now or if I am satisfied with what it is” (Mathias Interview).

Culture seems to be a term that is difficult to cope with and describe as it has an abstract interpretation for most people. Culture is a word that seems to be something that the investigator has to analyse. It can also be described by the management team but that is often described with management terms.

When talking with the interviewees, the researcher of this paper was able to talk more in-depth about the culture and it is an interesting observation that most people can talk about what the culture is if the words are somehow different that the overall expression, such as the word culture: “oh, yes, a lot of young people having a total fun, a great pulse at the workplace. Pulse is something not definable as I have seen in my 15 years in the tech industry. I have seen a lot of different organisation within, but here everyone is very much together – sales, developers, marketing, finance, product development and management. You can say that it is truly a small family and a team that wants to make a difference.” (Daniel Interview)

Looking at using culture definition as a workplace where people start to feel more relaxed and understand what something means: “It’s a pretty cool place to work. It’s very relaxed environment. The team is not very large. There are a lot of opportunities to learn a lot and do a lot of different things. You probably won’t find yourself doing repetitive tasks” (Carlos Interview). Carlos believes that developers at ChurchDesk do not have the same responsibility as developers from other places. The tasks at ChurchDesk vary a lot because they need to do some research on tasks, networking and database work.

There are also other definitions of the culture, and for the newcomer Maja, the culture is something hectic but at the same time cosy. The reason she believes this is there is so many
different goals they need to reach and the work burden is heavy of all the work that they need to show as a startup employee. On the other hand, the environment has a very relaxed jargon, they play loud music, drink beers and have a lot of social events. “I believe that it is the classical understanding of Silicon Valley and startup where it needs to be fun, but it also demands that you work really hard in order to enjoy the fun.” (Maja Interview)

The symbol of startup culture at ChurchDesk varies a lot based on who you ask and how you phrase the questions and words they need to respond with. The employees at ChurchDesk do however see themselves as part of a startup culture. One of the reasons that the employees see themselves as part of a startup culture is the stories from the beginning of the company lifetime where the culture looked a bit different. The culture develops over time and even though it is a young company, it still has a level of heritage.

“We went crazy! We had these weekends where we just worked all the time. We had this small challenge for ourselves of how many hours we could code without sleeping. It almost became a sport for us. At that point it was much about caring for the project and you just wanted to improve everything all the time. It was also something different when you are only two guys trying to save the world. Now the team has grown and become more professional. People have kids and a normal life they need to live so you can’t do the same things as before. People don’t want to do that for the salary we give them.” (Mathias Interview)

The development over time in ChurchDesk reflects in many ways what people believe that a startup is all about – working in garage with a couple of developers and only thinking about coding and developing something new and cool for the world. It is this short of heritage that has created a myth about how it all started with Christian and a few employees that worked hard. This also seems like a development they have been through when we have investigated the hashtags they use. Then it was clear that some of the words that previously have been used have been thrown away as they symbolise something different than the current situation. “The development has been that you can really feel that the company becomes more and more mature.” (Daniel Interview)

The maturity of ChurchDesk comes mainly from the knowledge created inside the company and all the external inputs from stakeholders, but most importantly the reflection of new recruitments. The sales department has had a lot of changes, but each new time the management of the sales department has improved and became more professional.

Sometimes the sharing of important information does not become communicated out to all the employees, which means that they are not on the same side as the management team and this is something they have worked to improve. If they fail to do so, this this could create opponents for
the management decisions. “I believe that you have been able to keep and maintain some of what were before and I believe that you can split it up into a phase where we were very unstructured and one that is more formed as an organisation” (Daniel Interview).

The unstructured phase described the first couple of years where it was more important to be agile and we were low practical. Here it was mostly important to sell everything that was possible to sell and rules did not apply to anything.

The structured phase describes the recent years with venture capital investments and new senior employees in management positions where you have developed many new processes. This is still as seen in the value analyses part as something where you, as an organisation, such as ChurchDesk, needs to balance the structure and the need for agility.

A strong connection to all of the interviewees at ChurchDesk was their choice of “passion” as a word that would describe the culture. To be passionate about something seemed to be the general thing that all of them were agreeing on. The passion to create the product, the passion to develop the company and the passion to be together on the journey instead of sitting in a larger organisation with potentially less hours and higher salary.

Another interesting area is the heritage that shows how the development over time at ChurchDesk has created a myth that effects the organisation today. In the tech department, there is a great fear of developing something that will never be used by the customers.

In that case, they tried a couple of years ago to develop a management system for graveyards and the personnel involved. The system started to sell fine but they found out that there were not customers out there who were willing to buy the system and that many of the customers were not renewing the product leading to higher churn. The worst part was that when the decision was made to cut the product out of the portfolio, then some developers still needed to maintain and update the system even though the system was “dead” and was not going to be used in the future: “we need to do anything possible in the world to make sure it is not going to happen again” (Mathias Interview).

Motivation seems to be a key element to make sure that the employees can have responsibility, making sure that the development is fast and the products are being used. The risk of not having motivated employees seems to have a strong negative feeling from the employees at ChurchDesk that compare the young startup to the previous experiences at larger corporate organisation where they found co-workers less motivated.
5.2.3.1 Corporate Culture versus Startup Culture

This section will describe how employees at a startup such as ChurchDesk consider themselves in relation to working at a normal corporate company. The interesting findings were that people believed the many of the values investigated in the functionalistic analysis were the fundamental differences towards a corporate. This is symbolising an interesting view to be built upon when looking at how people distinguish the corporate working life and the startup life.

The culture is highly valuing responsibility and it is something that the employees find valuable for themselves in order to find a meaning. It is also an interesting management tool to decrease costs and increase efficiency when you lack human resources in your company, where in large organisations you will have more departments focusing on less processes: “This might be different from a startup. In large corporations you have an operational department where you just throw stuff over the wall and pray that they can fix and implement it into the system sometime next month.” (Mathias, Interview)

The tech team was all fast to mention the differences from the previously workplaces in corporates to the one at ChurchDesk: “... Another thing that is a big difference is that in larger corporations some people might just sit there for the convenience of having a job and deeply within they don’t care for anything. They just try to work as minimum as possible without getting fired. I have been at some places where you could set the alarm for precisely 8 hours after which they would stand up and leave!” (Christian Jul, Interview). This part was truly mentioned with a negative feeling and less motivation for the company and workplace.

It seemed like many of the corporates have had a miss-cultural fit with the employees at ChurchDesk that all of them were seeking something different. At ChurchDesk, it is also a must for the employees to have a passion for the product and the willingness to go the extra mile in order to deliver. If they don’t deliver, then they will be fired and it is difficult to hide in a small organisation where your work is much more transparent. “I have been here for 9 months and the customers that I cater and take responsible for are all some that have grown in a way and this is a big force for me to work even harder, which is completely opposite to IBM where I was before, there I felt like a little ant” (Maja, Interview). Coming from a large corporation to a startup company will have an impact on how you experience a corporate culture. The focus will shift and the job that you are performing will, in general, be seen qualitative by a lot more people as they depend on you.

In a startup company, the employees get the chance to build something up from the ground and get a huge responsibility and trust “... I don’t believe that I would have gotten this kind of responsibility as a graduate at IBM. There I need to take two years of training to get the responsibility that I have today” (Maja, Interview).
Another point that is not something that is within the domain of startups is the organisational politics that can take place in large corporations. These politics are based on taking decisions where you have some sort of decision making power of others and even though they don’t agree with you, you overrule them in order for your own department benefits. “I have seen examples of people that have been overruled about which system to use even though it is there domain expertise. They have been overruled by someone in the higher levels” (Christian Jul, Interview). Such political battles would not happen in a company the size of ChurchDesk where everyone knows each other physically and mentally. This would not be possible in the same way as you would be much more interested in being objective as you can’t risk losing millions and months on wrong choices.

It is an interesting observation that employees fear the corporate cultural values and do not want to go back into that, but with it comes also an organisational dilemma. If ChurchDesk keeps growing its success, then the team and organisational will grow, which leads to more procedural and corporate initiatives. This is again a balance that needs to be found in future growth scenarios. The future of a culture in a startup can be difficult to predict.

5.2.3.2 The Future Culture of ChurchDesk

Looking ahead, in the upcoming years it is impossible to predict how the culture at ChurchDesk will unroll. It can be that the company will bankrupt in one year or they could raise more money and hire more people in multiple locations. The outcomes will, however, change the organisation as a startup company such as ChurchDesk would not lower the steam that is already set on. Challenge may occur when looking at the values that the employees enjoy to be part of. “I believe it is going to be a challenge to have this flexible environment when we get more new people in. There are so many rules that are not written down and it is super difficult to explain people what the place is actually about” (Mathias, Interview). The need for more writing rules would lead to more procedures and then a less quality in the value of not having strict defined processes. The process of this would take a lot of time as the balance needs to be maintained. It is also the size of the team that right now allows a more flexible culture as the tech team has around 10 people, which is for the tech team standard a normal team. The above number of employees will demand a new manager that could manage the other employees and create the bridge to the CTO Mathias.

Apart from that, some decisions will need to be made also on the product side that will affect the culture. “I believe that there is a constant tension between developing the product fast to get more features and win new markets and then the other side where we need to build something solid that can last in the future” (Christian Jul, Interview). In the past, ChurchDesk has been known as a sales
driven startup which has led to their current success, but it comes with the cost of having a poor IT infrastructure.

The need for finding this balance in the future seems interesting as it is not only a technical question, it is also how much you will focus on growth versus on stability. In the sales department, it seems like they will be interested in developing fast and start selling as they don’t have the same staffing and infrastructure as the tech team. “We don’t think about things going too fast and what are we going to do with our culture” (Daniel, Interview). The nature of sales is to constantly sell and increase the sales of the products you have. The discussion can go on whether there might be management differences in the tech and sales departments that are too difficult in order to make a comparison.

“I believe that it is going to be more serious in the future, not that it is not going to be fun, but I hope that we will joke around as much as we have done before” (Maja, Interview). The notion of how the language and level of fun will potentially change is an interesting element. The first is that there is a small conclusion that the culture is a bit unserious, even though it is a culture of very dedicated workers. Then it is also the conclusion that a company can’t have fun while growing and becoming bigger. This seems to be highly influenced by emotions and would not have empirical evidences unless you look at the previous section where I highlighted the fear of ChurchDesk becoming a corporate culture. It seems like the employees like to be part of a journey and grow the company, but still are a bit bias whether they actually want to be part of something bigger.

In this analysis, there is different perspectives highlighted that are found to be built upon the findings in the functionalist analysis. The author of this paper argue that by having a less rigid approach in the symbolic analysis it has been possible to find and highlight findings relevant for the reader and the scientific question.
5.3 Analysis sum-up

This section will sum-up the analysis in order for the reader to have a greater understanding of what has just being analysed.

The functionalism analysis has been used according to the theory but also interpretations of the theory have been made from the author. This has made the analysis more relevant in regards to answering the scientific question of the organisational culture of ChurchDesk.

The functionalism analysis has showed that artifacts at ChurchDesk provides an identity to the employees of being part of the best and highlighting success and growth.

The key values at ChurchDesk are outlined to be a culture that values and emphasises high responsibility, a very informal culture with almost no procedures and finally a culture that describe itself actively through hashtags.

The basic underlying assumptions at ChurchDesk are difficult to analyse as this is much about heritage and a story. The author has found that some elements found in the investigation can be seen as basic underlying assumption or seen as something to become that.

The symbolism analysis has built upon the functionalism analysis and have taken the reader through the simpler analytical part of action based and physical symbols where events are important and an identify change have occurred.

The interesting part in the perspective of the author is the verbal symbols that have led to a perspective of the employees that do not want to end up as a corporate as they see this negatively and wants to stay informal and non-corporate.

The symbolist analysis does also end up by looking at the future perspective of the organisational culture and is believed to have some kind of contradiction to what they do and what they want to become. The values that they support and enjoy is the foundation to company growth but the growth does also lead to more procedures and more corporate culture.

The background for using interplay as framework for highlighting the culture at ChurchDesk was to use the two different stand points in the best possible way and provide a nuanced view. The interplay could also provide new findings that the one theory could not provide in itself and thereby make it more adequate to answer the scientific question.

The strategy was to keep the two different paradigms apart and in the end gather the two into one whole. It turned out that the strategy to keep them apart were difficult as many of the areas
of one theory is almost the same as in the other one. The decision was made to cut out less relevant areas that the one theory covered but still maintain something in order to show the example of the theory applied to the case.

The analysis of ChurchDesk is the case study foundation for answering the scientific question of whether classical organisational culture theories can be applied on a startup. The findings are:

- The theories can be applied but some elements do not fit into these types of organisations which make the cultural analysis less viable.

- Theoretical parts might not have the same cultural effect in startup organisations than in large corporations.

- The elements that does not fit is regarding the lack of heritage and stability in the organisation where it is difficult to state that the culture is X. Basic underlying assumptions can only be a hinge of what it might become if the growth curve continues.
6.0 Discussion

Until now, the paper has been focused on structuring and answering the scientific question. This chapter is going to bring up a new perspective of the paper and discuss interesting findings and reflections to provide the reader with thoughts for the future in regards to startup culture investigation.

The main question that the discussion is seeking is whether classical organisational culture theories, such as those described and applied in this paper, can be used to analyse a startup organisation?

The argumentation against this statement would be to look at the structural differences of the two organisation types that are non-comparable in many ways. There is much less bureaucracy and on the same time not that many procedures for a small startup. Big corporations are much more structured with procedures and bureaucracy in the decision making process. The argumentation would be that when the theory, as the functionalistic one from Schein, is made for corporates as this is his empirical foundation to create the theory, then performing the analysis on a startup would be the same as applying an organisational theory such as this on an amateur football team.

Schein is building his own studies from cases studies he has overseen through his work with large organisations. He also believes that organisations need to have some sort of size and heritage in order to be seen as an organisation. The theoretical framework of this is made for old and big organisation as the view of artifact, values and basic underlying assumptions do describe the investigation journey that a researcher has to take in order to reach an organisational cultural conclusion.

Schein does, however, describe the relationship that the culture has with the founder and this might seem that his own studies have experience that the initiating entrepreneur or group of people have high influence on the organisation. Thereby, this paper also finds it relevant to use Schein and the necessary information highlighted in his studies.

The paper does argue that the theory of Schein can be used in the case of ChurchDesk and that the analysis in this paper is well grounded. Even though organisations need to have some sort of size and heritage, this will just alter the organisational culture. The larger an organisation gets, the more factors will influence the organisational culture. If it is small, then that also has an effect. It can be discussed that every element around an organisation has effects on the organisational culture. That is why researchers are investigating organisations in order to find these elements that affect them.
The paper would also argue, based on the analysis and findings, that the heritage and story behind a company does not need to be old. The definition of old does also make it intangible to discuss what the minimum and maximum years of history it needs. In the case of ChurchDesk, the paper finds its heritage to affect the current organisational culture as this was something that people talked about, even though they were not part of it.

The paper would argue that the theories used to answer the scientific question and analyse the case are adequate, even though they were designed for a large organisational cultural analysis. The discussion should rather be about the kind of modification that could be interesting to highlight if there should be an organisational cultural concept designed for startups.

A question that could be discussed or also whether this case study is a simple glimpse of organisational culture right here right now or it something that is more fundamental for ChurchDesk. As mentioned then business is changing fast in these types of startup organisations. A year before they had a sales focused culture and the year after it something different. As highlighted in the analysis then there are very few procedures in ChurchDesk and thereby makes it much more capable of being formed in different directions.

This forming means that its ability to change is much higher and also the risk of uncontrolled change is higher and thereby the cultural study must be seen as an instant picture. The discussion could be around whether this paper and analysis only provides an instant picture of an organisation. Even though that if it provided this then it is still a relevant and interesting perspective of organisational culture in a startup. The paper does not conclude something overall about startup culture but rather imply that there is an interesting angle to be investigated for a future and larger paper.

The paper see that this analysis could potentially provide a picture of how an organisational culture in a startup this size would be even though that the method and data is not adequate in order to make this conclusion.

6.1 Implications

The discussion will then lead to what kind of implications that this paper has? Is it on a practical level or purely an academic discipline?

Looking at the practical usage of this paper, then there is clearly a managerial implication in terms of the knowledge that ChurchDesk will gain. The founding CEO and the rest of the management team will gain insights and new perspectives on the cultural initiatives that they implement and also how employees feel in the company. It can also be used by future HR persons at ChurchDesk
to get an insight on what motivates the employees and what they should look for in a recruitment process in order to find cultural-fit.

Another practical usage of this paper is for other similar startups that are in the same situation as ChurchDesk in terms of lifetime and organisational size. The paper can be used as inspiration for how to structure the organisation differently or how another startup is succeeding at its current stage. The relevance for the paper would also be interesting for startups in a bit earlier stage as to see what could potentially happen to their organisation as they grow. They might not see the same values or verbal symbols as ChurchDesk have at its current stage but could use the paper to act strategically in order for what to prepare for.

The paper could provide inspirational insights for the large corporations. As mentioned in the introduction then the world is different today than it was before which mean that the business agenda also have changed. The need for innovation and agile organisations have become much more important the recent years and companies are trying to pro-actively react to the changing business landscape. This paper could help these large corporations to gather inspiration for how the cultural mind-set of people working in agile organisation are and what tricks them into working more efficiently and innovative.

Looking at an academic level of this paper then the author also sees an implication of the findings to the context of organisational culture theory and studies of these. The paper investigate how culture is at a new company in a new business world. This new business world of digitalisation and technologies has yet to gain academic studies on many levels. One of these levels and areas are the organisational studies and particular the culture side of it.

This paper shows what kind of minor obstacles the classical organisational theories has in regards to analysing young and fast growing companies. The implication on a high academic level could potentially lead to a new understanding of how to analyse these organisations. The paper does not suggest a new theoretical framework for studying startups but it do see it as interesting perspective of further research.

In a changing business world such as the one we live in it seems contemporary and relevant to investigate startups and the organisational culture that drives the innovation.
7.0 Conclusion

This paper has been about showing the reader an insight and glimpse of another world. The world of organisational culture in a startup. The case startup in this paper has been ChurchDesk which is a Copenhagen based startup that sells software for churches. The paper has been investigating the organisational culture of ChurchDesk as an example of what startup culture is all about. The paper has been investigated and analysed based on the scientific question;

How is the organisational culture in ChurchDesk? How can classical organisational culture theories by Edgar Schein and Majken Schultz be applied to analyse the organisational culture of a startup?

In order to answer the scientific question, the paper outlined a methodology framework and research design strategy that has been used. The key reason for establishing this framework was due to the intangible concept of organisational culture and as well startups. The research philosophy has been chosen to be hermeneutics as this allowed for interpretation of the data and as well turned out to be relevant to interpret the theory. The paper outlines that case studies were the right format in order to get the most knowledge within the theme of startup culture. The thoughts were around whether to use two cases in order to spot differences and similarities but taking the given time frame of this paper into consideration then it was chosen to only focus on one case in order to secure a high quality.

The theoretical framework for this paper was made from a classical organisational theory standpoint as it has been chosen to use Edgar Schein and Majken Schultz. Edgar Schein is representing functionalism and Majken Schultz is representing the symbolism. The theoretical thought about this paper was based on whether these theories could be applied to a startup organisation as the researchers behind the theories have developed them based on findings from large organisations.

Functionalism describes the three levels of culture that goes from artifacts, to values and finally to basic underlying assumptions. The artifacts describes what can be seen in front of you such as the dress code or the architecture. The values are less visible but still able to be spotted, this could be strategy papers or formal descriptions. The basic underlying assumptions are those cultural traits that have become embedded over the years and are difficult to spot.

Symbolism is an intangible theory and less developed as opposed to functionalism. The symbolism has some similar traits as the functionalism as it looks at action-based symbols, physical symbols and verbal symbols. These symbols are overlapping with functionalism but it still differs in the way that the people are more in focus here. The two theories constitute a great foundation of analysing an organisational culture.
The analysis was performed in the best possible way as interpretation of both the data and the theory occurred. The analysis of artifacts at ChurchDesk shows that factors such as location, office, design and people are all something that contributes to a certain image that it creates for the visitors.

The values at ChurchDesk are strong and three key values constitute the value foundation. ChurchDesk has built their internal culture framework upon hashtags which are frequently used internally and sometimes externally. The hashtags are used to provide an extra layer to certain statements. It reflects a smart, modern and international cultures as hashtags are a new phenomenon through social medias. It reflects a company that is contemporary.

Another value is the lack of procedures and predefined processes in the organisation. This is an area that are constantly balanced between what is needed in terms of structure so it does not create miscommunication and it something that creates an agile work culture. If they created procedures for processes and situations, then they risk of having to change these procedures as the organisation grows. The organisation grows so fast that in many cases it does not make sense to make procedures. The need for balancing structure and agility seems like a management tasks of the future for ChurchDesk.

Finally, a strong value is the empowerment of the employees as they all feel a strong degree of responsibility. This seems as a smart management tool as it allows the organisation to get high performers that works extra hard in order to ensure quality in what they do. The responsibility comes from the lack of supportive positions in the company, a fast growing company and a system where your work is transparent to the rest of the company. This transparency means that if you do something that is great then you get applause but if you don’t then everyone will see it.

The basic underlying assumptions at ChurchDesk is difficult to analyse as it is a young culture with a lack of heritage. There is though some findings that is argued to become future basic underlying assumptions if the growth continues. The findings were in relation to that the employees feel that everything is possible for themselves as there are all unique in their work. There is also an assumption that the company can only grow.

The symbolism analysis is built upon the findings at the functionalism analysis. The key elements that the symbolism looks at is the verbal symbols. The verbal symbols that are interesting is the differences in corporate culture and startup culture which are addressed by all the employees interviewed. The differences are based on what direction they don’t want the company to grow in as they want to stay agile and smart.
Looking at the future believes of what the culture would become of, the employees believe that the company will be more structured. This seems like an interesting perspective as this is opposed of what they would like to become as a place to work. This balance of wanting to grow as big as possible but at the same time keep the agile culture, is argued, to be an interesting perspective that management teams of startups needs to have in mind.

To provide an answer for the scientific question and in regards to whether classical organisational theories can be applied to analyse the organisation culture of a startup then the investigation have showed that it is possible. The analysis has highlighted key values that are unique for the organisations and that the author of the paper finds to be special for the case. These values needs to be tested with other startups but it is certainly something different.

The classical organisational theories become less relevant when investigating the deeper layer of the theory such as is the basic underlying assumptions. The author has found it difficult to validate whether these findings are real basic underlying assumption of the organisation or just an instant picture of the organisation. The elements that does not fit into the application in this paper is based on the lack of heritage and story that a large corporation has. It is the heritage but also a certain level of stability that provides an investigator a possibility to conduct a proper culture analysis of an organisation. It is difficult to create a reliable answer to state that the culture is X something besides investigating the current values.

The theory can be applied but the analysis also shows that elements in the theory are not relevant to include for startup organisations. The analysis with the classical organisational culture theories become less viable in areas that are designed for large organisations.

This paper has provided insights into an innovative world of a startup and has provided interesting perspectives of the organisational culture that an organisation such as a startup has.
8.0 Appendix

8.1 Literature


Schein, Edgar H., The role of the founder in creating organizational culture, Organizational Dynamics, Elsevier, 1983.


Web:

www.churchdesk.com

https://techcrunch.com/2015/08/20/churchdesk/
8.2 Interviews

Christian Steffensen CEO Interview

N: Hvad er din rolle som direktør i ChurchDesk?

C: Min rolle i Cd er jo at først og fremmest at sørge for at vi får ansat de rigtige mennesker til de rigtige roller og at de mennesker får succes i de roller og at det er sådan set det. Det helt afgørende. Det er i sig selv svært, for vi har svært ved at vide hvad de roller er og rollen har det med at ændre sig så det er svært at finde nogen der passer til rollen som den er i dag eller vi tror den er i dag og som den vil ændre sig til. Det betyder meget for kulturen fordi hvis folk har success så er det ikke en fed kultur. Det er let nok at have en fed kultur hvis der er success, det er svært at have en fed kultur uden der er success.
Jeg tror sådan set godt at man kan have success uden at have en fed kultur, men jeg tror ikke at man kan have en fed kultur uden der er success.
Success afhænger jo at man har de rigtige mennesker til de rigtige ting, så det prøver jeg rigtig meget af min tid på.

N: Kan du fortælle lidt om nedture?

C: Der er ikke særlig langt fra success til fejl, det kan være et spørgsmål om dage eller uger. I en ung virksomhed går det meget op og ned.
Der er mange som meget hurtigt kan tænke “uh nu bliver det lidt usikker, nu ved vi ikke hvad der kommer til at ske”. Så gælder det om at prøve at perspektivere tingene lidt, hey det har været prøvet før eller noget lignende før, eller måske har vi ikke prøvet det før, men vi er hey jo for at ordne det, der er jo ligesom vores job at ordne det, det er jo at prøve ting som er udfordrende som har en grad af usikkerhed over sig.
Det er en blanding af de rigtige folk til de rigtige ting og skabe det rigtige miljø som folk kan vokse. Nu begynder jeg at sørge for at andre kan bringe det videre, jeg har ikke længere komme i kontakt med alle længere. Der skal være flere der kan motivere videre.

N: Er du den eneste ansvarlige for alt angående kultur eller hr?

C: Vi har jo valgt ikke at have en HR person vi har heller ikke sådan en Kultur. Det har jeg svært ved at forstå, fordi det skal komme fra ledelsen.
Nogle gange ser jeg de mest Junior folk blive ansat til at være kulturpersoner, hvilket jeg slet ikke kan se hænger sammen.
Jeg kan godt se at der er en masse praktiske ting der skal gøres og det kan jeg godt sætte mig ind i. Jeg kan ikke se at man kan outsource det kulturmæssige.
Det fylder en del på vores ledelsesmøder og det fylder en del på vores off-sites. Altså hvordan er det vi gør ting. og ikke bare hvad er det vi gør.
Jeg tror det er ledelsen der skaber kulturen og jeg tror det er rigtig svært at ansætte sig ud af det. så det har vi ikke gjort. så det ligger hos os.
Jeg tror faktisk at kultur er rigtig meget lavpraktisk. Det bruger vi en del tid på.
N: Hvilken kultur bliver skabt i ChurchDesk?

C: Vi har sådanne nogle ord vi forsøger at prædice og bruge. Det ene er “challenge” som i at udfordre. Vi vil gerne have at i alle herinde synes det er sjovt at udfordre, hvad alt det indebærer, det indebærer usikkerhed, hårdt arbejde, man tænker sig om, man har det sjovt, man vinder og man taber. Vi har et ord der hedder challenge.

Så Vi har et ord der hedder “do good business”. Det er med vilje relativt åbent egentlig, men hvad er det egentlig at gøre god forretning? Det er at gøre forretning som er godt for virksomheden både på kort og langt sigt. I virkeligheden er det et spørgsmål om hvordan man kan at empower folk så langt nede som muligt, det synes jeg er en fed kultur! For ellers kan det være rigtig svært at skalere. Det er svært at lave regler for alt så hvis du forventer at folk laver god forretning så bliver reglerne sekundære.

Så har vi et ord der helt med fra starten af som hedder “join the ride”, det er sådan lidt teenage-agtigt. Det har vi egentlig holdt fast i, fordi det egentlig er meget godt ramme for hvad vi er, folk er en del af noget, folk investerer i det personligt et hvis omfang, hvis socialt, det er et levn fra fortiden. Jeg ved at der er sådan nogle folk der har det lidt ambivalent overfor for det fordi de sådan tænker det er sådan lidt plat. så bliver det også brugt ironisk, hvilket jeg også synes er helt fint. Det er jo synes er helt fint at der bliver gjort lidt grin med de ting vi gør, så længe det er på en god måde.

N: Er det noget som er nedfældet?

C: Det er noget som er nedfældet og så det noget vi forsøger at bruge og tale om. Det er i vores sprog og vi bruger det faktisk som Hashtags på vores intranet og ting og sager. Men det er en proces som tager tid og det er ikke noget man skal misbruge. Mit indtryk er at det bliver brugt i større mængder. Jeg synes det er sådant relativt succesfuldt, jeg tror de fleste er klar over at det er nogle ord vi bruger og jeg tror de fleste har en idé om hvad der menes med det. Det er fint at det varierer, der er forskel på hvad det betyder at “do good business” forskellige steder. Det skal der være plads til, det er med vilje en måde at lade folk kunne tage ejerskab for de har ord. Vi lancerede det på sådan et townhall møde vi har en gang imellem og hvor vi havde en workshop omkring det.

N: Hvor tit har i townhall?

C: Det har vi hver måned

N: Dette Kultur dokument i bruger, er det sådan en 1-pager eller hvordan bliver det fremvist?

C: Ja, eller det er ikke engang en 1-pager, det er jo 3 ord. Vi har tidligere haft noget længere med nogle sætninger, men det her har været et forsøg på at prøve noget andet. Det er jo en svær øvelse fordi kultur skal leves og opleves. Men alligevel i en virksomhed med stor udskiftning og stor diversitet så er det vigtigt at det ikke bare leves fordi nogen kan ikke forstå det, hvis det ikke
bliver forklaret. Det er sådan .. Prøv at forklar det, uden at skær det ud i pap, så det bliver noget plat noget som kan stå i en amerikansk management bog.

N: Hvordan har udviklingen været?

C: I starten var det sådan noget “join the ride”, “work harder” - det var sådan meget den slags. Der må man bare sige at kulturen har ændret sig en del fordi der er kommet flere lidt mere erfarne folk som ikke kan eller vil sove på en madras. Som har lidt andre forestillinger om hvad det kræver at bygge en virksomhed. Det er fint nok for det er en måde at bridge det på, jeg kan stadig lide at vi kan holde nogle fede fester hvor man ikke kan mærke vi er blevet et par år ældre, men der skal ligesom være plads til begge dele.
Interview Mathias (CTO)

N: Først kunne jeg tænke mig at høre dit navn og din rolle i churchdesk

M: jeg hedder mathias håmand og jeg er cto ved churchdesk.

n: hvad indebærer denne rolle her

M åh ja, det betyder jo at jeg leder tech teamet til dagligt og arbejder med kenneth vores produktchef og med teamet om at løse opgaver. Bugs, drifte, prioritere opgaver, udvikle produktet, komme med nye features, og så også meget personalehåndtering fylder også. jeg håber at når man bliver større at man får hr folk til at klare det, men jeg klarer det selv og hyrer også selv folk. Det er sådan meget, det er lidt det hele, alt hvad der har med produktet at gøre, personerne, jeg sidder også at koder en del.

N Det er lidt at det hele, hvor mange år?

M siden 2011, tror jeg, eller 11 eller 12, startede som studentermedhjælper og arbejdede mig op i hierakiet

N Hvis du skal sætte lidt ord på hvad får en kultur man har i her i churchdesk? hvad falder dig ind.

M Jeg synes kultur er svært at beskrive og sætte ord på. det er nok sådan en lidt en ting der har udviklet sig gennem tiden. Jeg ved ikke helt om hvad den er nu og om at jeg er tilfreds med hvad den er nu.

N Hvordan så den ud da du startede

M Der sad vi jo to udviklere, begge to på deltids lønninger og så arbejde vi 40-50 timer om ugen. Vi gik sådan lidt amok. Vi har også også weekender hvor vi bare sad og knoklede, uden at sove. Vi lavede sådan noget hvor mange timer kan vi kode uden at sove. Det blev nærmest sådan en sport. så dengang var det meget at man brændte for projektet og man prøvede bare at gøre det bedre og bedre. Det er også noget andet når man bare sidder to og prøver at redde hele verden. Nu er teamet så blevet større og mere professionelt. Folk har børn og der skal ligesom tilpasses en hverdag rundt omkring, så man kan ikke gøre det samme som man kunne førhen. det gider folk ikke til den løn. ja hvad er så kulturen? Folk arbejder hårdt, de brænder stadig for det, de kommer stadig ind fodi de har lyst, de kommer ikke bare ind for at være her 9-5, du kan ringe til hver eneste af dem lørdag kl 16 og hvis de står i supermarkedet så går de hjem hvis der er et eller andet. Det er hvad jeg tror beskriver det mest. Det er passionen for produktet og det ansvar man har, selvom man ikke er cto eller et eller andet arkitettk, det er alle der brænder for det. Om man så er på ferie så finder man sin laptop frem hvis man kan hjælpe teamet derhjemme.

N: Er det sådan en startup kultur? ikke fordi det behøvede at være det
M: Nej, altså jeg tror at vi nu er ved den størrelse at nu er det ligesom meget hvad andre teams er, men fordi folk ligger så meget så er vi fleksibele. Vi tjekker ikke om folk er her 37 timer, hvis de skal tandlægen så skal de ikke flekse eller noget. Det er ligesom, man stoler nok på at de brænder for projektet, og så selvfølgelig ligger de det der skal til og det er X, og det snakker vi ikke om. Og så håber man selvfølgelig at det over tid er i gennemsnit 37 timer og helt meget meget mere, men det er der ikke nogen der tjekker eller følger op. Vi vil gerne have frihed til folk, så folk kan også komme ind kl. 10 og det gør egentlig ikke noget, det kan også være de går tidligt. På den måde er det meget uden regler. Det eneste hvor vi har faste mødetyper er mandag og onsdag hvor der er faste morgenmøder hvor vi sætter alle sammen i teamet i tech sammen. Alle ni i tech for at tjække hvad alle går og laver. Det er en af de ting der er skiftet over tid, når man sad to personer viste man hvad alle lavede, det gør man ikke nu, så det er ligesom sådan et space hvor man kan sige hvad man arbejder med og hvad med har af udfordringer for så kan det godt være at en fra de andre teams kan sige “det har jeg lige rodet med, det kan jeg hjælpe dig med” komme med nogle tips eller “husk lige det her”. Altså jeg tror at kulturen er en stor passion for det de arbejder med og samtidig giver vi en masse fleksibilitet.

N: Er det specifik for jeres afdeling

M: Ja det tror jeg, for salg de skal gerne ringe 8:30 og de kan ikke rigtig ringe om aftenen for der er kunderne ikke på arbejde, så de har en helt naturlig arbejdsform, hvis de møder sent ind så er kunderne jo taget hjem måske. Hvor ved udviklerne så kunne de for så hvor vidt sidde og udvikle om aftenen, det er fint faktisk hvis de skriver i vores tech-channel at de skriver at de ikke kommer næste dag men de sidder og arbejder hele natten igennem, så fleksibelt er det. Det eneste vi ikke finder os i, er hvis de står op om morgenen og de så siger at jeg arbejder hjemmefra, det skal være planlagt inden, det skal ikke være sådan noget “uhh, jeg har svært ved at komme ud af dynen” men hvis det er professionelt nok at man kan sige det et døgn inden så er det fuldstændigt fint og de kan styre deres egen tid og det er fint nok hvis de kommer ind 1011 stykker på selve dagen, men som minimum kommer man ind, medmindre at man varsler det, for så har man planlagt det.

N: Er der andre dos and dont?

M: Altså den er ikke skrevet ned reglen, det er sådan noget man har udviklet over tid når man får praktikanter ind så får man lidt forskellig kultur ind, de er ikke altid lige gode til at stå op om morgenen, så man får ligesom lavet nogle små regler som er meget indforstået i teamet og de har ligesom været med til at lave reglerne. I øjeblikket har vi en lidt dårlig, jeg ved ikke om man kan kalde det kultur, men det har jeg lige snakket med min senior mand om at, men at møderne starter ikke til tiden, så f.eks. hvis vi har haft et møde med CEO og folk har fået afvide at det starter kl. 11 så møder de 20 minutter for sent, der er kulturen blevet for Loose, der skal vi have strammet op og vi skal faktisk have en snak om det på fredag. Men det skal heller ikke være for rigidt, det skal stadig være fleksibelt, det andet er jo bare uprofessionelt, hvis ceo siger kl. 11 så er man der, der starter mødet. men alt det andet, hvis man varsler det dagen inden eller hvis man på dagen, så er de fint, bare man overholder aftalerne, så skal vi også være bedre til at kommunikere internt. Vi snakker alt for meget 1-1 og vi skal blive bedre til at dele informationen til alle, så altså i stedet for at jeg skriver det bare til en enkelt person så skal jeg skrive det i vores public channel for så kan alle andre se hvad vi snakker om, det er noget vi snakker om.
N: Hvad tools bruger i til at kommunikere?


N: Nu sagde du i skal have en snak der har været andre situationer?

M: Ja men altså der har været personer som ikke har kunne komme op om morgenen f.eks. de her faste møder mandag og onsdag, så har jeg lige taget personen til side og snakket 1-1 om at det her skal altså gøres meget bedre for det er for umodent, det er også blevet meget bedre, næsten, working progress. Andre ting, det ved jeg ikke. Jeg tror uduover det at vi prøver at lave en kultur hvor folk tager meget ansvar og det betyder at alle udviklere det de laver kan de sende ud til kunderne uden at det skal igennem en gateway og det er ikke mig der lægger du ud på serveren. det er personen der går ind på serveren og klikker afsted. Det er også vigtigt at man sidder og arbejder på noget og så sender man det bare til mig og tænker at nu er det mit problem hvis der sker noget og at han nok skal fikse det sidste step. Det har vi også brugt meget tid for at søge for at alle ledene er automatiseret sådan at det er udviklere selv der ligger det ud til kunden. Det giver også et stort ansvar for de kan ikke satse på at CTo tjekker det, hvis det braker så det er dem selv det kommer tilbage på. Vores tool viser også hvis der er en fejl hvilken udvikler der er bag det og hvornår. de får en email om det med det samme. der er fokus på at der skal være ansvar og at det leder tilbage til udvikleren. det er måske en af de forskellige fra startup til større virksomheder, der har man ligesom en operations afdeling hvor man kaster ting over væggen og håber at de kan fikse og implementere det engang i næste måned.

N: Hvordan ser du jer hænge sammen med de andre afdelinger? der er glasvæggen jo?

M: Ja det tror jeg, vi kender hinanden internt i tech end vi kender resten, vi laver flere sociale arrangementer en gang om måneden sådan en board game night, burger night, så der prøver vi at arrangere en masse ting for at få folk til at være sociale og lave stickyness for hvis man finder et andet job så mister man en familie, jeg ved ikke om man kan kende det.

 Til resten af forretningen tror jeg det er nemt nok med at have et forhold til, det kunne got være meget bedre, men vi har bestemt en udfordringer i forhold til UK eller det tyske kontor, dem kender vi ikke så godt, jeg kender dem lidt fordi jeg snakker med dem oftere hvor resten af teamet der er der sådan lidt en silo de sidder i. Det skal vi være bedre til. Det ved jeg ikke hvordan, en ting ad gangen.

N: Har du oplevet at der har været situationer hvor man har været under pres sådan IT-mæssigt i forhold til deadline?
M: Så bliver prioriteret hårde, det bliver alle vel også, store virksomheder kan skalere op på folk, det kan vi ikke, det eneste vi kan er at prioritere hårde i ting. Det her udskyder vi, det her kommer ikke med i featuren, det er folk gode til at justere på, fordi de tager så meget ansvar så de ved godt hvad der kan nedprioriteres, der er ikke nogen der sidder som aber og bare tager ting fra en liste. alt er meget sådan, ikke vagt defineret, opgaverne er defineret, men alligevel ikke så godt, du kan ikke sende det til indien eller østeuropa, du kan sende det til teamet og de ved hvad du mener, hvad vi vil og hvor vi er på vej hen. 

Og hvis der er dealines, så har vi gjort det sådan at vi arbejder manditory arbejde til kl 20 hver dag fordi der er folk alligevel ikke gode nok til, de kan godt se at der er en stor arbejdssopgave, men de er ikke gode til at starte tidligt med at se på det. Der sker lidt det samme som i skolen, man sidder aftenen før og kigger på matematik afleveringen tre timer inden, så begynder man. Det er lidt det samme her, der går jeg så ind og siger at vi bider det over i mindre milestones og siger at det her skal vi nå denne uge, og prøver at encourage folk til at give den en ekstra skale for at nå det. Det er vel også meget almindeligt. Folk gør det så også. Folk bliver ikke betalt ekstra for at blive her til sent. De kan godt se det, talene bliver ligesom også, mine estimator bliver delt med resten og de er med til at lave de estimator for at få ejerskab og de sætter milestones, så de ved at det er delvist deres egen skyld. Det kræver at der en der siger, “det her når vi ikke, “ selvom de godt kan se at det hele skrider og så arbejder de også.

N: Du nævnte noget med en senior person, kan du sige lidt om forskellene der og i henhold til rekruttering? Har det ændret noget?

M: Nej altså jeg synes stadig at det er meget easy-going kultur, på den måde er han også perfekt fordi han er også “young mind” på trods af hans alder. Jeg synes egentlig at det er meget det samme team, han har bare, han bliver den man går til hvis man laver noget og har brug for en bekræftelse for at det ikke er helt dumt. Det er virkeligheden for at have en tjk op. Han fungerer meget som min partner, jeg ser det meget som det er os der leder teamet.

N: Har du nogen manualer/strategi der siger noget om hvordan i vil drive det hos jer og I ChurchDesk?

M: Ikke rigtigt, men vi har jo de her, sådan noget fire kultur et eller andet, nu er de så lavet om til hashtag Challenge, Join the ride, Do good business. jeg ved ikke om alle folk kan relaterer til det, join the ride er ligesom sådan et i tech, ja det kan godt være det ser helt uoverskueligt ud det er op ad bakke, men det er ligesom en del af rejsen, hop med og du må selv være med til at gøre det bedre for det er ikke perfekt. Det samme med challenge vel. Do good business, øh, ja. Jeg tror vi ligger meget vægt på i tech at man er ærlig ved hinanden og man ikke går og hænger ting tilbage hvis folk går noget dumt eller folk kan gøre noget bedre, så holder man det ikke til det “årlige møde, 1-1”. Vi laver 1-1s hver måned, men der er ikke så meget at følge op på til de her 1-1s for det hele er ligesom taget i dagligdagen for hvis det kan gøres bedre og der er folk meget direkte. Det prøver vi ligesom at fostre i kulturen. Alt vores arbejde bliver ligesom sendt igennem sådan et review process hvor der ligesom skal være minimum en medarbejder til at kigge dit arbejde igennem, det behøver ikke være en senior person, det er bare for at få et second par of years på ens arbejde.
N: Hvad tror du bliver de fremtidige udfordringer for kulturen?

M: jeg tror det bliver en udfordring at have det her meget fleksible miljø når man får nye folk ind. Der er lidt ligesom mange regler der er ikke skrevet ned, det er også derfor det er så svært at beskrive vores kultur fordi den er sådan meget udefinerbar. Det bliver nok over tid sådan noget der skal defineres over tid som skal skrives ned og tages stilling til. Det vokser organisk og det er godt som vi har det, det skal lige justeres lidt ind. Jeg tror det bliver en udfordring at få nye folk ind og lade dem forstå hvordan det her team fungerer.

ejeg tror det gælder mange ting, det er noget med hvordan arbejdet skal udføres, det kan også være noget med hvordan man snakker til hinanden, det er også specielt for de folk som kommer herind fra udlandet, den her direkt-hed som vi har. Det jo ikke sådan at vi hænger hinanden ud, men vi er stadig mere direkte end man måske vil være andre steder. Det er noget folk skal vende sig til og også være direkte og give den feedback. For så kommer de til mig tre uger senere når de er godt sure over en medarbejder og kollegaer, de skulle med det samme have sagt det til personen.

M: Jeg sidder faktisk og kigger på mine noter der snakkede vi kultur på et møde sidste uge med min senior person.

N: Hvem snakker du ellers kultur med?

M: Jamen altså CEO, men altså mest med min senior person, det er bare ikke den samme kultur som sælgerne, de har hele tiden den her gulerod at løbe efter. Det fungerer bare ikke i tech, tech bliver mere motiveret af at det er fedt team, det sociale aspekt, de får ansvar, virkelig meget ansvar, også det her med at de ikke er robotter, de lave rabare ikke ting efter ting, de kan være med til selv at udvikle produktet og selv definere hvordan opgaven kan løses på og der ligesom ikke er en måde at løse opgaven på, jeg prøver meget at lede dem ved at forklare dem om hvad det er vi gerne vil, men få dem til at tage beslutningen, men manipulere dem selv i den rigtige retningen. Få folk til at købe ind på min idé, i stedet for at sige at det er sådan her det skal laves. For at få folk til at tage ansvar for så føler de at det er deres egen beslutning, det tager selvfølgelig tid. Det er også noget af det som bliver svære over tid for allerede nu er det på grænsen til at jeg kan gøre det for alle 8 mand, men nogle kan selvfølgelig køre lidt selv og jeg arbejdet med dem længere tid. Det bliver helt sikkert en udfordring med den ledelsmåde, der skal hvert tal nogle andre managers ind, de skal jo også have samme ledelsesstil, ved ikke om det fungerer når det sker. Det er meget den her størrelse vi er på som er på kanten som jeg kan lede på grænsen af 7-8 mand.

Den største frygt for udviklerne i dette er at man udvikler den næste graveyard.

N: Kan du forklare lidt om graveyard?

M: Graveyard var et system til kirkegårde, men der var ikke nok kunder til det, der blev brugt en masse udvikling på det og da det blev droppet så var det værste for folk at sidde tilbage og skulle opdatere et dødt system der ikke vil blive brugt i fremtiden, det skal vi for alt i verden undgå igen.
Interview Christian Jul Tech

N: Dit navn og rolle

C: Jeg hedder Christian Jul Jensen og min titel er Lead Technical Architect som er sådan lidt flot på et team af 8 mennesker teknisk. Min rolle er at, jeg er kommet ind som Senior på tech teamet med sådan fokus på at sikre det arkitektoniske i softwaren. Så det drejer sig om at sørge for at vi bygger ting på en måde som gør at vi tænker længere end lige den feature vi er ved at implementere, men har systemet længerevarende tilstand i fokus og sådan have kvaliteten af alt det vi lever generelt i tech, hjælper udviklerne med at træffe de rigtige beslutninger i forhold til hvad de laver. Det er sådan den formelle titel og beskrivelse, i praktisk så er jeg Mathias(CTO) sidekick, det er ligesom meget Mathias og jeg der leder teamet 50/50, det er selvfølgelig Mathias der sidder i ledelses-delen som har forståelsen for de prioriteringer der bliver truffet. Men den daglige ledelse og prioritering af teamet gør vi det sammen, selvfølgelig forskellige roller, men det er sådan cirka min rolle. Jeg udvikler lidt så det er ikke rent administrativt, både fordi vi har den størrelse af team, men også fordi det er min opfatning at man ikke kan lave den rolle uden at have fingeren nede i det.

N: hvor lang tid?

C: siden første april, 9 måneder tid, så jeg er ved at være godt inde i det. Derfor også interessant for dig at snakke med mig fordi mine øjne er relativt friske, men samtidig kender jeg organisationen.

N: Kan du huske hvordan din start var?

C: Ja altså, jeg synes det var svært faktisk at komme ind, folk er utrolig søde her og hårdtarbejdende og sådan nogle ting, men jeg synes nogle af de ting som bed mærke i var at der er rigtig mange underforstået ting i organisationen, der er mange ting der er på en måde og folk ved ligesom hvordan det er og det er ligesom underforstået, det ved man ikke helt som ny og man skal selv finde ud af det. Jeg fik et onboarding forløb men det drejede sig meget om produktet og introduktion til hvordan kunderne bruger produktet, altså den helt business agtige onboarding hvilket også er relevant, men hele det med hvordan organisationen fungerer og ting det var der meget lidt af. Det var faktisk lidt svært for mig og navigere rundt og finde ud af hvad min rolle.

N: Var der ting man kunne læse igennem for at blive introduceret?

C: Nej ikke sådan rigtig synes jeg, det var også meget sådan arbejdsgange og hvem tager egentlig beslutninger om hvad, hvis der skal laves ting, hvem er det så der skal tage beslutning, hvad er processen og proceduren for en beslutning bliver truffet, hvem tager den osv. Det er klart at en virksomhed i denne størrelse så har man ikke og giver ikke mening at have fasttømret processer fordi tingene flyder hele tiden. Man kan sige at man har brug for at vide om det her er noget jeg kan beslutte eller ej og hvem skal jeg så spørge, jeg tænkte meget over at det bar præg af at ansættelsesmæssigt at man har voxset hurtigere end at få organisationen og culturen på plads,
det er jo ret indlysende med den historik man har her. Jeg har set noget lidt lignende andre steder, derfor genkendte jeg det lidt.

N: Har du været i andre typer af virk i den størrelse?

C: ikke helt, men jeg har været til selv at lede en virksomhed som var 3 da vi startede og var omkring 18 da jeg sluttede, så vi har været igennem nogle af de samme ting sådan organisatorisk, der er ligesom sådan nogle punkter man når, i starten ved alle alt for man sidder over hinanden og snakker hele tiden, når man vokser så går man ud over det. Når man vokser så kan man ikke helt holde styr på det, folk ved ikke hvad der foregår og man kan ikke selv have overblikket og det var jo dybest set det vi sloges rigtig rigtig meget med da vi var 10-12 stykker og så flere end det. Så skal man ligesom bruge en mere mellemleder type da der er for mange medarbejdere at man kan relaterer til alle folkene. Det lykkes os faktisk ikke at komme udover. Jeg stoppede på det tidspunkt og virksomheden blev opkøbt da det stagnerede. Jeg tror grunden var at man ikke fik organisationen med og skubbet det med.

N: Hvad synes du så om den udvikling i churchdesk?

C: Der sker jo hele tiden nogle udfordringer, der er blevet lavet nogle tiltag, jeg er spændt på at se hvordan folk reagere på at der lige er ansat en salgsdirektør da salgsdelen kommer lidt væk fra CEO, så CEO kan fokusere på at direkte for hele butikken og ikke 75% salgsdirektør, det synes jeg det har bøjet meget præg af at christians fokus har været der. Det er klart at det er super vigtigt, hvis man ikke sælger noget så er man ikke noget. Prioriteringen er anderledes. jeg tror det bliver sundt at det er mere balanceret for CEO. Man kan se at ledelsen er ved at flytte en lille smule rundt, jeg synes stadig, jeg har været her i så lang tid at tingene fungerer og man begynder så at blive en lille smule blind for det.

N: Er det vigtigt at få lavet nogle procedurer?

C: det sku et meget godt spørgsmål, jeg tror ikke at løsningen er at lave processer og organisationsdiagrammer, det tror jeg faktisk dræber en masse og den agility man har ved det. jeg tror man kan opnå noget ved at overkommunikere det hele og man har nemlig nogle antagelser om hvad folk ved og det ved folk ikke, man bliver nødt til at gentage og sige ting og sige ting der er vigtige og det man vil have prioriteret, det er meget sådan noget der skal, at man tydeliggøre det end at formalisere det, det tror jeg ikke man får noget ud af, hvis man gør det så får man ikke de typer der er interesseret i virksomheden her.

N: Hvorfor lige ChurchDesk for dig?

C: Det er sådan lidt skørt, det er lidt tilfældigt på nogen måder. jeg har haft et par år som freelancer og en kort ansættelse som ikke fungerer i et andet startup. Jeg manglede noget at gå op i, jeg var dybest set ligeglad med hvad det tele virksomhed jeg sad i gik op. Der var ingen faglig stolthed. Jeg savnede at have noget i klemme, eller gå op i noget. Det havde jeg tænkt lidt over og så blev jeg kontaktet af ChurchDesk egentlig tænkte jeg ikke over et fast job. Så tænkte jeg, lad os give det et shot, det er lidt tilfældigt. Jeg tænkte at her er nogle folk
som er passioneret omkring noget og det vil jeg gerne være med på, på samme tid tilpas stort og etableret til at jeg kan have små børn og hvor forventningerne ikke er til at man er der i døgndrift.

N: Hvad er det et sted så hvis man snakke om det kulturelt?

C: Jeg tror det drejer sig om følelsen af at være passioneret omkring noget, at gøre noget sammen, du ved, altså for at være helt ærlig så leverer vi jo løsninger til kirke og der er jo ikke vildt mange i organisationen der har en relation til kirken, derfor tror jeg ikke, ikke for at gå på klingen, så tror jeg ikke de er passioneret om kirken og dens løsninger, jeg tror mere at det er at udrette noget sammen og være et team der sammen opnår væksten og udretter noget, det er det jeg tror driver det. Det er jo rimelig ungt miljø, så der er jo mange der ses privat, spiller badminton hver torsdag, spiller spil eller går i byen sammen. Der er en del type af miljø hvor man er buddies med dem man er sammen med. Det tror jeg tiltrækker folk, jeg tror også at startup miljøet har et ry for at have mere fleksibilitet. Jeg har prøvet at sidde i nogle store organisationer og jeg mener faktisk ikke helt det holder det andet, jeg mener mere det er en myte egentlig, der er ikke nogen af de steder jeg har siddet som it konsulent i de rigtige store firmaer som har de der rigde 9-5 som man forestiller sig det skal være i store firmaer.

N: Hvad er så forskellen?

C: Jeg tror noget af det der er forskellen er at der kort til beslutninger, hvis der er virkelig noget der pisser mig af, så kan jeg faktisk gå 25 meter til Christians (ceo) bord og fortælle ham det på godt og ondt, der er kort vej til indflydelse på tingene. Jeg har rimelig stor direkte indflydelse på tingene, selv de ting jeg ikke kan tage beslutninger om kan jeg i princippet tage op, det kan jeg jo ikke gøre i store firmaer, der kan man ikke gå op til direktøren at det her ikke fungerer, ikke engang nødvendigvis den som sidder et par niveauer over en som har ansvaret over een, de ved måske ikke engang hvem jeg. Det gør helt sikkert en forskel. En anden ting som er stor forskel er at i større firmaer så sidder der bare nogle folk som er der for bekvemmeligheden, de har et job, de dybest set ikke går særlig meget op i, de er der, de passer deres arbejde godt nok til de ikke ryger ud. jeg har siddet nogle steder hvor man kunne stille uret efter at de ville rejse sig præcist 7.25 timer efter de skulle være der. Det gør det sku tungt, det er neden at arbejde sammen med folk der ikke går op i hvad de laver. De folk der er går op i det, hvis de ikke går så ryger de ud. man har ikke råd til at have folk der ikke bidrager. Det kunne man nemmere køre under radaren under store firmaer for de folk som sidder og tager beslutninger om det og det påvirker dem måske ikke så meget igen. Altså der er også en masse politisk i store firmaer som jeg har set i store firmaer hvor man bevidst træffer beslutningerne og man lader ting ske som man godt hvad ikke kommer til at fungerer, men fordi at man vil proof a point så gør man det. Jeg har set eksempler på folk der er blevet overtruffet af beslutning om hvilken system de skulle bruge, selvom det er deres område så er de blevet overtrufet ovenfra og så har de ligesom en politisk interesse at vise at det ikke kan løse, man har en interesse i folk skal fremstå i dårligere lys. Sådan noget sker ikke på samme med i en organisation som vores, man kender hinanden, man er tættere på hinanden, den kan ikke gå, hvis den går så galt så har man jo ikke råd til at miste mange millioner. Det kan man nemmere gøre i større organisationer. Sådan nogle ting er super irriteret at være en del af det politiske spil.
N: Har der været den modsatte oplevelse af det her i churchdesk?

C: Ja altså, specielt i tech laver vi nogle ting hvor resten af organisationen skal stole på os, ligesom når man afleverer sin bil til mekanikeren, man har jo ikke andre muligheder end at stole på ham, for man har ikke kompetencen til at undersøge dette. Der har vi de samme muligheder i tech for at gøre som vi ville, men det gør vi jo ikke, der er nogen ting og situationer hvor vi træffer nogle beslutninger af teknisk karakter hvor fokus kan være på at få et eller andet vildt hurtigt ud af rampen og der træffer man en beslutning om at det tager lidt længere men fordi at man kan se at det er nu det skal gøres. Man kan sige at det er sådan noget hvor man ikke overruler beslutninger, det er jo vores opgave at løbende sørge for at vi træffer de rigtige beslutninger. Jeg kan ikke komme i tanke om et stort eksempel. Altså vi siger hvis vi synes det er en dårlig idé, vi siger ikke bare Ja ja og så laver det, så tror jeg rimelig hurtigt at jeg ville være videre, for det jo ikke fedt, fordelen er jo at man er sammen, man er ikke større til at der opstår siloer hvor der er internt spil.

N: Hvad tror du udfordringer bliver i fremtiden?

C: sådan rent organisatorisk få det rent smooth, altså det tror jeg fortsat bliver en udfordring, jeg har lige hørt ceo sige ”nu jeg glad for at vi har det på plads”, det har jeg ikke sagt til ham endnu, men vil jeg gerne, altså det er bare rimelig naivt i sådan en organisation hvor det hele tiden er i bevægelse og den erfaring jeg har, det er bare sådan noget med at det bliver ved med at være problemer og noget der ændrer sig når det vokser. Min erfaring er at det tager mere og mere tid og det er bare naturligt og en større ledelsesmæssig opgave at få formen på organisationen til at spille og folk ændrer roller i takt med at der kommer nye folk til og de bliver skubbet lidt rundt. Når man er en lille virksomhed og man er tæt på en fyr som Christian (ceo) så forstår man hvad der foregår, når man bevæger sig væk fra det så mister man lidt touchet og der opstår gnidninger, ”hvorfor bliver jeg flyttet herover ? “ etc sådan nogle ting.

Rent organisatorisk tror jeg bare det er en af de allerstørste udfordringer for en virksomhed i vækst.

Jeg tror der er en konstant modstridende eller spænding mellem at udvikle produktet hurtigt for at få nye features ind for at vinde større markede. På den anden side at bygge noget som er solidt og kan holde til det vi når og er bygget til de ændringer vi må få i fremtiden, det kan man sige at der har vi helt klart haft, eller churchdesk har haft en historie af at få bygget noget meget hurtigt og det betaler vi nu prisen for. Det er helt naturligt for den type af organisation, vi havde måske ikke have været her hvis det ikke var man havde gjort det. Man skal bare nå nu til det at man skifter et andet teknik gear og konsolideringingene, det tror jeg kommer til at blive en spænding, det ene med at vokse og udvikle produktet og på den anden side at tingene bliver konsolideret og mere smidige. det er så lige at finde den rigtige balance, det jo ikke bare en løsning at tage tre måneder og konsolideringene uden at udvikle noget, det er lidt at finde balancen.

N: Har din rolle som senior noget specielt indvirknings?

C: Nej det synes jeg ikke, eller man kommer i kraft af sin seniority nogle ledelsesmæssige roller på en måde, men det er jo også det jeg e ansat til kan man sige. Så kan man sige at det er klart at jeg har familie og børn så kan jeg jo ikke være med til det hele, selvom jeg prøver så vidt som muligt,
jeg er mindre med i den sociale del end mange andre, men jeg synes ikke det er noget problem for mig på den måde. Jeg tror at de andre folk får noget andet ud af at være her end jeg gør, for mig er det bare en arbejdsplass, jeg er glad for at være her og folkene, men jeg har ikke den attachment som man kan have som ung når man ikke har familie og børn. Det har jeg det fint med, det er fuldstændig forvent, det er bare noget andet.
Så synes jeg at man på mange måder har den udfordringer at jeg har det mere erfaring på nogle områder end de folk der formelt set er mine chefer, det synes jeg har været svært en balance som Mathias (cto) og jeg har måtte have nogle snakke om, hvordan skal den balance lige være, hvordan får vi det lige til at fungere. Det synes jeg har været lidt udfordrende, det har nok været nemmere hvis jeg havde haft en chef der har haft mere erfaring end mig, men jeg vidste det jo godt på forhånd, men alligevel været svære end jeg troede. Hvis man ser et eller andet på baggrund af min erfaring, altså en ting hvor man tænker “hmm hvad sker der lige her, det er måske ikke så fedt”, at det er noget af det mathias har været med til at skabe og lave, hvordan finder man lige en balance for at fortælle og sige det og skabe en gensidig tillid og balance til at kunne snakke om de ting. Det synes jeg nok har været den største udfordring ved at være senior i teamet. Det har vi ligesom haft en masse snakke om for at få et godt format, men det kommer også i takt med at man lærer hinanden, man bliver venner og man opnår en gensidig tillid til hinanden så begynder der at komme et format på det.

N: Kan du mærke at der har været en kulturel forandring i churchdesk?

C: Det synes jeg faktisk ikke, jeg så det på nogle områder da jeg kom og kunne genkende nogle mønstre. Det er ikke blevet italesat på nogen måder. Altså jeg hørte historien omkring hvordan det er vokset, hvordan tingene var tidligere, jeg har ikke hørt nogen snakke omkring hvad der sker lige nu.
Carlos Tech Interview

Interviewer: Can you just give me your name and your age?

Carlos: My name is Carlos and I am 31.

Interviewer: And how long have you been here?

Carlos: I’ve been here since May the 20th. 7 months.

Interviewer: And what is your role and tasks here?

Carlos: I work as a backend developer. My background, most of my experience is with Java. I’m part of the tech team and my activities are fixing, encoding new features, and doing some deployment of the features and fixes we do to the production servers. I think that’s pretty much it.

Interviewer: Is it mostly on your own or mostly team-based?

Carlos: Mostly team based. Most of the things I fix or features I develop are somehow tied with other projects from the frontend team. So most of the things I do have an impact in the frontend and therefore I have to coordinate with them when changes are introduced or new features are added.

Interviewer: And how would you explain this as a place to work in the 7 months you have been here?

Carlos: It’s a pretty cool place to work. It’s a very relaxed environment. The team is not very large. There is a lot of opportunities to learn a lot and do a lot of different things. You probably won’t find yourself doing repetitive tasks. As a developer, you also have to do some research, networking, and database. We’re not interacting a lot. In the beginning, I wasn’t, at least, with the people of the other areas. But there are some key people in the IT department that they do have to be in constant contact with people from other departments. In my case, I’m mostly in contact with people from customer success, mostly when they report back. As I said, it is a pretty informal communication we have. And also with my boss. I find that pretty cool. I worked in Argentina in smaller companies, and also in larger companies, and this is very unique for me. I really like it.

Interviewer: Can you tell a bit more about the differences?

Carlos: Having a very open relationship with my boss. We can talk pretty much about everything and in a very relaxed way. With previous bosses I had, there was always some ways I could not express myself or I had to be more conscious not to be very direct, mainly because of the personality. They did not like to be addressed directly, or something that might expose an error they made. But here, if someone superior to you has made a mistake, you point that out, and they accept it, and just continue. An opportunity to learn, they see it that way, but I had bosses who were more proud. The whole working system in Denmark is different from Argentina: the salaries,
the locations, the working time is more flexible. It was more strict and they also expected the employees to give a lot of their time, including your own personal time, time from your own life. You become a lifer at some point. Here, I think it’s more balance between work and your life. I like that.

Interviewer: You said something about more flexible. What is that like in your daily life?

Carlos: I don’t have to be sharp and on a specific schedule of time in the office. I do it because I am used to that but here we can be more flexible, except in the meetings to be all together at the same time. Also, if I need to leave to run some errands, or something during working hours.

Interviewer: What happens at these meetings?

Carlos: Meetings where I coordinate work and tell each other what we’re working on and also if you have a problem. So other people know and they can also help you.

Interviewer: And how is that facilitated? You meet them there?

Carlos: Yes. All of our meetings are in the tech department, in the fish bowl, I would say. In the morning at 9:30, so we’re all there before the time, and we just stand up and talk. We go around, everyone tells what they are working on and so on.

Interviewer: How would you describe the overall culture? Is there some special kind of mantra?

Carlos: I think we’re pretty much concerned about doing good business. That’s one of the mottos, I would say. If we need to delay a release because the quality might be compromised, we would rather communicate that to the stakeholder, and then assume that cost, but deliver something that does what it promised what it will do.

Interviewer: Are there other specific mottos?

Carlos: There’s also called, “Join the ride.” It means, from what I understand, we have to put most of us to achieve our goals, and overcome the difficult things you might find in the road. Since we are a startup company and there are a lot of things we have to achieve, and a lot of challenges—

Interviewer: Do you live by these mottos? How do you use them?

Carlos: Most people are constantly naming those mottos. I don’t. It’s just a matter of custom. But I do think I am up for the challenge. I like to deliver good, quality code, translating into those features that do what they promise to do. I’m up for the challenge, I like being challenged, otherwise work is dull and boring. Doing good business well is part of it as well. I don’t have to listen to customers, at least in the part of the business I am, I try to do the best I can.

Interviewer: Do you think there is also needs to be more mottos? Or do you have something?
Carlos: I don’t have any. I would say more principles than mottos. I’m not constantly saying a phrase or word to constantly motivate me or others. I just try to go the best I can, find some quality, and I know it might take more time, but in the long term, it is better for everybody.

Interviewer: Do you think there is a big difference, like this glass wall in between the departments? Do you have something special compared to the other ones, or do they have something special?

Carlos: I am a little bit noisy, I would say, because I’m all day singing and making jokes, but that’s just me. I would say that’s the difference, mostly because this side of the glass, they’re all Danes. And there was an English guy and a girl from Estonia. But on the other side of the glass, we have people from all over the world. Personality and customs,

Interviewer: Do you feel that you have a different way of seeing these values, compared to the service department?

Carlos: We are all more or less centered in the same direction. The environment, the work environment, but nothing else. Not something that affects something. I might be annoying but it doesn’t happen really often where everyone is annoyed. They just tell me to shut up.

Interviewer: What about, do you have something special you do besides work? Do you do anything specific that is different from what you have experienced?

Carlos: We meet a lot off work, like on Thursday, we went and played badminton, people in IT and customer success. And I think it’s really nice to get to know people on another level. We also go to ball games. One of my friends in tech is very close to me and we usually go grab a beer and go to the park and hang out, that kind of thing. I think that doing that kind of activity helps to improve the relationship inside a company.

Interviewer: Is that different from other places you have been?

Carlos: This is the first job I’ve had here in Denmark, so my first experience in a lot of things, if I compare to Argentina. Most of the companies I worked, there are more close people. I think that is something very specific of developers. So they wouldn’t hang out to do things after work or practice a sport, those kind of things. There are also people who don’t like going out at night, going drinking or dancing, but here is different. I had the opportunity to do a lot of different things outside working hours with those people.

Interviewer: Have you also been part of some development processes as well where you had a lot of stress going on?

Carlos: Oh yeah. There was one time I tried to start, with a couple of business partners and colleagues, and I was working for a project in Argentina, and we had 2 weeks to deliver. We were supposed to deliver before Christmas 2012, and there was an enormous amount of work to do, and I was sleeping every day and a half, so at that point, it was—

Interviewer: Also, compared to here, try to be some kind of like deadline or something.
Carlos: We had deadlines and we had very little time to meet those deadlines. I had to work extra hours and weekends, but nothing like that period. It was insane. I was sleeping every day and a half and only 4 hours. 2 weeks of pain I will never forget and I will never repeat. Here, I just work until 10:00, maybe for 2 or 3 days, and then some hours on weekend, but it wasn’t insane, and I didn’t feel tired.

Interviewer: How do you see the whole department when you see these tight deadlines? Is there a different vibe going on?

Carlos: It’s mostly, more or less, even, the hard work we have to do. Some guys it is different because they do very specific things but for the rest, it is the same, because we are doing more or less the same, and it can be distributed throughout the team, and they can help you out if you are having trouble if there are a lot of things you have to do and you need to meet a deadline. It’s a good vibe.

Interviewer: And also try to be in some situation where the whole department was behind or something did not go that well. Do you have some examples there?

Carlos: I actually deleted a database and we had to restart, but it wasn’t that bad. I always go for the best solution, even if it is not me who proposed that solution. That is why I don’t have problems working with others. I’ve witness conflicts between other people trying to decide something and one of them is stubborn. But not in my case. It’s not to avoid conflict, but I think something should be done in another way, I try to defend my position, but we always have good arguments in good terms. It’s been okay.

Interviewer: You said in the beginning, there was some interesting things to do. Is that the case here as well?

Carlos: Yeah because I come from a different language and it was very different from JavaScript in some ways, so I had to restructure in my head a lot of things I would take for granted. In these months, I’ve been researching in my head, and that’s not a challenge most of the time. I still do have to learn a lot of things I have to deal with, code written by other people, complex code, or things that are very big to grasp, and new things that we have to do that require research, and also integrate to other systems. I found that challenging. And also, organizing to make the code run faster and also be more efficient and more re-usable. That’s also a challenge and there’s a lot of things we need to improve and I see different challenges—

Part 2

Carlos: I was saying we still have a lot of things to improve and along the way, we also have to develop a lot of new features, fix a lot, which will always be coming up, and I think there’s a challenge to develop new features and improve the quality of the things you already have, and also keep everything up and running, which is also another challenge. So far, I think I have a challenge for a while.
Interviewer: Sounds good. Do you have some special kinds of jokes internally, or expressions, or little things you do on your communication systems?

Carlos: We are always singing and replacing parts of lyrics with one of the guys there, but he never gets mad about it. They also laugh a lot because I have some weird accent, like someone who speaks Spanish and is trying to speak English, but they will mock me that I sound like Italian. It’s a joke I get and a joke I make. One of the guys at the office was always getting here late, so I just looked up a video where there is someone, a reference to someone never getting in town, or never getting to the place he is supposed to go, and based on that, we started calling this guys with a specific name because of what they say in the video. So let’s say I call him a nickname. He’s the chosen one.

Interviewer: Is he the only one with a nickname?

Carlos: The rest is just their names, yeah. There is another one with a nickname, he already had, and then after a trip we made, we created another nickname there. We call him Bangkok. It’s a long story.

Interviewer: Do you remember when you started here the first time, what was it like that surprised you or something?

Carlos: At first it was pretty cool because I got here and one of the guys in the development department was also leaving, so I got his key and his desk, and I also was invited to, one of the guys just moved to a new apartment and threw a party. And it surprised me that they would just invite me without knowing me. That was pretty cool and important. They also assigned me on some tasks to do and they told me it would take a lot of time for me, but code is code. I had to learn some differences but it was not that hard to understand what they were asking of me and to do it in another language. It was a fast learning curve. I got into doing things quite fast and it was good.

Interviewer: I think I got a lot of good info out of that/
Interview Daniel Massot Sales

N: Dit navn rolle og arbejdspogaver

D: Mit danial massot, jeg har rollen som country manager for norden og står for nye salg og opsalget af aboonomenter til kunderne, kirkerne i norden.

N: Hvor lang tid

D: I 1 år og en måned for at være helt præcist, startede i december 2015.

N: Da du startede dine observationer som cd som et sted?

D: ja, altså, unge mennesker der har det sjovt, der en god puls, puls er sådan noget udefinerbart igennem min karriere på 15 år i IT branchen. Der er blevet stiftet bekendtskab med mange organisationer, men her sidder alle meget sammen, udviklere, salg, marketing, finans, ledelse, produktudvikling så man kan sige at det virkelig er sådan en familie og et team der prøver at gøre en forskel i hverdagen i meget høj grad, og det er fedt at være en del af.

N: Har der været en udvikling i tingene i forhold til det du startede?

D: Noget jeg har erfaret som jeg ikke har oplevet før i min karriere, hvor der kan virkelig være dage hvor der er noget der gør godt og du virkelig er glad for at komme på arbejde og så kan der være dage hvor du bare synes det hele ser sort ud og du gør jeg og tænker “ååh der er lang vej hjem”, men når er året ender, ender vi så med en vækst på 25-30% i omsætning. Hvilket er et fint resultat, der er mange virksomheder der gerne vil øge deres omsætning med 25-30% og så tænker du at det er en saas virksomhed så er 25-30% jo egentlig ret meget værd. Udviklingen har jo været at man kan mærke at selskabet bliver mere modent, mere og mere modent, vi har en salgsledelse hvor der er kommet folk til henover tid og det bliver ledet på en professionel måde og man har ambition om at køre det som en professionel virksomhed. Det der er af huller er at nogen gange går det bare stærkt og det sådan typisk i et startup inden for informationsdeling med medarbejderne og vi prøver at blive bedre til dette fordi det er altså nogen gange hvor der bliver lavet ændringer i systemet som ikke lige lander ordentligt hos alle og derved skaber opponering fra medarbejderne fordi vi ikke tænker det godt nok igennem og fra starten af. Så det kan man sige bliver en udfordring.

N: Hvordan kommunikerer i nu?

D: Jamen det bliver kommunikeret sådan nu at ledelsen sidder på et møde og så bliver vi enige om nogle ting og umiddelbart øver vi os på at komme tilbage på kontoret og få skrevet en mail og får mødtes med teamsne og får dem får fortalt hvordan det påvirker dem.

N: Kan du beskrive sådan meta begrebet kultur i forhold til ChurchDesk?
D: Jamen her er kulturen at, jeg tror vi bygger noget ordentligt, alt skal i processer, det er der også en kultur om. Vi er salgsdrevet, vi er meget salgsdrevet. Vi fokuserer hele tiden på salg salg salg, hvilket jeg tror er meget naturligt i opstartsvirksomheder. Vi har også et præg af at de mennesker som er her både skal være udfordret, tænke meget konservativt i forhold til en størrelse som vores kunder er, samtidig med at man skal have en stor portion af tålmodighed i forhold til at kunderne er et et stort kæmpe skib som ikke kan, et tankskib, som ikke kan dreje særlig hurtigt hvis de skal ændre en kurs og det skal man jo selvfølgelig forstå og lære, alle i organisationen at det er den type kunder vi har.

N: har i noget specielt i salgsafdelingen?


N: Hvad kunne det være?

D: Et eksempel kunne være at vi kaster os i islands brygge vandet kl 08 og så tager vi på cafe og får god morgenmad og så tager vi op og hamrer igennem på telefonen og booker møder i salgsøjemed.

N: har i prøvet det før?

D: Altså vi har gjort det her en gang, så det altså ikke fordi vi skal hoppe i vandet hele tiden, men måske en gang hver anden fredag eller om en gang om måneden, at vi så laver en eller anden form for sjov aktivitet som forbereder os til dagen og så går vi igang med det som vi altid gør. Man kunne også forestille sig et eksempel hvor vi sætter os alle sammen i salg omkring telefonen og lytter til en som har et kald og bagefter så giver vi så råd til den der havde et kald med kunden om hvordan man kunne klare det bedre end og hvad der var godt så vi ligesom kan forbedre, som ligesom kan være lidt grænseoverskridende.

N: Har i nogen regler eller små ting når man ligesom skal overvåge hinanden?

D: Nej, jeg tror ikke at der sådan er nogen regler endnu etableret, der er ikke så meget at brokke så over at der de laver i salg, det man laver i salg er at man varetager nogle rimelig frie rammer, man har nogle rigtige gode systemer bag. Man er fyldt med gode værktøjer og man bliver trænet i et budskab og man forstår hvorfor man er forskel fra dem som vil kalde sig konkurrenter til churchdesk.

N: Har typen af kunder noget med jeres recruiting at gøre?

D: ja det skulle man tro, men det er faktisk baseret på gut feeling fordi vi ikke har prioriteret at bruge midler på en hunter der forstår vores profil og vores forretning og som henter profiler dere og egentlig burde have et godt match. Personlighedsanalyse osv har vi slet slet ikke endnu. Det er meget netværk og det er meget hurtigt i forhold til hvad hvem man kender og så tager en manager
en snak med personen. Vi kører bare klassisk job opslag på jobbanks. Det er faktisk meget ustruktureret og meget ad hoc og meget op til den enkelte manager. Lige nu har opskriften været at tage lidt yngre profiler ind som vi ligesom har kunne forme og så et par enkelte senior profiler herinde som også types sidder i ledende roller som også kan forme de nye så man kan sige at man bliver ChurchDeskificeret og forstår at man skal have noget tålmodighed, men man skal også udfordre, man skal ikke være bange og det går faktisk rigtig fint. Og så det klart, man kan altid få en profil ind som ikke virker, men det kan ske for alle organisationer med de to ansættelser vi har haft i salg.

N: Har churchdesk en anderledes kultur end et almindeligt firma?

D: Altså det som er specielt her er at man er en lille familie, det er man, og alle er jo ekstremt venlige mod hinanden og imødekommende. Det har jeg ikke oplevet i samme omfang andre steder, selv de små steder jeg har været. Jeg tror også det har noget at gøre med at de andre steder jeg har været som også har været mindre, selvfølgelig har det noget med størrelse at gøre, det hænger sammen. De har ofte haft plus på bundlinjen og man har derved ikke ligeså travlt som i et startup, men selvfølgelig har man travlt, dog større press i et startup.

N: Har du haft et indblik i hvordan udviklingen i churchdesk har været?

D: Jeg tror at man faktisk har været i stand til at bevare noget af det som har været tidligere, men jeg tror også at man kan dele det op, der var en fase hvor man var meget ustruturet og meget mere loose og fuldstændig lavpraktisk, bare sælge hvor der kunne sælges agtigt, ikke rigtige regler rundt omkring og hvor nu er den blevet meget mere formet og processer for mange ting. Det havde vi faktisk også på vores townhall her i januar og der beskrev CEO hvordan churchdesk havde udviklet sig. Det er jo sjovt at se, det startede jo med et tilfældigt skrivebord i en garrage og en telefon og så bare derud af og noget software der lige var udviklet. Produktet er jo heller ikke til at genkende og det ved folk også og det gør folk selvser fordi det er så meget bedre en dengang, mange flere ting at sælge ind på og meget større differentiator for os.

N: Hvad tror du bliver de store udfordringer?

D: udfordringen på den korte bane bliver jo at skabe en bro, for vi har brugt midlerne fra investorerne. Så kan man sige at dernæst så bliver udfordringen at få salg til at gå endnu stærkere end det tidligere har været. Altså man kan sige hvis vi stod med en plan om at skal hyre 20 i år så ville vi have en udfordringen i forhold til det kulturelle, men jeg tror at lige nu er der ikke nogen af os der har skrevet noget ned om den og den ansætter vi en. Derved har vi heller ikke tænkt over. Vi tænker hele tiden over hvad for en kultur vi vil have, men vi tænker ikke over hvis det nu går for stærkt, hvad gør vi så ved vores kultur. Vi tænker jævnligt på vores offsite med management om hvad vi kan gøre og hvordan vi får den kultur vi gerne vil have. Vi arbejder med nogle hashtags, Join the ride, do good business, og det jo sådanne ting som vi gerne vil have at folk køber ind på og at folk bruger dem sådan på slack og nu vi så kan promovere det fra ledelsens side af. Det har nogle forståelser som skal ind på nakken af nye medarbejdere og også når vi ansætter så tænker vi har vi en person her
som kan joine the ride og kan være en social del af det her, har vi en person der kunne være churchdesk-ish og do good business.

N: hvordan bruger i dem?

D: Vi bruger dem jo ved at have snakket om hvad det betyder. Vi bruger dem når vi har lukket et salg og når vi inviterer til sociale arrangementer så siger vi join the ride, du skal ikke være ude i kulden du skal være med os. Der er nogen der står bag det her og lægger kræfter i det og du skal også være med.

N: Hvordan har folk det med de hashtags?

D: Jamen de synes jo selvfølgelig at det er lidt amerikaniseret, men altså, det er jo også, hvis ledelsen bruger det, så stille og roligt får det et fodfæste og så bliver det en del af kulturen og det bliver også brugt, også af udviklere, ledelse osv.

N: tak for din tid.
Maja Sales Interview

n: dit navn, rolle her i churchdesk

m: Jeg hedder Maja og jeg startede 1. maj efter jeg var færdig uddannet og jeg sidder med kundeasnavar, nærmere betegnet som customer success manager på det nordiske marked. så det det indbærer kundepleje og opslag, mersalg, onboarding af kunder, retention, alt hvad der ligesom har med at gøre med sådan klassisk account management på det nordiske marked

n: hvor mange arbejder i sammen?

M: Vi er Jens og jeg, og vi deles lige nu omkring 600-700 kunder, så vi har delt det op, og det er gitig mange kunder.

N: Hvorfor søget du cd?

m: Det gjorde jeg altså, det var nok en blanding af interesse og tilfældigheder fordi at min uddannelse er med fokus på entrepeneurship så jeg synes startup miljøet og kulturen er sindsyg spændende. så kender jeg christien som er stifter igennem noget friviligt arbejde og der så jegat de ligesom søgte en kundeasnværlig i virksomheden og det var ligesom der hvor jeg lige ringede til ham og sagde at jeg skulle til samtale. jeg har fuldt virksomheden igennem lang tid så jeg synes det var spændende at komme ind den vej.

N: Hvorfor har du ikke valgt en almindelig virksomhed?

M: Nu har jeg også arbejdet i almindelige virksomheder såsom ibm og det jeg tror som var spændende ved startup miljøet er at du kommer med til at bygge noget op fra starten af og samtidig meet hurtigt får et stort ansvar fordi hvis du ikke gør det så er der ikke andre der gør det. så det har været en virkelig stejl læringskurve på den måde og det er det som jeg synes er spændende.

N: Hvordan var starten her?

M: Hektisk! rigtig meget information. Nu var jeg heldig at daniel min chef, var rigtig god til at lære mig op, men det var meget hurtigt at skulle påtage sig enormt stort ansvar fordi man er færre medarbejdere om det samme arbejde, så opstarten var god samtidig med det var nogle super søde mennesker og afslappet atmosphære. men jeg tror i alle jobs, ikke kun i startups, tror jeg det er overvældende de første par uger, fordi der er så meget viden, men en god opstart, helt sikkert.

n: Var der noget som undrede dig?

M: Ja, men det er så især i forhold til industrien vi arbejder i, fordi kirke-verden er så speciel og så niche, så det er en ekstrem, så man skal sætte sig ind i en helt speciel og unik verden som er så specific, som gør at man famler lidt i blinde i starten og det ved jeg ikke om er noget at gøre med startups eller lige den verden vi arbejder indenfor.
Ellers overrasket over man som ny-uddanet får lagt så meget ansvar over på en, der er en ekstrem stor tiltro til at man skal kunne ting, hvilket der nok ikke er hvis man er graduate i IBM. Så i stedet for at gå igennem 2 års forløb hvor jeg bliver lært op, så er det 2 uger og så er det “here you go”, det er meget startups specifikt.

N: Hvordan ville du forklare den kultur der er?

M: Den er på en eller anden måde hektisk og på samme måde hektisk, hvilket lyder lidt speøjs, men den er ren sådan mål og arbejdsbyrdemæssigt hektisk for vi har så meget arbejde og vi skal bevise os så meget som en startup, men samtidig er det en afslappet jargon, højt musik, øl, sociale ting, hvilket jeg synes er fedt.

Det tror jeg er meget den klassiske forestilling af silicon valley og startups hvor det også skal være sjovt, men det kræver så også at man arbejder hårdt for at det kan blive sjovt.

N: Du talte meget om ansvar, er det noget specielt for dig her?


N: Hvad sker der hvis en ikke laver ansvar?

M: Hvis jeg ikke når mine mål så når min kollega Jens ikke sine fordi vi er afhængige af hinanden. Det kan samtidig være at hvis ikke jeg gør mit job ordentligt så får vores support de her sure og utilfredse kunder i røret. Marketing er afhængig af at vi kan lave kundecases som de kan bruges som kan bruges i forbindelse med nysalg. Det hele er meget afhængig af hinanden. Når en fejler så kan det have rigtig meget betydning for det hele.

N: Hvad gør man for at sikre sig for det ikke sker?

M: Vi har en del uddannelse om strategi løbenende, marketing supporterer jo os ved at vi har lettere ved at sælge og demonstrere ting i vores system som så går videre til support og nysalg. Så jeg tror vi er emget gode til, også fordi vi sidder ved siden af hinanden, at vi er gode til at løbende finde ud af hvad der virker, andre gang slår det fejl, men det er meget den tilgang vi har til det. Vi prøver det og så må vi ligesom ændre det hen ad vejen.

N: Hvordan tester man noget?

M: Nogen gange fejler det og så har det ikke den effekt som vi gerne vil have. Jeg er også afhængig af at der bliver lavet ny forretning for det gør at jeg kan udvide min kundese og new bix er afhængig af at marketing har de rigtige demoer og sender det rigtige materiale ud, vi har jo oplevet at noget i ikke fungeret og noget gav bagslag og der må man ligesom tage en anden retning.
N: Har du eksempler?

M: Vi prøvede på et tidspunkt hjælpe folk med at finde ud af hvilken kapacitet de skulle bruge i sit system, der har vi haft marketing og support indover, men der fandt vi ud af at kunder førstod en masse og begyndte at slette ting i deres system, hvilket gjorde at jeg havde problemer i min kundegupper for der har de misforstået en række ting. For i vores startup har vi jo ikke nogen faste systemer, men vi må teste det og så finde ud af at det er noget helt andet vi burde gå efter. Der har ikke været noget fatalt, men det er meget det med at lære af sine fejl henad vejen, hvad der fungerer og hvad der ikke fungerer.

Hvad jeg opnåer er at personlig kontakt og ikke når noget bliver automatiseret kan man sige.

N: Har i noget system for at teste alle de ting af?

M: Kun IT mæssigt, men der skal vi være bedre til at læse de tal. Jamen altså hvis jeg får en ide så går jeg og der taler med marketing, det er jo en utrolig åben sted, der er ikke den perfekte opskrift på det hele så hvis nogen får en god ide så er det let at teste. Det har vi lige gjort ved Partnerskaber som er en idé vi hurtigt fik og der var nogen der greb den og sagde “fedt lad os prøve det”, det er super fedt at have noget og så bliver der ligesom ageret, hvilket jeg ikke tror man lige kan gøre i større virksomheder sådan lige.

N: Hvad gør man får at lave det til et fedt sted?

M: Altså ovre i salg så har vi det sjovt fordi der er musik og vi jooker, vi har en salgs-klokke, så er der engang om måneden sådan et townhall hvor vi opdaterer hinanden, deler historier, kigger på mål, så har vi lige været på skiferie sammen som gør meget for det sociale, vi laver fredagsbarer, inviterer hinanden ud og spiser, vi er gode til at lave spontane ting sammen, så hvis man har interesse i at blive inkludere så er der rig mulighed for det. Og vi er glade for øl.

N: Kan du mærke om der er forskel fra de forskellige afdelinger?

M: Altså jeg tror vi er jo sådan nogen der snakker hele tiden ovre hos os og har vi den her kunde eller case så deler vi det rigtig meget, så jeg tror der er rigtig meget Liv hos os, vi har også support hos os så der hele tiden er nogen der ringer ind. Marketing og Tech er nok lidt mere sådan koncentreret. Det kunne godt være vi skulle blive bedre til at skruj lidt ned fra hyggen engang i mellem, men jeg synes også det er fedt at komme på arbejde og have det hyggeligt med dine kollegaer.

N: Hvor meget inteargere i med de afdelinger?

M: Tech prøver vi rigtig meget at lade vre i fred fordi de har rigtig rigtig travlt, så snakker vi rigtig meget med kenneth som sidder med produktet og er vores kontakt person. Så snakker new biz med marketing, og vi snakker lidt med dem om nye cases. Så snakker vi med stefan som sidder med økonomien fordi det er vores direkte adgang til faktuerering. Der er en naturlig afdeling mellem os herude og udviklerne fordi for dem kunne jeg forestille mig, kræver et andet milø end det vi har herude.
N: Har der været nogle pressede perioder med deadlines?

M: Ja altså den er todelt. Man kan sige i vores industri så er nogle måneder rigtige langsomme som f.eks. sommerferie fordi kirken lukker fuldstændig hvilket gør at man ikke har så meget at lave hvilket gør at man bliver stresset fordi man har en række målog ambitioner og mål som man ikke kan nå. Andre perioder så har vi hamrende travlt som nu i et nytår med nye mål hvilket gør at det kan være svært at følge med, også fordi i et startup så skal man have rigtig mange hatte på, man skal virkelig kunne jonglere imellem alle mulige roller og det kan være frustrerende hvis man synes at man taber noget på gulvet, det er sjovt, men samtidig kan det også være rigtig hårdt.

N: hvad er forskellen?

M: Jeg tror at vi snakker mere, vi er mere ude, vi er mere til møder, så jeg tror der helt sikkert også der er den stemning at vi alle sammen indimellem er presset, men heldigvis er det ikke hele tiden.

N: Hvad gør man for at komme over det?

M: Det har hjulpet at Jens også er kommet på, hvilket gør at man kan sparre mere med en person, man har mulighed for at dele mål og derved tage nogle byrder væk fra hinanden hvilket jeg synes har hjulpet. Det har helt sikkert hjulpet, jeg tror vi har lært at der har været en stor arbejdsbyrde og vi er derfor blevet flere så det er blevet mere overskueligt, men igen, så er spørgsmålet om vi skulle have endnu en fordi arbejdet vokset, det er jo bare den eksanpansion vi er ude i.

N: Hvad bliver udfordringerne i fremtiden?

M: At løbe hurtigt nok! Mangel på tid! Tjene en hel masse penge fordi vi er også nødt til at nå nogle mål for at kunn udvide forretnningen så det kræver helt sikkert at vi løber hurtigt og det bliver helt sikkert målet i 2017.

N: Hvad med kulturelt?

M: Jeg tror det bliver mere alvorligt fremover, ikke fordi det er usjovt, det kommer helt sikkert til at kunne mærkes at vi skal nå rigtig mange ting fordi at man kan ikke fjalle rundt på samme måde, ikke fordi jeg synes vi har fjollet rundt indtil nu, men jeg tror helt sikkert det er vigtigt år vi har foran sig nu så vi skal virkelig udnytte tiden optimalt, men det betyder også at vi skal have det godt i kulturen sådan at vi kan arbejde sammen smartest muligt, hvilket også er en udfordring. Der er også en del nye mennesker og udskiftninger hvilket gør at det tager tid at finde hinanden og få rutiner. Der vil være en del udskiftninger som der har været indtil nu og det gør at man ligesom skal falde på plads og man skal vide hvem man kal gå til osv. man finder ud af at det ved at spørge rundt og finde ud af at den her person kan man ikke spørge om det område. Det er enormt vigtigt at vide hvor informationen skal pege hen ellers bliver nogle folk overrundt med information som de ikke skal blive, hvilket ikke er helt fastsat endnu, men det arbejder vi på.
N: Kan du nævne de kulturelle værdier?

M: Ja det er rigtigt, vi har hashtags. Jeg tror lidt det er den essens at vi har hashtag challenge, join the ride og do good business og det er jo meget den der med at vi er i det sammen og vi har en kæmpe udfordring med det vi laver men vi er også headson på de udfordringer som vi påtager os. Det tror jeg er meget sigende. Det med join the ride er der hvor vi arbejder mest lige nu med at vi prøver at strømline alle sammen som et hold hvilket ikke er en hundredsprocents opskrift endnu, vi har en kæmpe udfordring og vi bliver nødt til at gøre rigtig god forretning fremover. De er alle sammen ret afhængig af hinanden. Det bruger vi så intern i vores kommunikation.

Jeg bruger det meget ved f.eks. når der er nye medarbejder så det join the ride man skriver eller når der er nogen store udfordringer eller deals i salg så hashtag challenge, det var sku fedt det du lavede der”. Nu er vi ikke så mange, men hvis vi bliver meget større, så er det jo et godt grundlag at kunne give videre. En ting er at have et hashtag, men der skal jo også være noget værdi bag det enkelte, det er jo det som vi prøver på.

N: Har du taget hastahgs til dig?

M: jeg tror ikke at jeg bruger dem i sådan i min tale, men det er da noget man går og overvejer i det arbejde man laver hvilket jeg tror giver det er noget man ved og måske tænker man lidt over det i sit arbejde. Det er også noget marketing arbejder på ved at få skabt en fælles kultur, for det har vi ikke haft indtil nu. Vi er ved at få skabt fælles værdier, mission og vision.

N: Hvad skulle det være for det så?

M: Vores mission er allerede kommet ud på den måde med den historie vi har med Christian (ceo) og hvad vi laver og hvad vi gerne vil opnå så jeg tror at vi har den, men det er ligesom at nedfælde den og være bevidst om det til dagligt i de historier vi giver videre til dagligt, til dig og til vores kunder. Det er også fordi vi er noget til den tid i vores levetid hvor det er nu at kulturen skal være fast som er et stort arbejde for marketing lige nu og så ksla man ligesom prøve at efterleve det på et dagligt plan.

N: Hvordan vil du tro som skal stå i værdierne?

M: Jeg tror at det vi dagligt arbejder med er hele det her banebrydende på den her måde at vi prøver at ændre et marked som er meget fastsat med nogle meget fastsatte værdier og det er et ord som bliver brugt meget, men der er jo en form for disruption som vi laver og vi prøver jo at ændre det til det bedre hvilket jeg synes er en vigtig idé, det er ikke fordi vi skal gå ud og sige hvordan det skal gøre, men vi skal være der til at støtte op om hvordan det hele kunne gøres smartere for vores kunder. Jeg vil helt sikkert sige at den der hashtag challenge er den vi arbejder med dagligt og det ved jeg at marketing, finans og alle os sælger og endda udviklernerne arbejder på, hvilket også gør at vi bliver rystet sammen fordi er så ekstremt afhængige af hinanden. Jeg tænker at vores værdier at det er “helhed”, “udfordringer”.

N: Hvordan bruger du do good business?
M: Det er for mig at vi selvfølgelig tjener penge ind, men at vi gør det på basis af at det skaber værdi for kunderne. Når jeg sidder som kundeansvarlig så er det vigtigt for mig at virksomheden kan få værdi ud af det men ligesom meget at kunden får værdi ud af systemet og er trykke ved os som samarbejdspartnere, det er sådan jeg ser do good business for mit kunde perspektiv.

N: Hvad bliver din rolle når i skal vækste som i skal?

M: Nu har jeg været her i 9 måneder og de kunder jeg har taget ejerskab på og har ansvaret for dem kan man se en kæmpe udviklet for og det er en stor drivkraft at man kan se det man laver fører til noget, Modsat IBM hvor man føler sig som en lille myre. Så kan man faktisk se mit arbejde her på bundlinjen, så ens ansvar bliver også meget hurtigt synligjort, og hvis jeg gør det dårligt så kan man se det direkte og hvis jeg gør det dårligt så kan man også se det direkte, det er skræmmende også fedt at man kan se den store forskel man gør, det synes jeg er super motiverende, om det så er i tal eller værdi for kunderne.