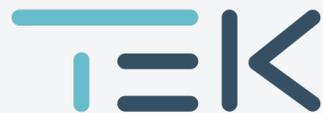




Finnish work life culture

Dr. Daniel Valtakari



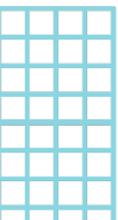


Dr. Daniel Valtakari

~~One coffee, please~~

In order to be able to talk about work life culture and traditions first the obvious must be stated aloud – [Finnish culture is Finnish culture](#).

For better or for worse, this is the way in Finland. Once we accept this it will be easier to understand and adapt to the way of the Finnish work life.

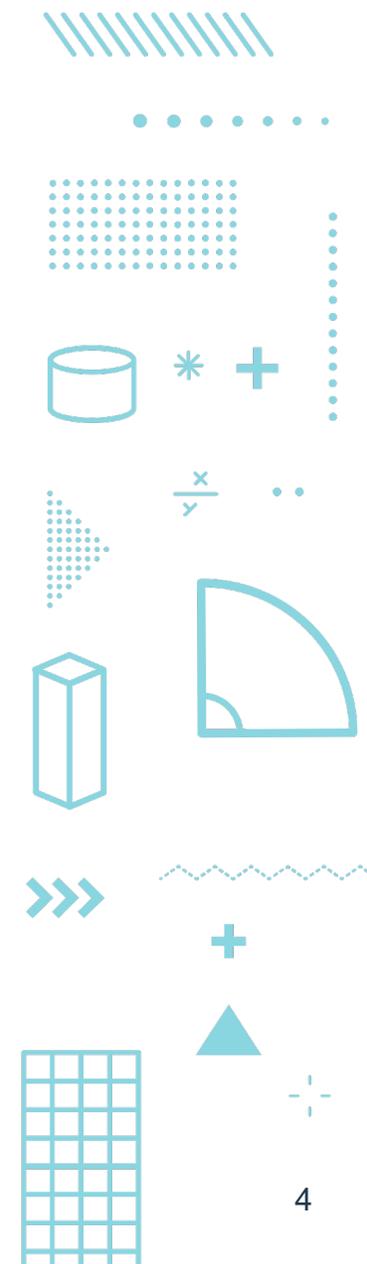


Why talk when I already agree

There is a narrative about the Finns sitting at international meetings in a quiet fashion, sometimes with no input. When asked afterwards about the silent approach the answer is typically in line with *There was nothing to add, why speak.*

This may not be entirely true, alas it's not far from the truth.

Times change and nowadays many Finns are talkative, master small talk and speak up at meetings.

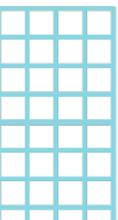


The flat hierarchy

Finns are straightforward. If you have a question, then you ask. You can address your question to colleagues, managers and even the top management. It's perfectly normal and widely accepted.

If you have ideas and opinions you should speak up.

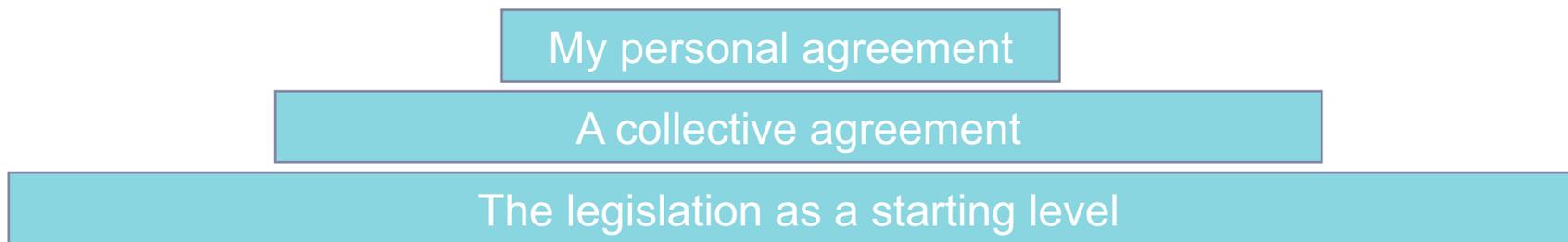
If you have a task and you are expected to perform something then you are also given the liberty to choose your way to get the job done. In the Finnish work life we don't check with superiors all the time about how we work and how we should do something. And if we don't get any feedback then things are (really) well. It can be interpreted as *there has been nothing to complain about*.



Finns negotiate and agree

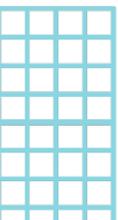
Yes, this is typical for Finland. It's the core of Finnish work life. In the work life the most important negotiation is that about *collective agreements*.

Collective agreements set the minimum standards for working life. They are negotiated by employee and employer organisations or representatives. They apply to everybody with the power similar of legislation and must be followed.



Labour legislation

Labour and work life related legislation is strong and applied at all working places. Usually it is not possible to agree differently from the legislation. If it is, then it is usually done through the collective agreements.



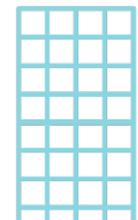
Employees are protected

Employees in Finland are protected in many ways from, for example,

- Abuse by employers
- Abuse from colleagues
- Excessive and exhausting work and stress

These are enforced by different authorities and monitored on a continuous basis.

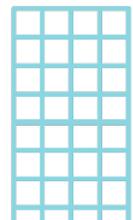
There is a Shop Steward and/or a Health & Safety representative at most working places to whom you may address any concerns. Your union will also support you at any time.



At the working place

Coffee breaks, lunch breaks and interaction between people at the working place is most important.

It's good to have breaks together with the others, participate in discussions (at least to listen) and *be part of the team*. This will also keep you in the loop and you will be appreciated by colleagues and superiors. In addition, it will have a positive impact on your career development.



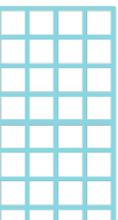
Trade unions

Finland is the promised land of associations, unions and trade unions. We like to get organised, have meetings and make things better.

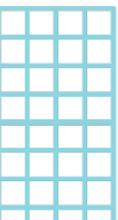
Trade unions are in the heart of the work life of individuals. Any member will get help in personal matters, such as employment related issues, advice on salaries and career development.

The unions are involved in the negotiations on behalf of their members, collective agreements (including annual salary raise), important matters in the society and legislative work (parental leave).

Trade unions also offer networking, mentoring and many other services and opportunities. There may be some variation from union to union.



...and then you



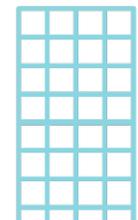
Where are the jobs?

Most of the job opportunities never become truly public, meaning that jobs are hidden and mostly found through networks, private and public.

→ About 80% of the opportunities are found this way.

This means you need to:

- Keep yourself updated about opportunities, not only open vacancies.
- Check all kind of employers, not only the obvious ones.
- Let your networks know that you are looking for a job and what competencies you can offer.
- Check out job fairs, different kind of media and homepages.



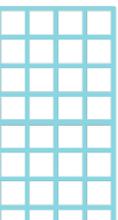
Networks

Make sure you create and support your own networks.

- Professional networks at your working place.
- Including your colleagues during the coffee and lunch breaks.
- Including project partners and business partners.
- Private networks.
- Friends and neighbours, including native people.
- Hobbies and schools.
- LinkedIn and other social media.

→ Be active and work to maintain and grow these networks.

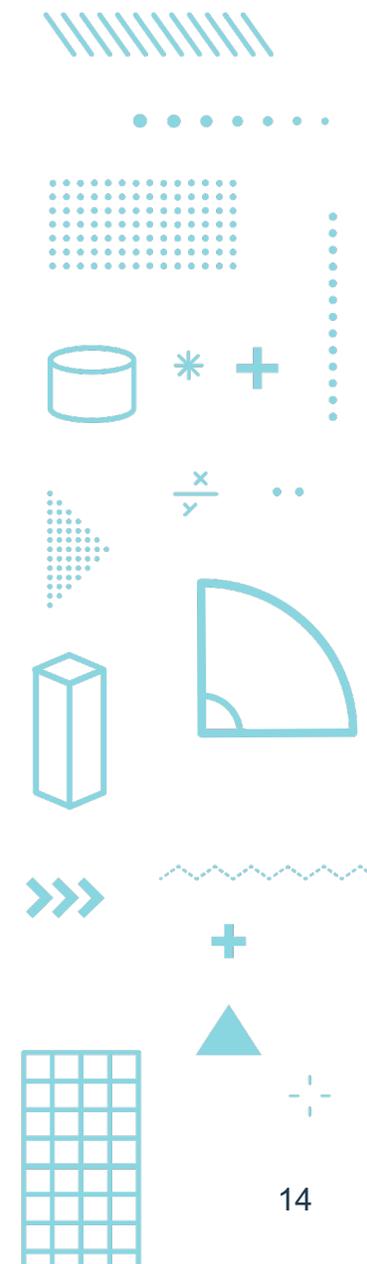
→ Be an active member in society and make contacts with locals.



Searching for job opportunities - where?

Applying for work is work. You need to dedicate time and energy and focus on the job search, if you want to succeed. Make sure you check all possibilities:

- Open vacancies/positions
- Open job search
- Jobs through different networks
 - Colleagues
 - LinkedIn, social media and similar
 - Friends and family
- Job fairs and marketing events

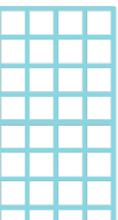


Documents and papers for the application

Prepare well in time for a future job search.

- **CV** – make a master CV that can later be tailored for the new job
- **Cover letter & job application** – get familiar with the structure
- **Skills paper** – an additional element to support your application
- **Working plan and suggestions** – in case you are asked what you would do

These are needed to bring to a comprehensive job application and make it possible to include the relevant things in each one of the documents.

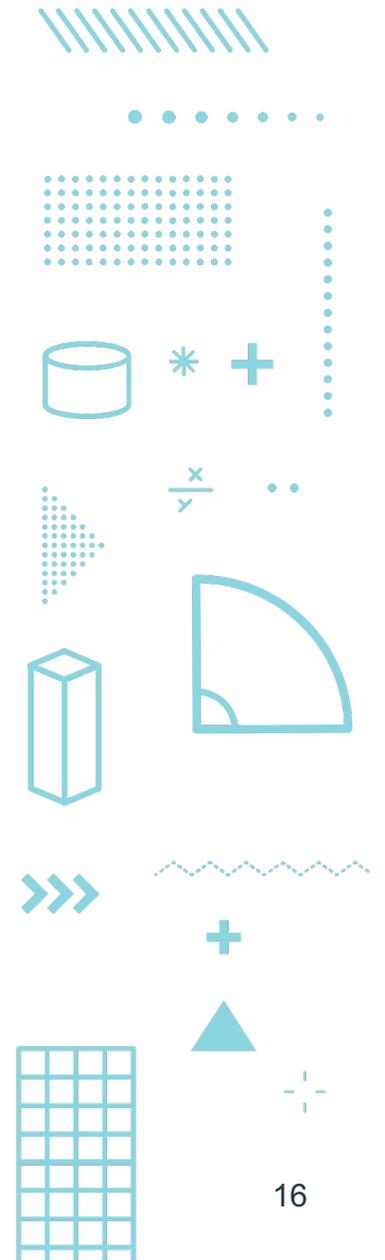


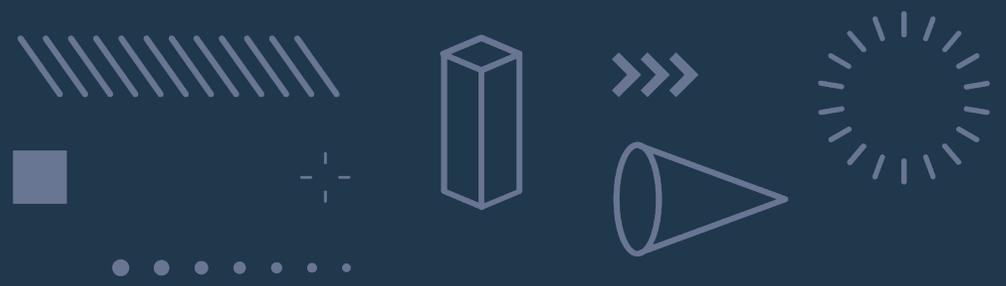
Our support for you

On you start looking for a job and eventually find it, you can rely on our support from the unions:

We offer, among other things,

- Career services and work life advice to promote your search for a job.
- Legal help to check your work agreement is in order and in your interest.
- Statistics and advice to negotiate an agreement you should have.
- Continuous support and advice during every step of your career.
- Courses in cooperation with the universities.





TEK
Me tekniikan takana

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