



UNIT 4. THE PROFESSION

ELEMENT 2. INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

WORKSHOP: INTERVIEW WITH ORGANISER

Other video transcript

- Voice 1 EASIT, Easy Access for Social Inclusion Training.
- Voice 2 In this video you will meet with Stefan Johansson.
He works at Begripsam, which is a Swedish
company and also an organisation. The name
Begripsam is a play on words and refers to an
understandable society.
- Begripsam organises workshops with producers
and end users. Stefan Johansson talks about how
to arrange workshops and how to facilitate for end
users to participate. The interviewer is Ester
Hedberg from The Swedish National Association
for Dyslexia.
- This video contains video clips from workshops
organised by Begripsam and the project Begriplig
text, and are used with permission from
Begripsam and The Swedish National Association
for Dyslexia.

Ester Hedberg Stefan Johansson, you are one of the brains behind Begripsam which started as a project at the Swedish National Association for Dyslexia. But now it is both a company and an association. Can you tell us a bit more about Begripsam?

Stefan Johansson Sure... After the project we have been going for four years. The association has 30 members and the company, 10 employees. But we have about 100 people on our payroll. They help us in testing and participate in activities. We see ourselves as a team that comes in and helps out.

We choose team members based on the task. We usually talk about how we have a bunch of first-hand experience in what is difficult and how we can solve problems.

Ester Hedberg So you have 100 people who are involved now and then? They help out when needed? What kind of people are they?

Stefan Johansson They come from all kinds of backgrounds. Some are students. Some have another job and help us out when they can. Some don't have a job at all. For many of them it is the first time they get a salary when they receive a payslip from Begripsam.

Ester Hedberg Do they all have some form of disability?

Stefan Johansson No, not necessarily. We usually say that they all have experience of disability. It could be that they



themselves are disabled. Or they know what it is like to be disabled. It varies. But many do have disabilities of their own. Sometimes several all at once.

Ester Hedberg

Why is it important that users with different experiences who have different backgrounds are involved in these processes?

Stefan Johansson

Generally, those who find things difficult or complicated are those who notice problems quickest. And it may just be that they come up with smart solutions. Or point designers in the right direction. They put someone on the right path. And show when something is not good enough that it needs to be better. The outcome is so much better if we work together.

Ester Hedberg

The authorities and companies you help, do they usually participate in the groups? How does it work exactly?

Stefan Johansson

It differs. Sometimes we work on our own. For instance, when we are preparing something to be presented. We then work on our own to start. But it is common for us to work together with those who have done something that has to be improved.

In those cases, it is good that they are involved. To start, they get to listen to what we are presenting. Then they are gradually welcomed into



the conversation. What ideas do they have to resolve the problem?

We raise awareness of the difficulty. And then we start discussing solutions.

The awareness has to go both ways. We usually need to understand what it is that is difficult for the person building or developing the solution. There may be laws or regulations in the way. They know that what they are doing will be difficult. But they have to do it because the law necessitates it. We have to know that. It is no use criticizing something we have no influence over.

We usually work in groups of 7 to 10 people. At times, we have several groups of 7 to 10 at a time. Sometimes there are 30 to 40 of us. We then split up into smaller groups.

- Ester Hedberg Now you will show us a film...from one of your workshops.
- Stefan Johansson That's right. Let me get it started.
- Video voice Peder I have the schedule in front of me.
- Video voice Stefan Would you please read it Peder?"
- Stefan Johansson So we go through the schedule for the activity we are conducting.
- Video voice Peder Let's go through today's activity and break up into small groups.



Stefan Johansson

I'm going to mute it here. Let me tell you what is happening. Here, we are preparing a workshop. There are actually 30 people involved in the activity. But we have

split up into smaller groups. We have 3 to 4 groups going at once.

They are working with a prototype. What you are hearing is Peder going through the program. Everyone is participating from home.

We usually have in-person workshops. When the pandemic started we started having digital workshops. It has gone really well. We have had a lot of practice. We have digital coffee breaks. So that you can prepare without pressure to perform.

The lines between whoever is leading and whoever is not have become blurred. But we usually have a discussion leader. And a person who is responsible for documentation. If the group is large, we have a third person to help if anyone is having trouble connecting. There are at least three of us.

And here we are working with a prototype. This is a typical meeting, which does not usually include those who will be looking at what we have done. We want to prepare on our own first. To have a thorough proposal.



This is the Swedish portal e-health services, 1177 which we are not pleased with. We are thinking that we will redesign it.

Ester Hedberg

Was that your assignment?

Stefan Johansson

No, we just took it upon ourselves. Because they are not interested. They are happy with the way it is.

Ester Hedberg

You usually get paid for what you do. Do you when you do something like this?

Stefan Johansson

Yes, because this is part of a research project called CoDeAc. Here we are discussing how we think the website should work. We have designers who give it a makeover based on what we say. We eventually developed this prototype. Here, we can contribute to how environments like this should look.

I will now show you what a group working in the Digi-JAG project is doing. The project includes participants with moderate developmental disabilities. These people have a little harder time to read and write. Here we need to have a bit more structure in how we discuss things.

In the previous example, you request to speak and do so kind of like when sitting around a table and raising your hand. It works well.

Here we have another method for passing the speaking baton. It is one of the things that has



been a bit more difficult in the digital world. But even in this case, we have included all participants in digital meetings.

What we are talking about here is what it is like to read. What constitutes a nice, cozy reading experience? I will run the film so you can see for yourself.

Video voice participant 1

It is when I lie down on the couch. It is just so comfy there. It is so comfy that I just fall asleep when I listen to that book.

Video voice Stefan

If you fall asleep, can you easily find where you left off?

Video voice participant 1

No, I am left wondering where I left off. I am not really sure.

Video voice Stefan

Thank you! Let us spin the wheel.

Stefan Johansson

This is a way of deciding who takes the floor to speak.

Video voice participant 2

Knock it off!

Video voice participant 3

You knock if off!



Video voice participant 2

Geez!

Video voice program Susanne.

Stefan Johansson Now Susanne is in focus.

Video voice Stefan Where do you like to read Susanne?

Stefan Johansson There are about 12 people participating in the discussion. Each of them gets to tell what a cozy reading experience is to them. This provides structure. A lot of people in this group think this is good. You get your time to talk and the others know when they need to be quiet.

Ester Hedberg How long can a workshop take?

Stefan Johansson They are usually 1 and 1/2 hours with a fifteen minute break.

Ester Hedberg That is the digital workshops. Let us watch a clip from an in-person workshop we held before the pandemic. They can be longer. No?

Stefan Johansson Yes. You can also run longer digital activities. But you need to take breaks. Sometimes we have a session before lunch and a session after lunch so you get a nice long break.

Here, we are working with texts. Here is an example of when we invited the authors of the texts. Here, we are working with official texts. We get the texts in advance. Then we review them in



a structured way. The participants have voting cards.

We have identified things that must be included for it to be a good text. Both in terms of layout and how it is formulated. And then we go through and critically review the texts. We cast the text on a large screen. And we discuss, text by text and give them a grade. Each requirement we identified gets a grade. Has that part of the text passed or failed? Then you can summarize the results.

And these are all the people who were in this workshop. Here, we also worked in groups. We split up into smaller groups. Here, you see people from places like the Tax Authority and Social Insurance Agency.

When we present it for the first time they sit and listen. Then we all sit together and they get to tell us what they were thinking when they heard us talk about the texts. They often discover that they can really improve their texts. We usually have fun discussions. Sometimes they even return home with a complete, new suggestion. Many times we are able to contribute so much that they are able to rewrite their texts on site. Or at least parts of their texts on site.

Ester Hedberg

You mentioned that they are on your payroll. Are all participants compensated?



Stefan Johansson Yes, we feel it is important. They are contributing their knowledge. And everyone else who does that gets paid to do it. So those contributing this knowledge should also be.

We have a collective agreement and insurance. They are paid and become tax payers. It is the first time for many of the participants. They have never worked before. And have never received a payslip. Which is pretty nice.

We feel it is important to upgrade this competency

Ester Hedberg What pitfalls should we look out for?

Stefan Johansson Make sure you do not squeeze too much into one workshop. It is better to split it up into more than one. So you have time to talk through the problems. I think that is what is most important. So you do not get stressed.

And then it is a matter of planning around the activity. So there is a clear agenda. There are times to be kept. There are breaks. And there are a lot of people who can help if the technology acts up, if you are running it digitally.

And eating a good meal and getting together. And breaks are essential for regaining energy.

Ester Hedberg So it is quite a social event too?

Stefan Johansson Yes. We had a Christmas party on Zoom last week. We enjoyed our coffees together and talked about how the year has been.



We have also had these in the summer too when not much is happening.

At such times, some people become isolated and feel alone. So we also try to make it a social activity. That is how we show that we really care about each other in this association. It is more than just an activity.

Ester Hedberg

So if you were to summarize what is the most important thing to think about in your efforts to be involved and have influence?

Stefan Johansson

To be part of a group. To take space. Or say that you want to be involved and make an impact. That you have ideas and are constructive. We try to avoid whining and yelling at those we feel have done a poor job. That is a bad way to get started. So being positive and constructive.

We have a word, conviviality. It is about wanting the best for others. There needs to be warmth in what you do. And there needs to be good intention. And we just assume that the people we work with want to improve. It is a nice word. It usually needs to be explained before it is understood.

Ester Hedberg

Thank you Stefan!

Stefan Johansson

You are welcome!

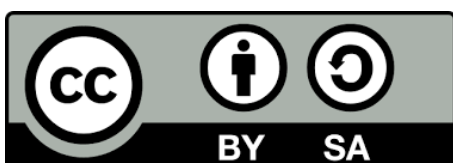


Voice 2

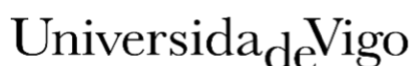
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