The lunch business industry in Sweden and Denmark

- A comparative study

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Master of Science Thesis
Stockholm, Sweden 2012
The lunch restaurant business in Denmark and Sweden – a comparative study

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Master of Science Thesis INDEK 2012:46

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Approved
2011-June-13

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Abstract

As the competition for talented workers increases fringe benefits are becoming an increasing part of the salary package. A token of this, could be the lunch industry, which has emerged in Denmark and Sweden as a way of attracting and retain skilled staff. Despite the similarities between the two countries, different business models dominate the lunch industries in the respective markets. This study displays some fundamental differences in the lunch habits, which are established from childhood experiences. All Swedish schoolchildren receive a free lunch consisting of a hot meal served as a buffet in big dining halls. Danish schoolchildren carry cold packed lunch bags from home, consisting primarily of rye bread and cold cuts. As a result of these experiences Swedes prefer hot meals for lunch throughout their lives, while Danes gladly eat their cold rye bread. Nonetheless, the dominating business model, within the Danish lunch industry, offers workers hot lunches served as buffets, while the common Swedish model requires workers to visit lunch restaurants. Alternatively, lunch can be delivered, but then it is served as single portions or cold/frozen and has to be heated. According to the results of this study there are no fundamental differences within the content or focus areas of the business models in the two countries and the key success factors are the same. The Swedish lunch models are not likely to be accepted in Denmark, due to the Danish population’s attitude towards frozen ready meals and that buffets makes single portions superfluous. On the other hand, the commonly applied Danish model seems to be a good fit with the Swedish culture, hence an entrepreneurial opportunity.

Keywords: Comparative study, lunch restaurant, business model, lunch, food, Denmark and Sweden, lunch habits, fringe benefit.
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1. Introduction

The foundation of future (economic) prosperity lies within the field of entrepreneurship (Callejon & Segarra, 1999; Audretsch & Keilbach, 2004; Bosma, Stam, & Schutjens, 2011a; Schumpeter, 1942). Entrepreneurship originates from innovation, which takes its point of departure in human’s ability to focus and be creative (Ward, 2004; Adriana & Constantin, 2010; Ko & Butler, 2007). These skills are, among others, used to identify and develop business opportunities (Baron R. A., 2006; Vesalainen & Pihkala, 1999) where the development of a sustainable business model is a key ingredient (Morris, Schindehutteb, & Allenc, 2005). In order for human’s to develop and acquire these cognitive skills, food is a must. The lack or insecurity of food affects the development of these skills negatively (Jyoti, Frongillo, & Jones, 2005). Furthermore, research has shown that the development of these cognitive skills can be stimulated through a healthy diet (Pieper & Whaley, 2011), and since lunch is most people’s only food intake during their workday it becomes an important and interesting field of study, at least in the eyes of the author. Several studies involving lunch have been carried out with school children, all indicating improved academic and cognitive performance (Belota & James, 2011; Nelson, 2011; Feinstein, 2006), thus improved ability to innovate and develop businesses. The scope of this paper is not concerning the nutritional elements of lunch, nor its effect on cognitive skills and innovation, but the industry that has emerged around lunchtime at workplaces. This industry was chosen since it is relatively new, with several interesting business models, and the fact that it is growing (see below). Furthermore, it has the potential to effect innovation/interpreneurship1 within the existing companies, as stated above.

2. Problem and purpose

In general, focus on eating habits has increased during the recent years in both Denmark and Sweden (Mikkelsen, et al., 2004). The benefit business, including the lunch industry (Matpåjobbet, 2012; Nielsen, 2008), is growing, and is expected to keep growing in both Denmark and Sweden (Randstad, 2011). The benefit business had its general breakthrough at the beginning of the economic boom at the start of the 21st century. Companies in Denmark, and in the Western world in general, fought to keep and attract skilled personnel (Duggan, 2011; Stevnhoved, 2006). One way of doing this was to offer the employees fringe benefits (Motes, 2012). A now common benefit in Denmark, which arose in this period, is employer paid or partly paid lunch. The common business model is lunch served as a delivery buffet directly at the ordering company (examples of companies in Denmark which apply such a model are: frokost.dk, frokostkokken.dk, maaltidet.dk etc.) (Danielsen, 2010).

In Sweden, a number of business models exist in the area of lunch benefits. The common Danish model, as described above, does not exist, or companies operating in Sweden, that apply this model, has not been detected during the research for this thesis. The most common lunch business models found in Sweden are: (1) coupons that employees buy from their employer with tax reduction, and use as payment in restaurants (Edenred, 2012). (2) Delivery of ready-made frozen food that workers can buy with a tax reduction as well (Matpåjobbet, 2012). (3) Delivery of lunch as single dishes from different restaurants (gastroni.se, aptit.se). Business model number one is the oldest one and has existed in Sweden for more than 25 years.

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1 Interpreneurship is entrepreneurship when it happens within an existing company (Tidd & Bessant, 2009).
Given the Scandinavian region’s close relations and similarities (Lindell & Arvonen, 1997; Ylalahti, 1999) the countries first look to their neighbours, when expanding business beyond their native market (Norden, 2011, s. 111). One would think that companies within the lunch industry would have done the same, however, this has not been the case and so, the objective of this study is a market comparison in order to identify why this has not happened. The research question, and purpose of this thesis, is to identify: Why have the Danish and the Swedish lunch business models, respectively not been introduced into the other country? In order to answer this question, the following two elements, proposed as research questions, will be subjected to research.

1. What are the fundamental values within the Danish and the Swedish lunch habits?

   - The answer to this question will provide knowledge of how the two cultures perceive their lunch. The expression “fundamental values” covers a cultural understanding of the genesis of lunch behaviour, habits and favours. This element was chosen after reading Johansson, et al. (2009), who states that food and eating are deeply embedded in culture.

2. What is the key success factors of the business models applied in the lunch industry in Denmark and Sweden respectively?

   - The answer to this question will display possible differences and similarities in the way of doing business within the two countries lunch industries.

The word and elements of a business model can vary from one person to another (Morris, Schindehutteb, & Allenc, 2005), thus to create a common understanding the author refers to the work of Alexander Osterwalder and Yves Pigneur (2009). This model was chosen since it is one of the most popular among scholars (Kuparinen, 2012). They identify nine main categories (Value proposition, Customer relationships, channels, customer segments, key activities, key resources, key partners, cost structure and revenue streams), which will underlie the second research question.

3. Delimitation

In order to ensure a more comparable study this paper will concentrate its empirical findings on the capitals of the two countries. This will be done in order to minimize potential demographic and market issues.

4. Frame of reference

Comparative research in general aims at developing concepts and generalizations based on the identified similarities and differences among the social entities being compared (Lewis-Beck, Bryman, & Liao, 2004, s. 152). Lewis-Beck, Bryman, & Liao furthermore argue, that the primary scientific objective of comparative research is not theory testing, per se, but concept formation, elaboration and refinement (2004, s. 150). Comparative research is often defined by its focus on phenomena that are of interest because they are rare, meaning a small number of N, which gives the comparative research a strong inductive component (Lewis-Beck, Bryman, & Liao, 2004, s. 149). Cross-national research or analysis is a form of comparative research, which concentrates on two or more countries (Hantrais & Mangen, 1996, s. 1).
Scrutiny of the existing literature on comparative cross-national research suggest that there is no single way to construct such research as different scientists use different approaches depending on the compared subject. This assertion is supported by Hantrais & Mangen (2007), two of the leading scientists in the field of cross-national comparative research, who state: “There is no single recipe, or one best way, for carrying out cross-national comparisons”. In their book *Cross-National Research Methodology & Practice* (2007), they have gathered articles discussing the main problematic areas within this type of research. The ideas and conclusions of this book provide the theoretical foundation of this paper.

5. Method

At the very beginning of this work, several methodologies where considered, but as soon as the research objective stood clear, a comparative study seemed to be the only logical choice. Due to the limited timeframe of this study a wide and hypothesis-based quantitative survey were rejected, and as a result of this, this study is meant to be interpretive and case study based.

As described in the section above there is no “how to” manual for conducting comparative research. Hence, the author initially divided his research into two stages. (1) The objective of the first stage was to research, identify and describe lunch habits within the two countries. (2) The intention of the second stage was to identify the content of different business models within the lunch industry in the two countries.

In order to achieve an extensive knowledge within lunch habits and business, a thorough literature review, and several case studies (Leedy & Omrod, 2001), have been conducted. Due to the explorative intentions of the study (research questions one and two) a qualitative approach (Flick, 2009; Lockyer, 2008) inspired by semi-structured interviews (Ayres, 2008; Bernard, 2006) was chosen. According to the Ayres (2008) and Bernard (2006), the semi-structured approach, allows the interviews to be more flexible and also permitting new questions and thoughts to be brought up during the interview, as a result of the communication between interviewer and respondent. A number of open-ended questions were to be used with the purpose of ensuring the respondents explicit view about the investigated subject.

The first section of the results contains a literature review in order to identify and describe the fundamental values within lunch habits. This review contains official documents and studies from both national and Nordic institutions, as well as research from professional organizations and studies by several scholars and scientists. The second section of the results contains several case study interviews with leading actors within the lunch business industry. Prior to these interviews a manual was developed (covering research question number two) to ensure focus on the specific subject. This template was constructed on the basis of the Business Model Canvas (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2009), with the intention of getting a thorough understanding of the business models of the current actors, in order to identify the key success factors of the industry. The prepared questions were open in form and gave the respondents the opportunity to put forward their answers in an explicit manner. The interview manual was first written in English, since the Business Model Canvas, on which the questions are based is in English. Furthermore, the business terms used by the model are widely known in the two countries and do not have direct translations, let alone Scandinavian names. However, when conducting the interviews, the questions were asked in Swedish when the research subject was Swedish, and asked in Danish when the subject was Danish - this approach was selected, following the recommendations of Lawrence (1988).

The interview candidates were found using the Internet and the search engine Google, searching for words like “lunch”, “frokostordning” etc. The candidates in Denmark, where
found after a specific search on the words: “frokost ordning københavn”\textsuperscript{2}. The first 4 hits were initially chosen and contacted. These companies had different sizes, and were found to give a representative picture of the business in the Copenhagen area. Additionally, these searches unveiled a Danish company called Frokost.dk whose business model is a mix between the common Danish one (buffet) and the earlier described 3rd Swedish one (delivery from different restaurants). This company was contacted as well. After these interviews, where one of the companies did not want to participate, the answers were so similar; that the author felt no additional data was needed, and so, no more interviews were conducted in Denmark.

The Swedish candidates initially chosen, were the ones mentioned as examples in the problem and purpose section. Since scrutiny in the Internet search did not reveal any more companies engaged in the lunch industry within the Stockholm area, no more interviews were conducted.

All of the interviewees (4 Danish and 4 Swedish) had higher-level positions in their respective companies, and were often the operating managers, the companies CEOs, or the owners themselves. A complete designation of occupation can be found in the interview resume in the appendix.

5.2 Methodological considerations

A game-changing hurdle arose during the initial telephone calls. When candidates became aware of the intention to interview them on their business plan/model, reluctance became obvious. It seemed, that the word business plan/model triggered this reaction. The solution to this problem was a rewrite of the interview manual concealing the business model questions in more acceptable, less alarming ones. The final, amended version of the interview manual can be found in the appendix.

The initial plan was to conduct face-to-face interviews with Stockholm candidates, and telephone interviews with the Danish candidates. The reason for this dissimilar approach was the authors profound believe in increased interaction when communicating face-to-face and the time and economic limitation of the project. However, when trying to set up face-to-face interviews in Stockholm, the timetables of the candidates greatly complicated such meetings, and finally all interviews were done by telephone. This choice might decrease the level of interaction, and thereby the quality of the interviews, but on the other hand, it increases the comparability between the interviews conducted in the two countries.

6. Results

As described in the method, this section is divided into two parts. The first part contains a review of the lunch habits within the two countries and the second part describes the content of different business models of different actors within the two examined countries.

6.1 Lunch habits

Johansson, et al. (2009) concluded that food and eating are deeply embedded in culture.

\textsuperscript{2}“Lunch solution Copenhagen” in Danish - http://www.google.com/search?q=frokost+ordning+k%C3%B8benhavn&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&aq=t&rls=org.mozilla:da:official&client=firefox-a
People’s food habits e.g. choice of food, eating regularity, nutritional awareness etc. is to a great extend a result of their childhood experiences (Branen & Fletcher, 1999; Kelder, Perry, Klepp, & Lytle, 1994; Cooke, 2007). Johansson, et al. (2009) furthermore discovered similarities as well as differences in the Nordic way of organising lunch for children. All Swedish school children have, since 1946 (Persson Osowski, Göranzon, & Fjellström, 2010), been served a hot meal, fresh salad, bread, milk and/or water, paid by the government, while Danish children carry a packed lunch prepared at home. Johansson, et al. (2009) points out pros and cons for both the Danish and the Swedish model. The legal requirement ensures that Swedish students get a healthy lunch, which is strictly a parental assignment in the Danish model. On the other hand, since Danish children might have greater influence on their packed lunches, possibly being able to negotiate with their parents and/or making it themselves, ought to guarantee they eat it all, hence a full and satisfied child, with learning ability in top.

In Sweden the school lunch is seen as a part of the educational system, with aims such as teaching students healthy eating habits and consideration for others (e.g. queuing, not leaving a mess, waiting for their turn etc.) (Johansson, et al., 2009). According to Swedish law, the school lunches have to be nutritionally balanced3, and it is recommended that the schools offer two alternatives plus one vegetarian dish (National Food Administration, 2007). Persson Osowski, Göranzon, & Fjellström (2010) and Gullberg (2006) state that school lunch is embedded, and seen as a norm, in the contemporary Swedish society.

In Denmark, the Danish school children get their midday food from a packed lunch they carry from home (Mikkelsen, et al., 2004). The typical content of the traditional packed lunch is: rye bread with cold cuts. The bread is normally spread with butter, wrapped in greaseproof paper and placed in a hard lunch box, stored and eaten cold. In more recent times, some fingerfoods have been added to the standard Danish lunch (Lagnevik, Lindén, Nyberg, Jørgensen, Mikkelsen, & Thorsen, 2009, s. 55). Søren Smidt (2005) and Lisbeth Haastrup (2005) argues that the lunch box symbolises specific family’s values, and that it is a little piece of “mom and dad”, that the children brings to the institution. In this perspective they claim that others (friends, pedagogues etc.) attitude and saying concerning ones lunch box is very important, since it represents ones family (Smidt, 2005, s. 232). As in Sweden, the lunch breaks in Danish schools are held collectively, under specific rules of order, decided by the specific institution, or the teacher present during the meal (Haastrup, 2005). However, when Swedish children eat collectively across year groups and classes, Danish children most often stay in their classroom and eat with their classmates. According to Haastrup (2005) the Danish way of organising school lunch is grounded in the attitude towards responsibility of, and between, the state and the individual/family.

A Swedish study on regular working adults lunch behaviour, displayed that more Swedes perceive the lunch as being important compared to breakfast and dinner (Lunchfrämjandet, 2007). A study from 2010 reports that the lunch breaks are getting shorter, and that the ones with the shortest break often eats alone, which makes one less happy then when eating with colleagues (Lunchfrämjandet, 2010). Furthermore, this study shows that 31% eats 3-5 lunches a week in a staff/lunch restaurant. This number increases to over 50% if it is one lunch or more a week. However, the most common habit is still to bring a lunch box from home (44% does that 3-5 times a week). In a study by Nyberg (2009) approximately 50% of the respondents indicated that they eat hot lunch at least 3-4 times a week, and another study states that Swedes traditionally prefer a hot meal for lunch (Prim, 2007, s. 25). Prim (2007)

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3 http://www.slv.se/sv/grupp1/Mat-och-naring/Maltider-i-varda-skola-omsorg/Sklmaltider/Krav-pa-naringsriktiga-skolluncher-i-nya-skollagen/
did a doctoral thesis on ready meals from the Swedish consumers perspective and found that microwave ovens and ready meals are strongly connected in the mind of the consumers. Only 8% of her sample did not have access to a microwave oven at work/school – 20% did not have one at home. 70% agreed that ready meals are tasty, have improved and are sufficiently filling. 20% perceived ready meals as unhealthy. Furthermore, Prims (2007) study connected ready meals with stress and time pressure. Ready meals where most commonly eaten at home for dinner, or at work for lunch - 49% eats at least one ready meal a week (Prim, 2007). Finally a study claims that people want to eat healthier but, due to high prices, they do not do so, and that people who eat a healthy lunch are more inclined to obtain a healthy way of living in general. (Lunchfrämjandet, 2010)

According to Lassen, Hansen, & Trolle (2006) the typical food selection in Danish company canteens, consist of cold cuts, a variation of bread, sandwich, salad and one hot dish. Another study indicates that the most frequently served dishes are (in order) salad, a warm dish, open sandwich (Danish smørrebrød), a hot dish, and finally sandwiches (Mikkelsen, et al., 2004). A research paper from 1995 states that the percentage of Danes, eating lunch at least four times a week, in the age between 25-64, are 76,6% (Fødevaredirektoratet, 1995). A more recent study finds that 59% prepare a packed lunch, at least every second day and 41% prepare it five times a week (Landbrug og Fødevarer af Synovate, 2010). Furthermore, this report argues that the number of alternatives are the greatest hazard to the packed lunch, thus, the amount of packed lunches are smaller in Copenhagen then any other place in Denmark. Finally the study asked the respondents how their packed lunch habits have evolved, and the result was that 48% have been making fewer packed lunches throughout the year prior to the research. This tendency is further being confirmed by a report, which documents an increased use of canteen facilities among younger people (19-34 Years) (Groth, Sørensen, Biltoft-Jensen, Matthiessen, Kørup, & Fagt, 2009). According to this study 21% of the Danes eat lunch in a canteen five times a week. 37% eat at least one lunch a week in a canteen (Groth, Sørensen, Biltoft-Jensen, Matthiessen, Kørup, & Fagt, 2009). Their study further revealed, that only 17% eat at least one ready meal a week at home. The relatively low number, compared to Sweden, are being explained by prioritizing of home cooked meals and a desire for fresh ingredients (Groth, Sørensen, Biltoft-Jensen, Matthiessen, Kørup, & Fagt, 2009). Research claims that 93% of the Danes think that work canteens should make healthy food with many vegetables (Lagnevik, Lindén, Nyberg, Jørgensen, Mikkelsen, & Thorsen, 2009), and that 57% find it important that the packed lunch is healthy (Landbrug og Fødevarer af Synovate, 2010).

As mentioned in the introduction, Swedes that want to enjoy lunch with tax reduction have two choices. Either they can purchase Rikskuponger, which is done by more than 165.000 people (ticketrikskuponger, 2010), or they can purchase ready-made frozen at their workplace, which is done by more than 75.000 people (Olson, 2012) (Skatteverket, 2012). In Denmark the only way to obtain tax benefits are through the canteen solution (Skat, 2012), which a study shows that 31% of companies with more than 10 employees offers (Rambøll Management, 2005).

### 6.2 Business model interviews

Due to the rewritten interview manual, the resume of the interview answers given below is subjected to a great deal of interpretation by the author of this paper.

The Danish lunch companies are focusing on serving healthy and fresh made food to work staff. Their offered value propositions could be described as making sure that staff in
customer companies are getting feed well during their workday in order for these to contribute their utmost. The Swedish companies’ answers are very similar, with the addition that they see themselves as a burden easier and a way of increasing efficiency.

According to the interviewed companies, in both countries, a typical customer cannot be described as they have all kinds in their portfolio – both regarding industry and number of employees as well as type of work performed etc.. However, the tendency to use lunch companies, such as the interviewed, seems greater among academic heavy companies than manufacturers. This tendency is particularly valid among the Swedish companies applying business model number three. Furthermore, several of the respondents claim that artisan companies and shops do not use this kind of services do to odd working hours and lack of facilities, such as a common eating area/room.

All respondents state customer relationship as a key factor within this industry. They all have regular mail and telephone correspondence, and several have developed systems to track, document and analyse customer satisfaction regarding variation, quality, delivery etc.

Regarding accretion of new customers, all interviews indicate that it is generally the lunch companies that seek up the potential customers rather than customers coming to them. Internet advertising (google adwords), companies/employees network, references, booking of sales meetings etc. are all mentioned as ways of getting new customers. As described above, a typical customer does not exist, and therefore a typical customer profile cannot be made or used when segmenting the market. One company reported that they mainly look at companies, which had their physical location close to already existing customers, so that transportation cost could be divided on a larger customer group. Another company said, that they mainly targeted companies that already had a lunch arrangement but with a different company. The tendency for lunch companies to seek up customers seemed stronger in Sweden than in Denmark. One Swedish interviewee even said: “The customers never come to us, we always contact them”. This interviewee further stressed, that in his point of view, this was connected with a non-existing tradition of Swedish companies taking care of their employee’s lunch.

When asked about preferences and patterns within the customer’s choice of food based on industry, type of work or education etc., no general tendencies were observed, although, they all greatly stressed the importance of variation. All respondents underlined the fact that physical hard work requires more energy/food than sitting down in front of a computer all day, and that younger people and men tend to eat more than older people and women. Furthermore, some Danish lunch companies said that they saw a small trend among some academic intensive companies to order a little more sophisticated food e.g. sushi or exotic dishes but this was not a general picture. One of the Swedish interviewees stated some food ordering differences connected to which area of Stockholm city their customer’s office was located in.

The typical Danish lunch buffet offering consists of a hot dish, some salads, cold cuts and different kinds of bread incl. butter.

Regarding ecology and health issues some respondents reported dissimilarities between what was spoken out loud and what the customers actually wanted, or maybe wanted to pay for. Most of the interviewees found their possibility of affecting the lunch market and behaviour, in their respective countries, to be very limited. In general, they said that they just followed the market needs and trends, which are controlled by the customers.

It is a general opinion, in both countries, that one of the most important activities, if not the most important, is the connection and communication with the customers. Some companies do this in a very organised way e.g. week- or monthly questionnaire among the customers employees, in order to constantly adjust and optimize the offered product. Other companies keep the contact more casual, although still frequent, with face-to-face meetings or telephone calls focusing on a personal relation with their customers. Most often, however, the bigger pattern is to ask the customers about their preferences and satisfaction with the offered products.
players perform both structured and un-structured customer surveys frequently. The companies applying a business model where they do not make the food themselves state communication with their suppliers to be vital as well.

Regarding the question on how the different companies differentiate themselves, the answers can be summed up in two words: variation and service. A few companies mentioned their it-systems as well, but this was just seen an instrument to reach service and food variation.

If the respondents pointed out any partnerships, which far from all did, it was mainly that with their respectively suppliers. As described above, this depended to a large extend on which business model that the particular company applied. One Swedish company told about a co-operation with a branch organisation of restaurant owners, and one Danish company, about them being part of an educational program.

When the respondents where asked about what they found to be most important to succeed in their industry they all had quite similar answers. The element mentioned most often was variation. The interviewees stated that this element is crucial if one wanted to survive in the business, and that selection variation and menu planning have to be implemented with great diligence. Delivery and logistics was another important element that especially Swedish operators mentioned several times. A general theme, which goes for almost any business, was customer focus e.g. observing and constantly identifying customer needs and wants in order to adjust the product. Food quality and nutritional balance were mentioned a few times as well.

7. Analysis

The following section contains an analysis of the findings in the result section.

7.1 Lunch habits analysis

A person’s food habits are greatly affected by ones childhood experiences. In Sweden the free school lunch for everyone is embedded in the society and is seen as part of the educational system. This could very well be the reason for most grown-up swedes to perceive the lunch as important compared to breakfast and dinner. Furthermore, the school tradition of hot lunch is carried into the adult life, as most Swedes prefer to eat a hot meal for lunch. Contrary to this, most Danes eat the lunch cold and prefer rye bread open sandwiches, as they know them from childhood, school, work and the Danish culture/society in general. However, it seems that the trend is moving away from packed lunches. The packed lunch symbolises a little piece of “family/mom and dad”. The fact that Swedes are served their school lunch in a canteen, thus get used to a food serving environment, could be the explanation for more Swedes to choose restaurant/staff canteens compared to Danes. It seems that Swedes have a more positive attitude towards ready meals than Danes, in general. The populations of both countries seem to desire a healthy and nutritional lunch. Finally, similar tax reduction is possible in both countries, and does by such, not influence the comparison of lunch eating habits. The tax benefit in both countries is directed at eating in restaurants/canteens, hence the number of people choosing the option might be lower, than if the reduction was not available.

7.2 Interview analysis

The lunch industries, in the two examined countries, appear quite similar at the first glance. This thought is confirmed by the interviews in this study. Although there may be differences in the applied business models, the basic content and areas of importance are more or less the same.
Due to the rewrite of the interview manual it was difficult to get exact answers on the interviewed companies’ value propositions. However, the answers circulated around the convenience of delivery of healthy food. Regarding customer segmentation, a typical customer could not be described in neither of the two countries, nor in any of the interviewed companies. Nonetheless, the use of lunch companies seemed more widespread among academic companies in both countries. Concerning the act of attracting new customers, no differences were reported between the two countries. Both used direct and indirect channels, such as sales persons calling potential customers, and different kinds of marketing and commercials e.g. Google adwords.

All respondents agreed that customer relationship is an essential element if one wants to succeed in the lunch business industry. They all mentioned building, maintaining and developing customer relationships as key activities. However, the way of doing this depends more on the particular lunch company than on applied business model or operating country. Furthermore, most companies regarded their way of doing this as one of their key resources. Some respondents referred to advanced IT-systems and structured processes in their communication and partnership with the customers, and other, often smaller companies, told about occasional telephone calls and sporadic questionnaires. Another key resource mentioned, by all respondents, were the ability to vary the offered solution. Supplier partnerships were declared important, but only by the companies that apply a business model, where these play an essential role e.g. those companies that bought the food from independent restaurants. The key success factors emphasised by the respondents did not differ between the countries or applied business model. Variation, delivery and logistics, customer focus, and quality were identified as the four most important elements if one wants to succeed in the lunch business industry in Sweden or Denmark.

8. Conclusion

From the day Swedes begin in school they get used to hot meals for dinner. Furthermore, they get accustomed to a restaurant/canteen environment when dining for lunch. These early life experiences seems to deeply affect the habits of most Swedish people, as the traditions of restaurant visits and hot meals for lunch are continued throughout, at least, their work life. The fact that many Swedes prefer to eat, at least, some of their lunches in a restaurant, have led to the existence of a rather large lunch restaurant industry compared to Denmark. The Danish children grow up with a home packed lunch in their school bags, containing rye bread and cold cuts. A tradition, which many of them brings into their adult life. However, the traditional Danish way of lunching got heavily influenced by the breakthrough of the lunch business industry, which came about with the economic boom in the start of the 21st century. A still increasing number of Danish companies incorporate a lunch arrangement in their daily activities.

The Swedish tradition of eating ones lunch in a restaurant was picked, and further developed, by Edenred, the company who offers “Rikskuponger”, back in 1985. Today, one of their greatest strengths is their network as such a business model requires a number of restaurants to participate and accept their payment method, e.g. coupons, in order to function properly. As the lunch restaurant industry, known from Sweden, virtually does not exist in Denmark, such a business model, as the one applied by Edented, would be very difficult to implement in Denmark, which probably is the reason why this have not been done.

The general Danish attitude towards ready-made meals is properly the reason why the second Swedish business model, with delivery of frozen ready-made food, has not been introduced on the Danish market. This model might, however, work if the delivered food is fresh instead of frozen, as the Danes are used to eat cold lunch.
The third Swedish business model, with delivery of lunch as single dishes from different restaurants, becomes kind of superfluous when compared to the common Danish business model of buffet delivery, or at least when compared to the business model of frokost.dk, where the customer can choose between a number of kitchens/restaurants and change this as often as one would wish to.

At first sight the commonly applied business model of buffet delivery in Denmark, seems to fit better with the Swedish society and tradition, as the hot lunch meal served as a buffet is more embedded in the Swedish than in the Danish culture due to the childhood experiences in school.

When examining the actors of the lunch business industry in the two countries, no major differences in the content of the business models were found. Furthermore, the same four key success factors were identified in both countries (Variation, delivery and logistics, customer focus, and quality). Thus, this study shows no obvious explanation to why this business model has not been introduced into the Swedish market.

9. Future research

Before rushing in and founding a company with this business model in Sweden, further research into preferences of the Swedish population’s lunch habits is advisable as this could enlighten potential problematic areas, and perhaps provide a more detailed explanation to why this model have not been introduced earlier. Additionally, a thorough study of Swedish law and regulations could add other important elements, and last but not least a survey of the potential customers (being companies, if the Danish business model if followed accurately) interest would be crucial to a potential business.

10. Source of error

In the following section the author will try to describe a number of the potential errors that have been made throughout this paper.

The section on lunch habits is based on a large number of studies by several researchers and scholars. Since these studies differ in their design, number of respondents and research methodology, their results and conclusions may not be summed up or compiled as it has been done, and their level of representativeness might undermine the conclusions made in this paper.

The empirical part of this study contains a number of potential errors as well. The research relies on a number of interviews that might be too small to justify the conclusions. Furthermore, the rewrite of the interview manual added a substantial veracity hazard as the new questions might not trigger an answer to the element wished for, and that the answers were subjected to the author’s interpretation. The last of the major possible errors, which will be accounted for here, were the interviews themselves, where the interview technique and language differences (in Sweden) might have biased or triggered uncompleted answers.
11. References


Olson, S. (den 20 Marts 2012). How many consumers do you have. (L. Tindbæk, Intervjuare)


12. Appendix

12.1 Rewritten interview manual

This amended version of the interview manual laid the foundation for the telephone interviews. The underlined texts were the specific subjects that the questions in bold were supposed to illuminate. Given the fact that a semi-structured interview method was used, additional questions were asked depending on the respondent’s answers. The additional questions, the ones in parenthesis, were help questions with the purpose of guiding the interviewee in the right direction. As stated above, the manual was translated into Swedish when Goddag, mit navn er Lasse Tindbæk. Jeg er i øjeblikket i gang med min Master thesis – en sammenligningsstudie mellem Danmark og Sverige. I den forbindelse vil jeg gerne have lov til at stille jeres virksomhed nogle spørgsmål, har du 10 min? Formålet med spørgsmålene/studiet, er at få et bedre overblik over frokost industrien. Spørgsmålene følger Osterwalders Business Model Canvas, og hvis du ikke ønsker, eller kan svare på et specifikt spørgsmål, er du naturligvis velkommen til at sige pas.

Value proposition:
1. Hvis du skulle prøve at definere jeres virksomhedsrolle i samfundet, hvordan ser du så den? (Hvad er det i bidrager med?)
Customer relationships:
2. Hvem er jeres kunder typisk? (Hvem har sådan frokost ordninger?)
3. Hvordan foregår den typiske ny-kunde proces (kontakter i dem eller kontakter de jer)?
4a. Hvad laver i for mad?
4b. Hvad vil folk gerne have?
4c. Er der forskel på brancher (Banker vil hellere have fisk etc.)?
5. Hvordan er jeres muligheder for at påvirke markedet og frokoster i DK (Hvor store er i)?
Channels: Hvordan sælger i? opsøgende salg eller via internet etc.? Uddybelse af spørgsmål 3
Customer segments: Segmenterer I jeres kunder? Hvis I gør, hvordan gør I så det? Uddybelse af spørgsmål 4c
Key activities: Hvilke aktiviteter udfører i? og hvilke er de vigtigste?
6. Hvad skulle du beskrive som jeres vigtigste aktiviteter (Madlavningen, går jeg ud fra, men ellers… Kontakt med leverandører, kontakt med kunder, egen innovation, spørgeskemaer etc.)?
Key resources:
7. Hvordan differentierer i jer?
Key partners:
8. Har i nogen samarbejdspartners og hvad går samarbejdet ud på? (Deltager I i nogen branche organisationer, udvikling med Universiteter/kokkeskoler, jeres kunder, jeres leverandører)
Key success factors:
9. Hvad skal man være dygtig til for at lykkes i jeres branche?

12.2 Resume of the interview

Below the reader can find all the answers from the semi-structured interviews. The answers are written in Danish, since this is the native language of the author and at least half of the answers where given in this language.

1. Vi leverer mad til foretag og privatpersoner.
   Behov blandt virksomheder, der skal bespise medarbejdere. Sundt og nærende. Vi har 32-34 medarbejdere, så ansvaret for dem som arbejdsgiver er også vigtigt.
Vi gør hverdagen lettere for arbejdende mennesker. Vi er en service når mennesker behøver mad på sine møder. Vi er et compliment.
Vores forretningsside er helt i samfundet ånd – sikre arbejdende mennesker mad 24 timer i døgnet.

Virksomhed som skal generere overskud til ejere, jobskabende og vækst. Caterbranchen er en niche.

Sund og frisk mad til firmaer og selskaber.


Vi har en meget gennemgigt virksomhed, vi tilfredsstiller et behov. De ansatte som har frokost ordning gennem os, de kan vælger mellem mange køkkener. Rating systemet, gør at folk altid skal være på top. Kunderne kan teste lidt af hvert, og finde de 5-6 køkkener de kan lide.

2.

Nogen som arbejder på et kontor (Bank, finans, advokat, it, produktion). De tænker ikke så meget på prisen, derfor er de vores primære kunder. Kvalitet kontrol en gang om måneden, ved at ringe til udvalgte kunder, som har handlet den udvalgte dag, og hører dem hvad de synes om maden og leverancen.


Alle som er i arbejde, men vi har dog indsnævret os til folk som arbejder i tjenestebranchen. Alle som arbejder på kontor, da man (alle) ansatte skal have kort, for at benytte vores produkt.


Ingen segment profil, har både større internationale firmaer og små lagere, Alt - fra store koncerner til en-mands-virksomheder. Ingen specielbrancher heller lign. Dem som ikke er vores kunder, er virksomheder som har egen kantine/restaurant.


3.

Både opsøgende salg, i form af sælgere som kører ud, og virksomheder som finder os via nettet, samt referencer eller anden markedsføring (eks. skriftlige reklamer osv.)

Både opsøgende salg og anbefalinger. Mange som søger via nettet. Kunderne som anvender os, er meget hurtige på internettet, og finder os oftest her.

Det er altid os, som henvender sig til kunderne, ingen kommer til os. Dette skyldes, at der ikke er tradition for at virksomheder skal stå for de ansattes frokost, derimod er det Alment opfattet af virksomheder står for kaffe.

Internet, opsøgende salg (Mødebooker) og Referencer (Belønner kunder for at skaffe andre kunder). Profil: Min. 10 som spiser hver dag og Geografisk afgrænsning til kbh.

Typisk reference eller medarbejder der skifter job, og i sit nye job anbefaler os eftersom denne har haft gode oplevelser med os tidligere. Lidt mindre grad opsøgende salg, men dette gøres ud fra eksisterende ruter.

Vi bruger opsøgende salg, men da Rikspuponger er så kendte, sker det også at vi bliver kontaktet af kunder. Virksomhederne er vores kunderne, og så har de deres ansatte. En gang om året har vi en kundetilfredshedsundersøgelse.


Profil: Folk der har leveret løsning i dag, eller kunne være interesseret (dog ikke så meget energi på sidstnævnte). De fleste kunder kommer fra virksomheder som har frokostløsninger i forvejen.

4.

Det vi ser, det er der er forskel på den mad der bestilles i de forskellige bydele. Södermalm meget pasta, Östermalm meget salat. Generelt er det dog de restauranter som sælger mest hos os, som sælger mest over hele byen.


Vi mærker ingen forskel på brancher – igen som jeg sagde før, så er det mere typen af mødet. De fleste vil have variation, men visse kunder står fast ved samme type af mad.


Fuld frokost buffet, varm ret, salat, hjemmebagt brød, kage en gang om ugen. Ikke så stor forskel på hvad man spiser, men mere forskel på mængden.

Alt muligt. Prøver at have en standart menu, så som Torsdag er det fisk, det kan alle så få. 80-85% får den menu der er på nettet. Vi kan så varierer lidt indenfor samme pris, hvis en virksomhed eksempelvis gerne vil have ost hver anden dag. En grov generalisering: Jo flere ældre, jo fysisks hårdere arbejde og jo flere mænd = mere kød og varm ret. Et call-center med mange unge spiser mere varmt og mere mad generelt.

Vi har ingen data om hvem som spiser hvad. Elevkortet – gymnasieelever, hvor vi spærre kortet, så at man ikke kan købe pommes fries og lign. Vi følger ikke op på det almene kort,
men man må ikke købe alkohol og tobak med kuponerne. Vi laver i øjeblikket en undersøgelse med prøvekøb for at stoppe dette.
(tor tror ikke der findes en norm) men tror selv at produktion spiser mere mad – lidt mere varmt. Advokat spiser mere salat og går mere op i sundhed. Lidt flere klassikere i Jylland, denne trend er dog på vej tilbage.

5.
Det er mange som spiser på kontoret, det skal gå hurtigt. Man spiser når man har møder.
Effektivitet.
Der er et stort ønske om økologi men man vil ikke betale. Vi bruger mange grønsager, men vi leverer det folk vil have, så det er dem som bestemmer.
Meget små. De fleste kunder bestiller bare på nettet. Dem som ringer, dem spørger vi oftest hvad de vil have - koldt eller varmt, meget eller lidt mad osv. Vi er på nuværende tidspunkt kun i Stockholm og her er vi 3. tredje størst.
Vi er blandt de 3 største. Alle vil gerne spiser sundere når vi taler med dem, og alle vil gerne købe økologi siger de, men ingen vil rigtigt betale. Lave en afvejning, så man selv kan vælge om man vil leve sundt eller usundt.
Vi kan påvirker ret meget, men det er regering og folketinget som kan påvirke mest. Sidste år indløste restauranter kuponger for 2,2 mia. SEK. Vi findes over hele landet, men vores netværk er tættere i storbys områder.
Ikke så store, det er meget op til køkkener, og kunderne.

6.
Det vigtigste er samarbejde med restauranter og kunder. God service.
Godt forberedt. God organisation og strukturering, så der ikke opstår fejl. Være på forkant med tingende. Jævnligt i kontakt med kunderne,
Vi skal vide hvad og hvor folk vil spise, samt hvad man vil betale. Vi laver 100-200 kundeundersøgninger om dagen. Både spørgeskema (Struktureret) og ved at snakker med kunderne (ustruktureret) Vi møder dem hver dag, vi er ude og leverer mad.
Vi fokuserer meget på spørgeskemaundersøgelser hos kunderne. Og så beder vi kunderne komme med input. Hvis alle siger de vil have gule ris, så navigerer vi efter det. Nu er der kylling på menuen hele tiden, men det er der ikke, så er det måske hvad folk spiser hjemme, så vi er meget påvirket af faktorer vi ikke selv har kontrol over
Da vi er relativt små, så vi bruger meget personligt kontakt. De skal kender os, personligt. Skrive personlige mails. Es. ønske folk god påske etc.
Det vigtigste just nu, er overgang fra kuponger til kort – enklere administration og håndtering. Virksomhederne vil have det sådan.
Have mange produkter på hylderne, i form af mange køkkener som kunder frit kan vælge imellem.

7.
Vi er de eneste som har almindelige restauranter.
Har markedets største udvalg – pris og kvalitet = markedets stærkeste frokostordning. Vi er dygtige til at varierer. Mange kunder har været hos os længe.
Vi har et bredere sortiment, sundere mad og en bedre pris.

Hastigheden på vores respons, i forhold til kundehenvendelser. Vi har mange maskiner, så produktion bliver nemmere og mere ensartet. Vores eget udviklede it system, som giver fordele i forhold til kunderne.

Friskheden af råvarerne, vi bruger lidt frost, og lidt konserves. Vi forsøger at få maden til at smage af noget. Fælden som mange går i, er at forsøge at ramme alle smag, ved eksempevis at lave en så mild chili con carne, at denne ikke smager af noget, og ligeså godt kunne have været spagetti og kødsovs. Fleksibilitet i produktet.
Vores styrke er vores netværk, stort set alle restauranter accepterer vores kupon. Vi er 40 år gamle så vi kender markedet og vores kunder. Konkurrencen er mod andre typer af frysegoder.

Lave kundeservice på et helt andet niveau end den stressede kok. Vores it-system, feedback til kunder og køkkener. De ansatte har et link til egens menu, hvor de kan rater denne, som kontakt personer så får og bruger til følgende: Kontakt personer rater på mad, transport og vores service som sendes en gang om ugen til frokost.dk

8.
Vi har en virksomhed som kører maden ud – Budkompagniet.

Nej!

Nej, ingen ud over vores samarbejde med leverandører. Med dem laver vi markedsføring og produktudvikling.

Hotel og restaurantsskolen, udvælgelse af elever fra skolen til at blive Cater elever. Har prøvet at starte noget op med hotel og restauraionsskolen, om mad allergi, men de var ikke så interesseret. Ingen branche organisation endnu, men denne er under opbygning.


Nej, kun med leverandørerne. Vi gør en kæmpe forskel for visse af vores køkkener med deres indkøbsaftaler, da et samarbejde med os, er en forsikring til deres leverandører om økonomisk stabilitet.

9.
Bred udbyd, mange valgemuligheder for kunder. Punktlighed i form af leverancetider.

At du holder hvad du lover. Ikke for store armbevægelser. Ikke oversælge produktet.


Kundefokus, fokuserer på kunden (Lydhør og se på kundens behov)

Udholdighed, langsigtet og omhyggeligt. Logistik fra start til slut. Mindst holdbar
tid.

Man skal tørge for smagen af maden, forskelligt mad, husk klassikere (Frikadeller, boller i carry) men skal dog også være spændende.

Variation, både på dagen, ugen og 14 dage. (De gode retter må godt gå igen, men ikke kylling hver mandag), stabilitet og kvalitet (Frisk, kvalitet, sæson). Relationer til

Det vigtigste er at forstå det her med næring. En ansat skal spise i fred og ro, og have god
mad. Frokosten er ligeså vigtigt under arbejdssagen, som ferien er under arbejdsåret.
Variation og mad med hjertet, godt til prisen, leverer til tiden og høj service.