

Linköping Science Park

Joakim Hedström

COMMUNITY

# COMMUNITY

– how to build a win-win  
collective



COMMUNITY  
BUILDING  
COMMUNITY  
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– how to build a win-win  
collective

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community



Linköping Science Park





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Svante Axelsson / Fossil-Free Sweden



GENUINE MEANING





# 01. Ahead, together

When the government made Svante Axelsson national coordinator of the Fossil-Free Sweden initiative, he had three keywords to adhere to: visibilise, challenge and inspire.

“I like to say, rather provocatively, that I have the easiest job in Sweden. Living and working in this country, where everyone’s on the ball and wants to help Sweden become the world’s first fossil-free welfare country.”

Svante Axelsson is an agronomist and environmental economist. After 16 years as the secretary general of the

National Environmental Protection Agency, he is now in charge of bringing together 21 industries and inducing them, inducing the whole of Sweden in fact, to become fossil-free – of uniting people from companies big and small behind a shared vision and agenda.

Amongst the hundreds of members are pharmaceutical companies, transport operators, major foodstuff chains, power suppliers – and even petrochemical producers. Svante Axelsson describes the initiative as a community climate gym, where everyone can take part on their own terms and according to their ability.

Many people would probably consider this a mission impossible, but Svante Axelsson is optimistic. And he certainly complies with the government directive to challenge, especially when saying that “the big battle is about provoking people. Why? To make them realise that it isn’t that hard to join forces to become fossil-free.”

The initiative started some years ago and there’s no questioning its success.

Svante tells of how the leaders of the biggest companies in the country are suddenly saying that their lives are feeling more meaningful. This is even something they openly admit. “We’ve been selling the same thing for decades, but just

imagine if we can now help to create something huge. What if I become part of this, and we become the first company in the industry to be fossil-free?”

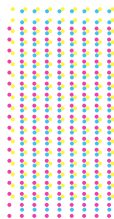
Meaningfulness is paramount. Not just for Svante Axelsson and Fossil-Free Sweden.

“To bring people together we need something greater in our sights. We have to explain why we do what we do. People don’t want to work themselves to death, get a house and dog, and join the rat race. They want genuine meaning.”

This is why Fossil-Free Sweden is giving corporate bosses and politicians training in story-telling. So they can tell others about what they do, how they do it, and why they do it – on their own terms and in their own language.

“You can stand there going on about curves and data till the cows come home. You’ll still never get inside people’s skin. I’d like to go to a class of 15-year-olds in Sweden and tell them that we adults have actually worked little, and not just lazed around.

This is the Swedish story of how we’ll be one of the world’s first fossil-free welfare countries.





## **To leave it all behind and start afresh**

Five years ago, Jean Zagonel and his wife decided to up sticks and move 10,000 km away to start a new life. She was going to write her doctoral thesis at Linköping University and he joined her to take a master's in business administration.

“Tchao, Brazil. Hejsan, Sweden!”

Before they left they searched for useful information on Sweden. On social media and through friends, they tried to find someone who could tell them something about the country they were moving to.

They soon learnt at least that it was a good idea to layer up. But as they discovered on landing, it wasn't just the clothes and the food that were different. The culture and the means of communication were also new to them.



“In Brazil, communication is more about interpersonal relationships,” says Jean Zagonel. “We focus more on the context and the collective best than on the words per se. In Sweden it’s more individualistic and to the point when we talk.”

He says the people who – like his wife – come to Sweden for work often get an instant context, a group of colleagues that help to guide them into Swedish society.

Jean Zagonel’s own ingress into Sweden was initially tougher. He had no job and no established network.

Until, that is, he met some of the hundreds of Brazilian families living in Linköping. “Events were arranged for us by another ex-pat at the university. But when he moved away that was it. There might be a few small groups that still meet up, but it’s not the same.”

The reason why the larger events stopped happening was the lack of a sufficiently strong force, a clear leader, able to bring together the Swedish-Brazilian families. There was no firebrand with the energy to propel the community forward.

But Jean Zagonel was fortunate. He was naturally curious about meeting people and learning new things. Motivations that opened society’s doors to him.

He attended events at and around the university and met interesting people. Then one day someone invited him home.

It wasn’t long before Jean was asked if he wanted to be on Linköping Science Park student board.

“That’s when things really started snowballing,” he says. “Thanks to that, I was noticed by a member of the university

staff, who said that me being involved with the board meant that I was trustworthy. So even though the work I was doing was voluntary, it gave me a foot through the university door and now I'm permanently employed at a company here at the science park."

## Two tales from one seed

In effect, Svante Axelsson was tasked with starting a community. But how much would it have galvanised some of the biggest companies in the country to join *the community* Fossil-Free Sweden? And yet a community they have become, one that unites 21 industries on the route to unshackling Sweden from its fossil dependency – and that gives company directors an unusual feeling of meaningfulness in what they do.

For Jean Zagonel, it was the lack of a context that left him initially outside Swedish society. He had no idea where to find people who shared his values. It was not until he was invited onto the student board – and given his admission ticket to his first community – that Swedish society opened up for him.

So what is a community? And why can they can be the key to our future nation? Turn the page and read on...

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## 02. A community of greater purpose

Teenagers on coding camps. People running co-working spaces. The drivers behind different innovative environments. Government experts. They might use different words, but in effect they share the same vision.

So what exactly is a community? A community is a collective, a means of socialising. It comprises people with similar attitudes, views and priorities. It can be our family and friends. Perhaps a local club and the gang down at the allotment. In the best of worlds, it's society at large and Sweden as a nation.

It's a group of people with shared values. People who stand side-by-side because they believe in something. Because they have a story to tell about why they do so. They know what's acceptable and what isn't – without having read a rulebook.

A community is something more than neighbours greeting each other in the street or in the local supermarket. It constitutes more than people who just happen to be at the same place at the same time.

In *Community – The Structure of Belonging* Peter Block writes that communities are about precisely this: a more or less structured togetherness and the sense of belonging. That communities can provide a solution, reassurance for us in a divided world – where countries, churches, companies and associations are entities unto themselves instead of being parts of a greater whole.

A community is not based on fears or egos, but on people who ask what they can do for others. It's built on trust and generosity and the belief that we – you and I and others like us – can create something greater together that we can all profit from, literally and metaphorically.



A community is built up of people who see beyond themselves. People who are open and willing to share their knowledge and experience, who listen and cooperate. People who are impassioned and passionate, who have more than just an interest in something.

## From Linköping to the world

This is by no means an exhaustive community book, a comprehensive guide that unlocks all the secrets. It is a book about people, containing tales told by teenagers and adults, entrepreneurs and government staff; a collection of stories and perspectives that together aim to explain how a community can be and what it is that makes a community work.

Even though our book isn't about Linköping, it has its origins in this southern Swedish city. For when it comes to communities, they always revolve around a point, be it physical, digital or a bit of each. And it is upon such places that we base our lives.

Linköping is also the birthplace of this book – or more precisely, **Linköping Science Park**. An organisation that started as a physical development environment but that's now taking the step from place to platform, a platform that seeks to provide individuals, networks and organisations with the tools and environments they need to attain their

full potential, where talent attraction and community building are given conditions of success.

## **Lack of talent – the greatest obstacle to growth**

We used to go to the physical office to work. Today, we work across national boundaries without giving it a second thought. Many of us can be on holiday on the other side of the globe and still have access to the same tools we have at home. And our colleagues can just as well be in Nepal as in Gothenburg, the big separator being time and, possibly, language.

Over the past few decades, we've created techniques that have removed many of the obstacles that once kept us isolated. We've created something wonderful – and possibly problematic.

If people can move around and work where they want to, how will Sweden retain the competence we need to build a strong country in the decades to come? And more to the point: how are we going to create such attractive places, towns and surroundings that will make them want to live here too?

Reality is actually much more complicated than this.

According to **Statistics Sweden (SCB)** we will need to have found an additional 265,000 people by 2035 to employ in engineering, science, social science and manufacturing. People who to some, or even great, extent Sweden does not currently have. And the report *The IT skills shortage* from

the Swedish IT and Telecom Industries shows that there is already a shortfall of 70,000 people with sufficient computing knowledge and skills.

If we are interested in holding on to our position as a knowledge and innovation country, there are no two ways about it: we have to care about attracting more people here, people of all ages with the know-how and experience we seek and need. So how do we do this?

*Leave behind everything you know, gather up your family and move to Sweden* is possibly not the best of enticements. Jean Zagonel dropped everything in Brazil, moved 10,000 km and ended up an outsider in Sweden.

True, he eventually found work, but a job is still just a job. For us to feel good in ourselves, we need a context and to feel needed.

Research also shows that it isn't that easy to entice people to a particular area, city or region. People are drawn to people. So there have to be people there, a life and a community.

## **Community-building and global ecosystems**

This book is also about the wider perspective. About how communities give people a sense of belonging, of influence. And how communities can both be used to attract tomorrow's workforces and be merged into larger ecosystems.

We want to show how we are cyclically dependent on each other as individuals and groups – and the changes that can be achieved when ecosystems and clusters of companies and organisations cooperate.

This is why we will eventually leave the community perspective and end the book by looking at ecosystems to find out what happens when one community cooperates with another. For if the challenges we're facing are already global – consider the environment or the question of how to sustain and strengthen our competitive muscle when people are free to migrate across borders – this is also where the solutions have to be found.

We hope that you will like what you read and want more. In the extra material, you will find checklists and more tips on how to create a community – and give it the best conditions to thrive.

One final comment before we move on.

At the time of writing this book, we're in the throes of a pandemic caused by a virus that's overturned the very foundations of how and where we socialise and work. For years, we've been discussing the pros and cons – and even feasibility – of letting people work from home. When the virus struck, it turned out that much of the working population – in the space of just a few weeks – were quite amenable to going remote.

Even if our lives are affected by some future political or economic factor, or virus for that matter, one thing's for sure: our need to meet people and exchange ideas will remain.

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# 03. Why do you do what you do?

David Brohede is a registered psychologist and has devoted much of his career to behavioural change. When he hears the word “community” he thinks of human motivation and belonging, of the human drive to create, and to do so together.

He maintains that this is why the Linux operating system has grown as big as it has. And why Wikipedia – a website that at the time of writing is run by over 138,000 active volunteers – has been able to knock out many of the commercial encyclopaedias published by companies with enormous budgets.



## The answer lies in intrinsic motivation

David Brohede says that modern motivation research can be summarised as a duality – intrinsic and extrinsic motivation – and that this can be the answer to why a community is formed and how it survives.

Put simply, *intrinsic motivation* is the drive that's rooted in your curiosity, what you're interested in and what you find enjoyable and important in your life. This type of motivation scholars call "autonomous" motivation. The drive comes from within. *Extrinsic motivation* comes from the outside – money, status, prizes, guilt, coercion, recognition and countless other such extraneous things. This scholars call "controlled" motivation, because it's controlled from the outside.

If you want to know if what you do is driven by intrinsic or extrinsic motivation, you can ask yourself a simple question: *Why am I doing this?* Think about if you're doing whatever task it is out of your own free will or because someone is expecting it of you.

Let's say that you're digging a pit. Since you find it a boring task, we'll agree that you'll get a penny for every shovelful of soil you remove.

"In this situation, extrinsic motivation in the form of a reward can actually work," says Brohede. "But as soon as you have complex tasks to perform, extrinsic motivation doesn't operate in the way we might think. Whether it's managing a project, creating something innovative or leading a group, studies show that sometimes people actually underperform if you give them extrinsic motivation in the form of a raise or

an outcome-linked bonus. This is because you'll have removed their intrinsic motivation and their reason for wanting to do the job in the first place."

He tells us about his daughter who bounces up and down on her new trampoline from morning to night. She doesn't do this because he's paying her, but because she loves it. She keeps running to fetch her dad to show him some new trick she's learnt. If, however, he'd offered her a penny per bounce, she wouldn't have kept going for as long because her joy – the intrinsic motivation – of bouncing would have been removed.

## **Focus on not destroying**

"Instead of running motivation-boosting initiatives, companies should focus on not destroying the motivation that already exists. Because the risk is that the managers think that written strategies and going on team kick-offs will solve things."

These are Brohede's words. But they're not bitter or accusatory. What he means is that most of us don't understand what the research says about motivation.

During the age of industrialisation we began to regard human beings as machines. We promoted efficiency with carrot and stick – a rather crude philosophy. And it worked, up to a point, back then. But as society and our lives have grown more and more complex, we have to change our views on what it is that motivates us.

"What organisations need to realise is that they can't pay



THE  
FORTY  
MILLION  
FIGHTERS



+

Motivation

people to be ambassadors and to be passionate about their jobs. It's impossible. But on the other hand, you can create conditions that enable it to spring forth naturally in people. And then avoid destroying it. It's when people choose to do something from their own impulses that you're on the right track."

## **The building blocks of a strong community**

According to modern motivational research, there are three things you should focus on if you want to build a strong community. It's a recipe that works just as well if you want to create a healthy company. These three parts are autonomy; competence and learning; and belonging and purpose.

Autonomy is when you're involved in deciding how things are to be done.

Do you want to make people autonomous and involved? Give them clear directions to a clear destination. Let them then decide what has to be done, when it's to be done, where it's to be done and with whom.

Competence and learning is about being challenged, learning new things and getting better at what you do.

Do you want to make more people feel like they're developing? Then ask them – one at a time – what you can do to make their job and their working day a little easier. What can you help them with? How? What do they want to learn and get better at?

Belonging and purpose is the third part. It's not just the bosses of the country's largest companies that want a more

meaningful life at work and at home. We all want something greater to aim towards and the opportunity to get there with others who like the same thing as we do.

Explain why you do what you do – leaving aside financial gain. What is the main reason for people having to drag themselves out of bed every morning? What change does your organisation want to achieve in the world, and why? What story do you want employees, customers and partners to tell about you?

The three parts above describe the operating system Linux and Wikipedia to a T. They are platforms built on an open source code, of which anyone can and may help to change the content – and even add to it. There's no boss dictating what has to be done and by whom. It's up to you and everyone else to do what you think needs doing, and since no parts of it are secret, the knowledge is free. Afterwards, you and many millions of others can say that you helped to create one of the world's biggest operating systems and encyclopaedias.

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Niclas Söör / Dospace



# 04. Coworking – automatic cross-fertilisation

When Niclas Söör started the coworking company DoSpace, it was because he'd noticed some trends in society.

The first is that we're facing a time of social change, where people want more and more say over their own time. We want more influence over what we do, when we do it and whom we do it with.

Moreover, in a large company it's no longer about sticking with the same group of colleagues. Maybe you'd like to work with one group of people today and another tomorrow. And to do so according to what you need in the moment – both personally and occupationally.

Söör says that he's identified a pattern whereby large organisations are broken down into smaller and more specialist companies that work with each other when they want and need to.

All this chimes with what motivation research says about autonomy. To be really motivated, we have to be involved in making the rules.

“Another thing I noticed was that most situations are homogenous,” he says. “Friends who I studied with tip me off about certain things. We watch the same films and read the same books. We create our own clusters that are shielded from the outside world. Coworking can be a great way to break out of these bubbles.”

You might, a little mischievously, say that *coworking* is just another word for a business hotel, an office centre where a bunch of sole traders sit in their own room and share a kitchen, some toilets and a printer.

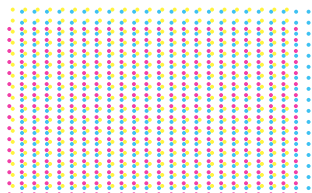
Or you could describe a coworking space as a structured and businesslike hippy collective in which companies sometimes cooperate to achieve some greater goal slipping in and out of constellations and creating collaborations – communities if you like – of ad hoc benefit.



The latter interpretation is definitely more accurate.

Söör mentions how people from different industries and companies of all shapes and sizes meet to do business that would never otherwise have got off the ground. The reason is that they bump into each other at the coffee machine or sit down beside each other at one of the common desks.

“It would never have happened if the psychologist had just gone to conferences to meet other psychologists. There’s a strength in the unforced. Here, connections are made over lunchboxes on a rainy Monday. Or by the coffee machine on a Wednesday. It’s never a case of ‘now we have to go out into the big wide world and seal this deal or meet this or that person’. Here the dialogue can start on firmer ground. It gives people the courage to express themselves in a way that’s slightly different to when they meet in a contrived and focused way to discuss a project.”



## On your own, yet still together

A coworking space you can share with people from Finland, Spain and New Zealand. People who want to work with their own things but not from home – alone. Instead, they'd prefer to sit side-by-side with other driven people who are all working with their own thing.

As employees, there's always been a structure in place – a context – for how we work. When all the more people want to work on their own as individuals a structure is needed that will still allow them to draw on each other's knowledge and experience – and to find each other. The purpose of the coworking space is then, like it is for a science park, to facilitate, to make it easier for people to find like-minded others, energy, inspiration and new collaborations.

To Söör, coworking is about cross-fertilisation, even if that's a term noun he never himself uses.

As the world grows more complex, so do the solutions. So we're going to have to rethink not only how companies collaborate with other companies, but also how people can collaborate with other people. A community, says Söör, regardless of its nature, is a perfect tool and a structured context for people to meet and find ways of working together.

## **Peace, love and profit**

The job of the one running a coworking space is to do everything to ensure that the companies renting the offices or desks in the shared environment can focus fully on their business. People should just be able to turn up and knuckle down.

“People need to be happy, to feel welcome, seen and heard,” says Söör. “They need to feel secure and know that there’s no risk of their being steamrollered or questioned. We put a huge amount of work into how we treat people and how we can create a congenial atmosphere.”

Söör changes the subject to leadership.

He says that it’s about everyone knowing what’s expected of them. One such unwritten rule is that the tenants are to greet one another and introduce themselves to newcomers. They’re also to fill and empty the dishwasher, no matter who’s dumped that used coffee cup on the draining board and walked off.

“It’s small things like this that go to make something bigger. Since a community is transparent, people are constantly flowing in and out. So if new people don’t quickly get a feeling of security, they’ll just infect others with their insecurity. If you get a group that feels insecure and unsettled, you won’t get anything out of it.”

A conceptual image featuring two hands, one from the left and one from the right, holding a large, stylized heart. Inside the heart is a black checkmark. The background is a soft, light blue gradient. The image is framed by a thin white border. The text 'PEACE LOVE & PROFIT' is written in a bold, black, hand-drawn font across the bottom of the image.



PEACE  
LOVE & PROFIT

## **A pointing finger can choke**

He pauses to think before describing “a classic thing that’s quite telling”.

“You have a meeting, and someone turns up ten minutes late. Some around the table want to make it clear that they disapprove, others make out to be unbothered. At the same time, the meeting should embolden people to speak up and perform to the max, shouldn’t it? But the latecomer feels ashamed and sits in silence for a while to get acclimatised. I think as the one leading the meeting you need to see this person; greet them and try to take the sting out of their shame at arriving late. Otherwise, he or she won’t exactly feel inclined to deliver.”

According to author Peter Block, successful community-building is about focusing on the possibilities. For example, a community is always created out of voluntariness. It’s when people step forward of their own free will – their own intrinsic motivation – that they feel inclined to open up and discuss what they’re willing and able to contribute. In this instance, to erect a strict regulatory framework will merely crush their motivation.



Linn Lichtenmann / EbbePark



**SUSTAINABLE  
URBAN DISTRICT**

# 05. Matches for lighting a campfire

Ebbepark in Linköping is undergoing a transformation from today's business park to tomorrow's sustainable urban district, an area that according to their website "is vibrant and buzzing with activity 24 hours a day. A dynamic growth environment for business ideas and innovations, with apartments, services and everything else essential to the living of lives."

Apartments and shops. Innovation and sustainability. 24 hours a day. One of those charged with making sure this grand vision comes to fruition is Linn Lichtermann, the area's community manager.

“I’ve never done it before. So when you ask me how I’m going to do it, I say I have no idea. It’d be best if you could finish the book first, so I can read it and then answer your questions.”

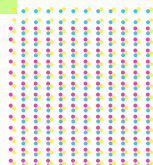
When we meet it’s her second day on the job. And she’s right. **She’s never built a community.** But she has worked as communications officer for various divisions of Saab and as head of the company’s external relations in Östergötland. Roles in which she’s served as an advisor and hub for other people. Linn Lichtermann knows how networks and communities are created.

“I envision myself as a watering can, watering what people are trying to build and what wants to spontaneously emerge. But I also have a box of matches to light campfires with. Fires in the form of concrete activities that people can gather around.”

She looks through the window. Everywhere new buildings are rising, but it’s not these she sees; it’s what will come afterwards.

The district has been home to enterprises for years. Yet it’s something of a forgotten part of the city. So Lichtermann has been wondering a lot about whether there’s already a community in place and how it will be affected





now that she's been tasked with building a new one.

There are small groups, but nothing to naturally bond them. And this is precisely what's going to be formed.

“What we want to build is the larger context. When you hear the name Ebbepark I don't want you to think about a certain company or café here but the place itself. If you live, work or socialise here, you should feel a sense of belonging. Maybe even of love for the place.”

## **Many people at the same place attract talent**

Lichtermann thinks her job is very much about creating and building relationships. About not only listening to what the people in the local companies want but also about being true to the vision that lies at the heart of Ebbepark. They then need to be open to the activities and events it gives rise to.

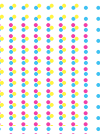
“People are always the context. It's their feeling and the way they relate to each other that make up the collective. When that goes, there's nothing left. You can never therefore have complete ownership of a community. But you can be clear about the conditions and values that apply to your creations. As a consequence you'll either attract people who believe in it or repel those who don't.”

She says that they talk a great deal about attracting talent. About the advantages that companies can enjoy in being part of a community and a context that is greater than themselves. It can make it easier to attract not only employees but also customers, drawn there by the fact that everyone is talking about one and the same place.

“Simply by saying that they’re in Mjärdevi, for instance, which is one of the sites of Linköping Science Park, a company acquires a special aura. For us Linköping residents it says something about the business and adds a certain sheen to its brand. We hope this will be the case for Ebbepark too. Since we aim to have a fairly wide spread of companies here, maybe the name can become a hallmark of quality.”

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# 06. How to create a community



Whether you want to create a small association or an entire urban district based on a community philosophy, there are three things you need to think about.

## **What do you and the initiator want to create?**

You can never own a community, but you can still make demands on the kind of behaviour you want from the members. By being clear about what you want the community to stand for, you'll attract like-minded people.

## **What do the people want to create?**

It's when you invite the people in the community and engage them in decisions that you involve them and fire their motivation. What are they envisioning? Why do they want to be involved? What conditions do they think should apply?

## What is the spontaneous and organic emergent property?

One of the big differences between an association and a community is that the former are by nature more conservative, with charters virtually set in stone.

A community is a more fluid entity that follows the members and their current needs. The question is then how you can be sure that it's structured enough for people to know its norms and values yet open enough to allow space for the emergent property to arise.



More tips

- **FIND THE PURPOSE.** Solve a real need. Don't start a community just for the sake of it.
- **NO STOOL HAS TWO LEGS.** Try not to win points by flying solo – ask for help.
- **KEEP THE THRESHOLDS LOW.** Joining a community should be easy. Make sure to welcome and take care of new members.
- **BE TRANSPARENT FROM DAY ONE.** It will make people more involved and inspire mutual trust between the members.
- **START ON THE RIGHT SCALE.** Pub meetups often beat massive jamborees in the first year. Make sure to create a core of potential ambassadors before going big.



# LOCATION



# 07. The importance of place

We sleep at home and work at work. Meetings are often arranged in a conference room. The lunch room is where we have lunch. We work at our desk in the office or at the machine in a factory. When we want inspiration and new knowledge we go to networking events, attend lectures or read a book.

“There are ways we *do* things,” says Lichtermann, “and then there are ways we *could do* things. The point of Ebbepark is to give people a chance to be and to meet not just inside buildings but also between them, since the physical walls are often themselves barriers.”

It's a matter of creating a balance between removing the

familiar and adding the new.

“Without the risk of things becoming too hippyish, we have to make people do new things. They need to feel confident enough to open up on a more personal plane. If one starts, another will often follow. And off it goes.”

These sentiments resonate with what Söör talks about. Cross-fertilising ideas and knowledge by offering people more relaxing ways to meet. There's also an echo of Axelsson's notions of meaningfulness and following the grand vision together.

## **Workations and the gig economy**

To grasp the significance of place, you just have to stop and think about where you yourself feel good and energised. If it's in a hammock on a Mediterranean beach maybe that's where you should go more often to work? If your employer won't allow it – and your workplace is the biggest energy thief in your life – maybe it's time to change job.

There are two expressions that indicate how we're starting to look at places differently.

Workations is a portmanteau of work and vacation. Maybe you relocate for a few weeks of the year to work and live somewhere else. A summer cottage a short train ride away or an apartment abroad. Perhaps the office space you rent in Sweden is part of a larger network that leaves you free to work from Norway, Italy or Japan.

The new place is then not just a workplace, it's also somewhere that impacts your lifestyle. You meet other



people, do new things and explore other sides of your nature and your life.

The *gig economy* is the trend towards replacing permanent positions with more limited term engagements for consultants, freelancers and temps. For example, a survey (conducted by Sifo on behalf of Bluestep bank) shows that almost half of all Swedes at some time in the future would like to work under other forms of employment than the traditional permanent contract. People in the age-bracket 18–29 are particularly interested in this.

Instead of settling down where the jobs are, we turn things around. First we find a place where we want to live. Then we find or create work out of whatever opportunity or potential presents itself. Increasingly so, therefore, jobs follow the people, not vice versa.

## The community binds the place

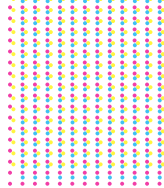
Here is where I can relax and be myself. This is a feeling you can get anywhere. At home, at work, in your association or visiting a friend or relative. A sense of belonging. That the people around you think like you despite your differences. That you have something in common.

The community is the tool for attracting – and then retaining – people to a place, be it physical or digital. The place and the community become the hub and the node at which you feel comfortable.

“People like us do things like this,” says marketing guru and author Seth Godin.

By this he means that a community comprises people who share the same values. They know what’s OK and what isn’t in their context without anyone having to produce a bible of commandments.

When it comes to communities and places, you visit them for this very reason: *people like us do things like this*. You and other people believe in and like a certain thing and in this are united – whether it’s sewing table cloths or creating world peace.



There are also places within places. Like the little department in the big company. You become a place (the department) within the place (the company).

A place-within-a-place can also be the block you live on. Or a certain kind of event.

Let's say that you're not that interested in Gothenburg. But at the same time, more concerts of the music you like are arranged there than in any other Swedish city. If the other life conditions are right, you might therefore consider moving there or at least visiting the place much more often.

The music community can be so strong, it makes you go and settle there. Then when the firebrands themselves move away maybe you do too, since your feelings for the city have changed. In this case, the community was what attracted you and the absence of community is what repelled you. But maybe your own passion has been ignited and instead of leaving you step up to become the firebrand that keeps the community's flame burning.

## The characteristics of places that grow

People are naturally drawn to different things. If, however, we talk about what attracts people from a perspective that has an economic bearing there are some attributes common to places that grow. So says Charlotta Mellander. She's professor of economics at Jönköping International Business School and a researcher of regional development.

According to Mellander, all attractive places share four characteristics:

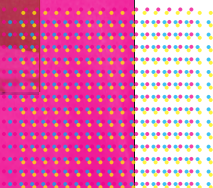
- *Infrastructure:* In addition to producing something, people should also consume and use whatever exists locally. So it's good if there are restaurants, cafés and shops around and that events are arranged.
  - *Charm:* The place should ideally have an aesthetically attractive environment. Why? Because we like to live in and go to beautiful milieus.
  - *Connections:* If a small place is to attract people, it needs to offer good communications. It has to be easy to nip over to other places with a greater range of offerings.
  - *Soul:* People draw people. The strongest growth occurs where lots of people live. We gravitate towards each other and create environments and places together where we want to live, simultaneously bolstering the local labour market.
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GROWING GROWING



Anna Broeders / Linköping Science Park



## 08. If the driver goes, what's left?

Linköping Science Park therefore offers community building as a service. This involves supporting community builders by, for example, training them, arranging experience exchanges, and offering premises and support for marketing and events. At one of their sites, Mjärdevi, roughly 300 events are arranged in one year, attracting some 45,000 visitors.

Thanks to the infrastructure, communities can get a better start and meet across community boundaries. And sometimes it's necessary to help by pausing, or closing down, a community so that others may thrive.

One of the many initiatives was East Sweden Tech Girls, which was started by two drivers as a network for people

who “identify as women and who work in the IT and technology industries” for the purposes of knowledge-sharing, networking and development. Another aim was to encourage children to take an interest in technical subjects.

“As always when we get an idea rolling, we start with a workshop to find out if there’s a need. Was there a need here? What did the ones who expressed an interest want the network to contain? This meeting showed that there was a definite interest in getting involved.”

Everything that was needed for them to get off the ground was there. Then, after just a few meetings, one of the drivers got a new job and the other had a baby.

“We tried to drive the network on but it was all to clear that the firebrands weren’t there. It’s always the same. A community needs people from the inside to drive it forward. They’re the only ones able to engage more people in it. So even though everything else was in place for making this network work, it’s now lying dormant waiting for people who really want to take the lead and grow it.”

The same thing happened to Jean Zagonel and the network for ex-pat Brazilians. Despite the fact that hundreds of people could have derived much use and joy from the community, nothing happened when the person who set



it up moved, since no one was interested in taking it over. There was no firebrand, no driver.

## **Firebrand – not employee**

Listen, it's OK to drop an idea that doesn't have legs. Or to pause an initiative when the firebrand leaves. Because it's never as simple as replacing this person with an employee. That was exactly what the science park learnt when it came to East Sweden Tech Girls.

“One explanation is that we employees don't have the same credibility or inspire the same trust as a firebrand. No matter how committed we are when we join, we're actually getting paid to care,” says Anna Broeders.

Besides, you can't employ people to be passionate about their work, as David Brohede said earlier on. What you can do is create the conditions that inspire people to become firebrands of their own accord. And if it doesn't work, that's fine.

## **Just active**

What constitutes a community? When would you say that you're in one?

Think of the parents selling hotdogs at their kids' matches. They're engaged and always willing to help out. They're there come rain or shine. But despite the sense of togetherness they probably feel with the other parents who are also engaged, would they really say that they're part of a community?

Likewise, university students wouldn't say that they belong to a community. They are *just active on the student scene.*

And people who fly model planes four times a week do just that – fly model planes with others who also enjoy flying model planes. They probably wouldn't say that they're part of a community either, even though, in practice, they are.

If a football parent stops giving the kids a lift, there are doubtless many others who'd be happy to do so instead. But if the one who calls round to chase up others one day decides not to do so, the whole thing falls to pieces.

Next year there will also be parties and events at Sweden's universities, even though this year's finalists have graduated and moved out. These traditions and communities are so strong that they even survive a sudden turnover of members.

So before you start a community, stop and think for a while.

Is there a need for what you want to create? Is there a firebrand? What happens if the current one moves away or gets bored? Would you be prepared to at least temporarily let the community go dormant, or will you fight for it even harder?

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# 09. Keep the community cauldron boiling



- **FOCUS ON GIVING – NOT RECEIVING.** Everyone can and wants to contribute, the question is what. Make sure that there's generosity and a culture of giving.
- **ENCOURAGE HONESTY AND OPENNESS.** When people feel safe and secure, it's easier for them to take part.
- **MAINTAIN DIVERSITY.** Dissimilarity is the mother of innovation.
- **THERE ARE NO READY ANSWERS.** So test small and fail quickly. Let people bring to the community what they think it needs.
- **BE CURIOUS AND RECEPTIVE.** Listen to what



people feel, think and want. Remember that plans can change. Continue listening to what people need.

- **ENSURE EVERYONE IS EMPOWERED.** If you want something to happen, anyone should be able to take the initiative.
- **ENCOURAGE ENGAGEMENT.** Make sure that the community isn't dependent on a single person. You need many people who are willing to give and take.
- **FEW, BUT GOOD.** It's better to focus on arranging good events and meetups, rather than many. It's OK if there's a big gap between meetings.



Kristofer Skytner / MakersLink



# 10. MakersLink – from craft to robotics

Kristofer Skyttner had just started his own business based in Linköping Science Park and was fully occupied with it. His company offers its customers a fully automated system that allows them to link together the entire process from manufacture to online sales.

“Thanks to the fact that I started the company in a science park and not in a basement, I was exposed to so much more. All of a sudden I found out while queueing for lunch that a makerspace was going to be built in Linköping, and I got invited to the first meeting.”

You could say that it was luck that they happened to meet that day. But you could also say it was inevitable. They met in a science park where thousands of people work, and where an open event is held almost daily. All the prerequisites were there.

Let's pause the story and return to Kristofer a bit later.

You probably already know what a *makerspace* is, or at least might have heard the word. The Makers of Sweden organisation says that a makerspace comprises "people who gather in quasi-workshop environments conducive to the sharing of knowledge, tools and ideas".

Makerspaces bring together people who use CNC machines, teach 3D printing, have robot-sumo competitions, convert dolls to synthesisers, crochet and sew – with or without built-in electronics.

It's a place, a context, where people who like creating find like-minded others.

As proof of the importance of the makerspace association in Linköping, they were – thanks to the large community of creative people – contacted by the innovation team at Region Östergötland, who asked if they could help slow down the corona pandemic with the aid of open design.

The products of their efforts were freely available blueprints, prototypes, designs and samples for making protective visors, goggles and breathing masks.

Back to the story.

Five years after his lunch queue chat, Kristofer Skyttner looks back at what became MakersLink – the not-for-profit



makerspace association in Linköping.

“It started with an empty, crappy industrial building with no lighting. With the help of 30 or so volunteers and a load of donated machines and furniture we were able to get it in some order. Today we have an association of over 250 members that keep the place open several days a week, where everyone is welcome to come and create. And all this work was done on a shoestring budget.”

## **Volunteers and other non-profit agents**

Kristofer Skyttner mentions several times that it was the space that made everything possible. A brave municipal company made sure that they gained access to the premises, which had been standing empty for some time. In return for creating an open and creative meeting place, the association was also given relatively free rein.

“We got the keys to the building around midsummer 2015. We had nothing. Since our costs were low, we were able to focus on building the business. We went round to companies and private individuals all over Linköping, collecting donated and broken things. Things that were available and that the members said they wanted. It’s the members that have built up this association from scratch and made it such a success.”

Today, there are all kinds of makerspace associations dotted around the country.

Some municipalities start a makerspace and employ people who teach kids to use 3D printers. Other associations have a more anarchist bent and are steeped in politics and philosophy. Then you have commercial makerspace associations targeted at companies, and ones that are free and open to everyone and anyone.

When MakersLink was founded, they looked at how other voluntary movements and organisations have grown their businesses. With a sufficiently strong vision and policy, it even seemed possible to build up a business using volun-

teers and other non-profit agents.

“We said from the outset that people couldn’t buy their way into the association. All you had to do was trade time. If you could agree to keeping the place open two days a month, you got your own key and could come and go as you pleased. This meant that we always had someone there who could open up for inquisitive people and explain to them a little of what we were doing.”

While the first members came from all kinds of background, from teachers to artists, there was a surplus of technical people, many of whom were 25–35-year-old engineers with daytime jobs in cryptotechnology, 5G and gas turbine construction – and a thirst for more meaningful leisure time.

“They come here after work, often without a concrete project to work on. They have a coffee, do a bit of creating and exchange ideas with friends. If we get Linköping’s creative people to meet and create together a few times a week, just imagine what could come of it.

think that new ideas and solutions will crop up that are so good they'll go towards shaping the communities and businesses of the future.

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# 11. A liberating view of the world

“People in the IT and corporate worlds should stop looking down on young people as if our point isn’t as important as theirs just because we’re young and lack the training,” says Selma Rosenbaum.

Linn Källström agrees and says that if Sweden is to get more highly skilled people, it has to appeal to the younger generation. “I think that the key to getting a lot of people into the IT world is to talk to the young. To fire their interest so that they see there’s a market for them. If companies don’t do this, no one else will either.”

Linn is 16 and in her last school year. Selma is a year older and in her first year in upper secondary. They don’t see their future selves living and working in a particular district

or city. Or at least not only there.

They say that most people effectively have access to the whole world on the net, so why limit yourself? No matter what our needs, almost, we can find it there in the form of people and community.

Selma and Linn have friends from the Netherlands and the USA, people they've got to know without ever having met them. To them, a community is neither digital nor physical. It mostly just *is*. And they take it for granted that people can connect with and understand each other and share interests regardless of where they are on the planet.

When they visited Code Summer Camp, a week-long technology camp for 7 to 17-year-olds, they had no interest at all in computers. It was one of their parents, a coder, who suggested they go along to check it out.

"Neither Selma nor I knew what awaited us," says Linn. "I more just tagged along with Selma. Then we discovered the joy of creating. To code, do graphic design and develop games. The way they taught was also more fun than what we're used to at school. There was a lot more freedom here and we could choose for ourselves what we wanted to do. And that gave the whole place a much more collective feel."

Independence and getting to decide for yourself. Learning new things and growing. And getting to do it with others who like similar things.

Again, a bull's-eye when it comes to what the research says about our motivators.



## A bigger person

To Linn and Selma the ingredients of a good community are self-evident: an acceptance of novelty and of people unlike you. People with different ideas, views and traditions.

In the next breath they draw parallels to what you need to make your life function smoothly.

“I think it’s about always trying to be a bigger person. About trying to get a relationship, or a group or a team to work. *Always* trying. And not getting hung up on the trivial things that put you off collaborating,” says Selma.

Linn agrees and says that humanity as a race evolved through cooperation.

“We wouldn’t have come anywhere close to having what we’ve got today without cooperation. Sure, we can cope fairly well on our own these days, but to evolve we have to cooperate. No matter what our situation. To spread inspiration and knowledge and help each other.”

And it’s not long before they’ve broadened their perspective even more.

“There are so many conflicts and problems around the world that could have been resolved if people had only taken a

deep breath and sat down to talk things over.” Selma picks up the thread: “Maybe I just want to do my bit to help make the world a slightly better place, one in which we talk instead of fight.”

## **Place is everything and nothing**

In a way, place is irrelevant to Selma and Linn. The distances and relationships in their world are counted not in kilometres but in milliseconds.

At the same time, it was the physical place that enabled them to find their path in life and choose technical studies.

It’s people like them, people who see the whole and the common goal, that we want to keep and keep motivated. We – as a city, a region and a country. We need to keep inviting them in so that they develop a sense of community with like-minded people, both locally and nationally. Give them space and attention so they feel that they can contribute – and that their opinions definitely mean something.

The challenge is to make them stay – or at least return – here after having studied and roamed the world. Here, to a physical place somewhere in Sweden.

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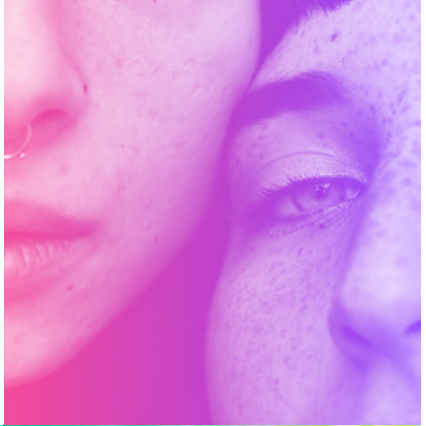
# 12. Avoid the pitfalls

- **NO ONE WANTS** to work with poor communication tools or platforms that are devoid of content. Think about how you communicate with each other – before you start doing it.
- **NO FIREBRAND, NO COMMUNITY.** Someone needs the passion to drive it. Or rather, *someones*. More is better.
- **BEST NOT INVOLVE MONEY.** It's easier to build on people's intrinsic motivation.
- **AVOID DOING WHAT FEELS RIGHT.** Make sure you always know and understand what people want and need.



- **DO YOU WANT STATUTES AND DOCUMENTS?** Then maybe an association is a more suitable option.
- **NO ONE LIKES BEING SPUN AROUND,** so take small steps in the dance of change. And make sure that the members of the community are involved in choreographing what needs changing – and why.
- **DON'T SIT BACK ONCE THINGS GET ROLLING.** Needs and people change all the time. A community is a fluid thing, and requires constant attention and continual adjustment.
- **DON'T FLOG A DEAD HORSE.** Be prepared to wind down the community when there's no longer the need or the commitment for it.





**RADICAL  
CHANGES**

# 13. The wider perspective

In the first sections of the book we focused on how communities are built experiences and examples of this, and people's driving forces. The individual and often isolated forces that crop up here and there.

Now it's time to return to the Fossil-Free Sweden initiative, or rather the wider perspective. Because whose role and responsibility is it, really, to build Sweden? The politicians'? The regions'? Or how about this: maybe you and I already have both the ability and the mandate to create the country in which we want to live, without asking those at the top?

As we've already shown, it's impossible to pay people to develop a passion about something. But what we can do is

prepare the soil from which this passion will grow naturally – and then not kill it.

Going by this logic, shouldn't it be possible to bolt different communities together to see what comes out? That was exactly what happened when Region Östergötland asked the local makerspace association if they wanted to help save lives. In their turn, the association asked other makerspace associations around the country and together they all helped to devise the solution.

This is also the philosophy used by companies like Volvo and AstraZeneca. To connect many small, specialised organisations, and from this build ecosystems in which everyone gains from the collaboration.

One to one, two to many and all to all. But it will require radical changes.



## The key lies in the many and the small

“So far the focus for setting up companies has been on major investments. This is because we haven’t borne in mind how small companies can cooperate with the large and bring important skills, regionally as well as nationally. Today, the key to Sweden’s competitiveness is increasingly to be found in the many small innovative growth enterprises, rather than the few, large and established companies.”

Marie Wall is head of startups at the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation and serves as a link – and perhaps interpreter – between many young innovative enterprises and politics. With personal experience of the startup world, venture capital and innovation support at Vinnova (the Swedish governmental agency for innovation systems), she’s well acquainted with how the different worlds operate.

If the regions are to become competitive, they’ll need to cooperate, specialise and build a critical mass of companies in specific fields. This will put them on the map and enable them to attract more companies and skills. Strong attractive nodes are part of what she sees is needed for building a healthy

and prosperous Sweden.

Marie Wall is energetic, talks as fast as she thinks, and says that she's involved in numerous processes. For instance, she's project manager for the *Cooperative programme for skills supply and lifelong learning* – a programme designed to inspire and enable people to re-learn and constantly grow to keep themselves attractive on an ever-changing market. Swedish companies must also have opportunities to grow and attract the right workforces to be competitive on a global market and to conduct world-leading research.

It's obvious when talking to her that she believes the future to be everyone's responsibility. When she takes up some concrete examples to make her point, she tends to use the word *we* – not *they*.

“One reason why we have a strong Volvo that continues to operate in Sweden is that we have many strong subcontractors. Subcontractors who are increasingly becoming partners in the development of the cars of the future. Volvo benefits from its proximity to these small companies' specialist skills, and the small companies can develop and grow through their close ties with Volvo. It's win-win. Now that we're transitioning from petrol-driven to electric cars, however, to some extent new partners and subcontractors are needed. Will all these 'new' partners be started in Sweden? No. So the question is how we can attract the companies we need to guarantee a strong subcontractor-cluster. This is a critical question for the whole country, not just for Volvo.”





## **Ecosystems – collaborations in which everyone's a winner**

Wall seems to agree with what many community-builders feel: we need to change the way we think about how we can and should collaborate. Those who understand this will be the winners, whether it's a matter of forming an association, a company, a city or region – or perhaps even an entire country.

“A community can gather the right people on the basis of a purpose and have them get to know each other in order to create stronger bonds. But if you don't know the greater perspective and what you want to build, nothing will come of it.”

What she's talking about is ecosystems, the things that emerge when companies or communities start to work together towards a shared goal.

“AstraZeneca is a good example of an ecosystem builder. They've been proactive in encouraging the development of a surrounding ecosystem that helps to augment their own innovativeness and skills. The proximity not only benefits AstraZeneca, it also contributes to the more efficient and rapid growth of the small enterprises.”

AstraZeneca confirms the picture. In newspaper interviews, company spokespeople say that the ecosystems aren't only there to strengthen their own competitiveness but also that of the town they work in and the entire Swedish life-sciences industry. They can clearly see how it pays off to be open and to share knowledge and experiences with each other.

Since there is no template for how a large company like AstraZeneca is to collaborate with smaller companies in a way that makes everyone feel like winners, everything is based on trust.

Maybe the high degree of trust that Swedes have for both the state and the individual places the country in something of a unique position. It's a success factor that other countries can find difficult – if not impossible – to emulate.

The BioVentureHub collaboration that currently has some three dozen members is even presented as “a community of trust” and with such phrases as “no strings attached”. The giant has no plans to suck smaller companies dry of their knowledge and skills only to buy them up and shut them down. The whole point of the collaboration is the direct opposite. Everyone wants to co-exist side-by-side and collaborate in order to derive much greater benefit than any of them would have been able to achieve alone.

A person with another person. A community with another community. An ecosystem with another ecosystem. The automatic cross-fertilisation that occurs when we meet and work across boundaries.





Catharina Sandberg / Lead

# 14. In whose best interests are we working?

Catharina Sandberg is CEO of Lead in Linköping, one of around 40 business incubators in Sweden. These incubators have been set up to create environments in which startups with innovative commercial ideas, services and products can quickly flourish.

“When you build a startup, you’re often pretty much alone. If you can share the experience with others, obtain a context and bring new companies into collision with old ones we can share experiences. And none of them get to fall into the same trap. What’s more, we might even discover that if we get together with our neighbour, we get an even stronger offer. This is very much the community thing. Not being alone and learning more and faster.”

Catharina Sandberg talks about the necessity of a forum, a space where people can meet and say: *Right, you've done that. How did you do it? How did it go?* And of an environment and a culture that make people open up in a spirit of mutual trust.

“You’ve got to have opportunities to share your failures instead of sweeping them under the carpet. I want you to be able to stand in front of others and say: ‘I learned this and that. Don’t make the same mistake. Turn left over there.’ It has to be OK to fail, which makes it super important that we take on people who believe in that.”

She talks about the collaborations that exist between the innovation environments in Östergötland and the advantages they bring. About how each organisation can be niched and can specialise in its own thing. About how they all have their community and culture, their own context, and how they then can choose to cooperate to achieve something bigger.

Sandberg argues that community building is the perfect tool for attracting talent and future employees.

“We have a programme that we call the Summer Match, in which researchers and our member companies can get help in their development from a group of driven university students. Given the complexity of the work and its eventual outcomes, the summer workers are paid very little. Despite that, over a hundred people have applied for the twenty vacancies. They apply so they can get to be part of us, part of something greater.”



As pleased as she is with the local and regional collaborations, she's equally frustrated with the inhibiting effect of national regulation.

“Let's say that we have a company that specialises in textile solutions. It should be a no-brainer to put them in contact with organisations in Borås, since they're the best in Sweden in the field. But the way the incubator programmes are set up means we get no gold star for sending them there. We actually have to pay for it, which is weird as it could really benefit Sweden Ltd.”

She argues that a different approach needs to be taken at national level to how and in whose best interests we – Lead and other organisations – actually operate. Are we only to look to our own needs, or help Sweden's many small components build something bigger?

## **Think horizontally to understand each other**

Lena Miranda sees a similar inherent resistance and a desperate need for a new approach. She's CEO of Linköping Science Park.

She says that there are many radical changes taking place in society that demand novel forms of cooperation. That we need to move on from local and regional competition, tear down all barriers and obstacles to collaboration, and muster our energies to achieve lasting global change.

“With their global goals, the UN have identified a number of areas that are challenges facing the entire planet. But the challenges are so complex that you have to break them

down into smaller parts and fix each problem separately before you build it all back up again. And what's more, there's no single person, company, organisation or sector able to solve the transverse problems. We have to think horizontally and mix skills to understand each other across the boundaries and hit on those really smart solutions."

The opposite, she says, would be to continue creating small, mutually isolated bubbles and refining the knowledge and skills of each. It will always be more convenient to keep treading the well-trod path. Miranda notes that, historically speaking, we've built countries, regions and cities as autonomous units with their own, unique hierarchies.

And if we have Linn Källström and Selma Rosenbaum represent the next generation, these bubbles aren't interesting – to them or to society in general.

They believe that we are where we are thanks to cooperation. So it has to be cooperation from now on, too. It's about being the bigger person, about not getting hung up on the details, about always trying to make headway.

"I think it's because we're basically lazy," says Selma. "We always seek the path of least resistance, and that path rarely involves cooperating with others. We can get by on our own nowadays in many ways. So instead of acknowledging that we don't want or can't be bothered to cooperate we come up with obstacles like religion, background and ethnicity."

"And maybe we think we can profit by keeping things to ourselves," adds Linn. "Sure, the two of us can be lazy too, but you reach a point when there's something more



important than simply taking the easy way out. When it's a matter of doing what's *right*."

## Holistic dealmakers

Catharina Sandberg, Lena Miranda and Marie Wall all draw the same conclusion.

It's obvious that the ecosystems we build are chaotic. They comprise lots of companies and even more people and endless opportunities. Add to that just how quickly technology is advancing and you'll realise that no one can be expected to have a thorough or even general grasp of how everything is threaded together. And yet we need to cooperate more than ever, on all levels.

They argue that tomorrow's professional role will be that of dealmaker. A go-between. A bridge, an interpreter and a liaison centre rolled into one. Someone who puts the right people in touch with each other. *If you're looking for capital, you'd best talk to... If you're after that kind of kit, you should really go and see...*

Someone who listens and understands. Who sees the value of the small while never losing sight of the big and how the parts are linked by mutual dependency.

Dealmakers at a local, regional and national level. And

more than that, dealmakers with an even greater system perspective. People who help to connect dealmakers from different parts of the world.

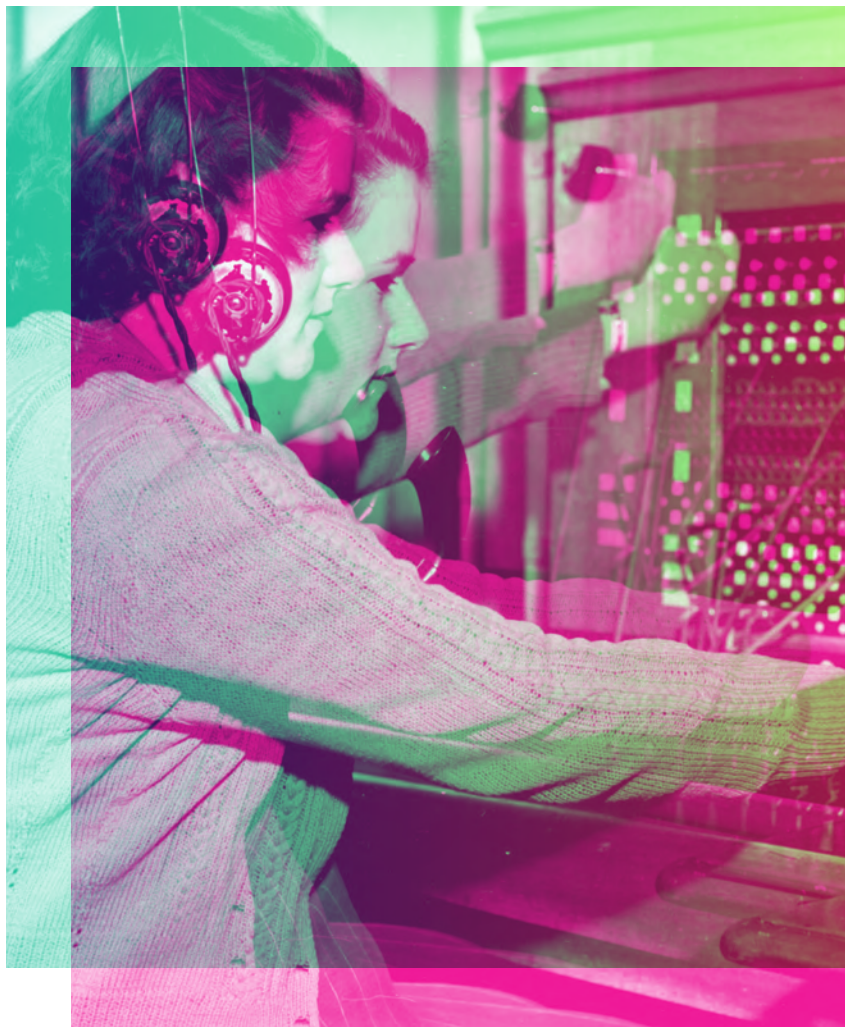
Modern switchboard operators who always know who we should turn to, but who don't always understand or even need to bother about the details.

Dealmakers can be people operating in and around the innovation support system; people in cluster activities, development environments, incubators and science parks; or people employed at a company that offers coworking spaces and organisations offering networks, like the Swedish Chambers of Commerce.

Even if there'll undoubtedly be a certain amount of development without dealmakers, these people will be the oil that lubricates the machinery.

“Regrettably, the Swedish innovation system has so far neglected this role,” says Marie Wall. “In research projects, dealmakers, in the shape of innovation offices for example, only enter the scene at the end. If we got into the habit of involving them at an early stage, they could bring valuable insights about actual needs and challenges. Then they'd also be able to make sure that knowledge is protected and patentable, something that could enhance the uptake of most projects. The competence we have amassed in the intervening spaces is a profession in itself and we have to clarify the importance of this role in building the strong environments that Sweden needs.”

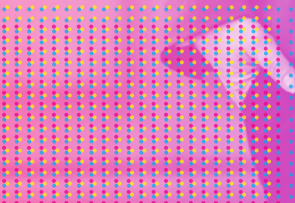
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+ Holistic dealmakers



Lena Miranda / Linköping Science Park



# 15. The keyword is together

A few concluding words from Lena Miranda, CEO of Linköping Science Park, chair of Swedish Incubators & Science Parks, and member of the National Innovation Council.

“We’ve talked about the power inherent in bringing people together. About how we have to understand each other and our society to be able to navigate in a fluid and complex world. How we need to understand what’s happening from a local and global perspective, simultaneously. And not least, sense-making – the joint creation of meaning.

When technical development moves as fast as it does now, the greatest challenge is for us – the people – to keep up. We need to create processes, forums and infrastructures to orientate ourselves. And we need a strong vision of the good society that can guide us to use technology for the right things.

We're doing OK here in Sweden. We have a welfare system in which I still feel that most people see each other as equals. We welcome people from around the world. And we like diversity and unorthodoxy, and putting them into collaborative practice.

In a time when some countries are closing their borders, our openness and curiosity towards the world will be more important than ever.

## **Belonging and context**

When we build our common future, we must be guided by two principles: *the sense of belonging* and the *will to contribute and share responsibility*. Only then can we deal with the global challenges and ensure growth – ecological and social as well as economic.

As a leader – of a company, place, municipality, region or country – you need to understand what makes a community tick. It's only then that you and we others can build the larger context – the ecosystem.

It's in the ecosystem that we gather the many smaller components required to solve complex problems. It's no longer *big* that matters, but *together*. Our task, therefore, is to gather and guide the people, the culture and the tools.

We have to realise that it's not the engineers, the coders, the police or the doctors who'll save us. Sure, they're part of the solution, but they're not *the* solution. The challenges of the future will be too insurmountable.

The parallel with today's hooked up society is clear. The

first connected product was cool and interesting. When we then connected more stuff up to the same network, we were able to get them to communicate with each other. Now we had something both cool *and* useful. But it was only when the individual systems formed ecosystems that the potential accelerated exponentially.

Now we have to learn to do the same with people. One to one, two to many and all to all. A community to a community, one ecosystem to another.

## Getting people on board

As I write, we're in a time of transition due to the corona pandemic. So don't see the book as an instruction manual or take what it says to be gospel truth.

Right now – as the world holds its breath – great changes are occurring. A kind of momentum is being generated, the power and charge of which is propelling us to our destiny.

And again – still – it will be together that we take the next step. *Together* is the keyword for how we should tackle some of the most important questions for tomorrow's world.

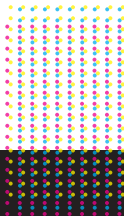
What shall we do with this opportunity? We'd love to hear your ideas.

**Lena Miranda**

lena.miranda@linkopingsciencepark.se

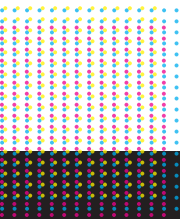


# 16. Suggested reading



- **LINKOPINGSCIENCEPARK.SE/COMMUNITY**  
Here you'll find checklists, practical tips and much more to explain how to create a community – and give it the best chances of thriving.
- **COMMUNITY, PETER BLOCK**  
A best-seller on community-building. How do communities work? How are they built up and why are they the answer to how we should organise ourselves in the future?
- **PLATSMARKNADSFÖRING, HELENA NORDSTRÖM**  
For more about the art of attracting people to settle, visit and invest in a place.





- **STARTUP COMMUNITIES, BRAD FELD**  
On what it takes to build a community of entrepreneurs who support each other's talents and creativity.
- **MAKERSOFSWEDEN.SE/MAKERSPACE**  
Information on the makerspace movement in Sweden, with links to how you can find your nearest one.
- **COMMUNITY-CANVAS.ORG**  
A framework that helps you build meaningful communities.





COMMUNITY  
BUILDING  
COMMUNITY  
BUILDING  
COMMUNITY  
BUILDING



From events for teenagers to government initiatives and collaborations involving some of Sweden's largest companies. They all use the same tools to give people a greater sense of meaning and things to rally around — communities.

*Community* explains what makes communities strong and how to create a win-win collective. It's a book for anyone wishing to understand more about tomorrow's leadership and about building attractive places and organisations.

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