

Efficient Communication Management in a Growing Organisation

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Efficient Communication Management in a Growing Organisation

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse the importance of organisational communication and to explain how communication should be managed for it to be effective. Two fast-growing companies were interviewed for the thesis, who give entail on how they have managed communication regarding the organisational changes. Organisational communication is divided into external, stakeholder and internal communication in this study.

In this thesis, organisational communication is first defined and its evolution throughout the years briefly explained. Secondly, the importance of communication planning and management in a growing company analysed and the crucial role of communication explained. One of the research questions is how to plan and execute communication strategy that supports company's values and answers its stakeholders' needs?

Main focus is on the organisational communication of an international software company that has been in function for 20 years. Another case company is an architectural office and a customer of the software company. Both provide product/service to construction building industry and have been growing in sales and numbers especially during past three years. With the help of interviews from these companies, researcher offers recommendations for improvement areas in their organisational communication.

Keywords

Organisational communication, Organisational growth, Communication management

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Terminology

IT	Information Technology
BIM	Building Information Models
SMC	Solibri Model Checker
IFC	Industry Foundation Classes
IMC	Integrated Marketing Communication
MBO	Management by Objectives

1 Introduction

Communication and organisation are complex terms individually and even more so when the two are put together. The starting point in this study is that communication binds organisation's different functions and operations together, enabling the interaction within the organisation and with its various stakeholders and making communication the basis of the organisation. Without well planned and successfully executed communication, it is very unlikely that the corporate message reaches the stakeholders and target groups, leaving the organisational communication as defective.

Since people, surroundings, and communication technology channels change continuously, companies must continually adapt to the changes. Different characters, opinions and aspects must also be considered when communicating; different perspectives often bring out issues that did not occur before and can be now considered. When open and equal discussion is encouraged, new communication methods and modules can be found to operate better in order to satisfy the stakeholders. All the above-mentioned points are highlighted even more during fast organisational growth that often leads to spontaneous and abrupt decisions within the company. This is where the importance of smooth communication flow is highly emphasized.

This study focuses on organisational communication from the point of view of a fast-growing business organisation. Two different companies, which both have more than doubled their personnel within last five years, have been interviewed and those experiences are contemplated in this thesis. These two companies have had to adjust their communication strategies promptly and they have first-hand experience of the challenges in organisational communication when major changes are happening. Stakeholder communication is also discussed in this study, as these two companies share a customer relationship.

The inspiration for this thesis is mainly its topicality for the researcher, but also personal interest in the continuous changing process of communication. Working in different organisations after turning 18, I have been lucky to witness how working on the grass roots level differs for example from the management level. Working in different business environments from the Embassy of Finland in France to the fast-growing software company has taught me a lot and one of the most important things I have learned, is that clear and detailed communication planning and management always reflects on the actions of the whole organisation. One small change in communication strategy can start a big transition within the whole company.

1.1 Research Objectives

The main research objective is to study and analyse the current internal and customer communication environment of a software company called Solibri Inc. The research problem is defined as the study of the communication strategy and the challenges to function effectively as major changes are happening within the company during fast growth. Another growing company called Soini & Horto Oy was also interviewed for the study; they share a long-term customer relationship with Solibri and represent the typical of Solibri customer.

The research questions of the thesis are:

- Why is organisational communication so crucial for Solibri?
 - How should communication strategy be executed, so that it reflects to the changes but that company's core values are still visible and the strategic goals met?
 - What are the improvement points and how to implement the corrections?
 - What is the role of stakeholder communication and customer communication, and how has it been implemented?

Researcher first analyses the success level of the case company's communication management and then offers recommendations for improvement.

1.2 Thesis Structure

The first section of the thesis focuses on outlining the topic and the motivation for the research. The case companies are introduced and the reasons why they were chosen to be analysed and interviewed for this research are presented. The research process is explained and the starting points and presumptions for the thesis introduced.

The second part of the thesis consists of defining organisational communication: the author offers definitions for marketing, internal communication and stakeholder communication through various communication theories. This study focuses mainly on customer communication of stakeholder relationships which is discussed with the help of examples in the second part. The theoretical framework introduces the key definitions and communication models used in organisational communication.

Organisational changes' effects on organisational communication are discussed in part three where case companies' point of views are also reflected. Communication control models between management and personnel are presented and the methods to improve employee motivation through communication management analysed.

The last part of the research offers study results, recommendations and implementation plan for the case companies to improve their communication management. This chapter also includes conclusions and discursive prediction of the future of organisational communication regarding the case companies. The validity of the research and its results are also discussed.

There are few limitations in this study; in the first chapter, organisational communication is discussed from marketing and public relations point of views, and the importance of internal and customer communication is addressed. The focus of stakeholder communication is on customer communication because of the customer relationship between the case companies, Solibri Oy and Soini & Horto Oy.

Another limitation concerns the organisational structure; as Solibri joined a large European public company Nemetschek in the end of 2015, its internal communication expanded to intercompany level. However, Solibri's organisational growth and its effects on organisational communication are considered only on the Finnish company's (Solibri Oy) level in this study.

1.3 Research Process and Methods

Research process started in January 2017 as a draft of a thesis subject related to organisational communication. Due to being part of a fast-growing company for a year now (as of May 2017), author chose to focus on the company that she has a close insight to. Working as assistant, organisational communication on different levels is familiar for the author and motivated the focus to be analysis on communication management. After choosing the topic, the author started to develop her knowledge about the first case company, that was Solibri and then later decided to contact one of their customers Architectural office Soini & Horto. The interest in S & H arose when one of their shareholders acted as a guest speaker at Solibri's event. Their construction project Tripla, fast growth and the customer relationship they share with Solibri, give more depth when discussing about organisation communication and growth.

Research process then continued to explore different communication theories and how organisational communication has developed over the years. Writing process started by defining organisational communication and communication management methods. After finding the main theories used in the study, researcher contacted the case companies for interviews. Interviews gave more insight into the companies' actions and how they have executed their communication strategies. Research was finished when the state of the companies' communication management was analysed and recommendations for improvement were developed. Due to researcher's possible bias through working position, validity assessment was also done.

Research is executed with qualitative research method by using previously identified communication theories, article references and case company interviews as a base for defining organisational communication. Inductive approach was taken for this research, as different existing theories are presented when defining organisational communication. Through these definitions, theories and information from the interviews, researcher offers information about the current situation of organisational communication in the case companies and as a result, guidance on how to manage communication better in a quickly changing work environment.

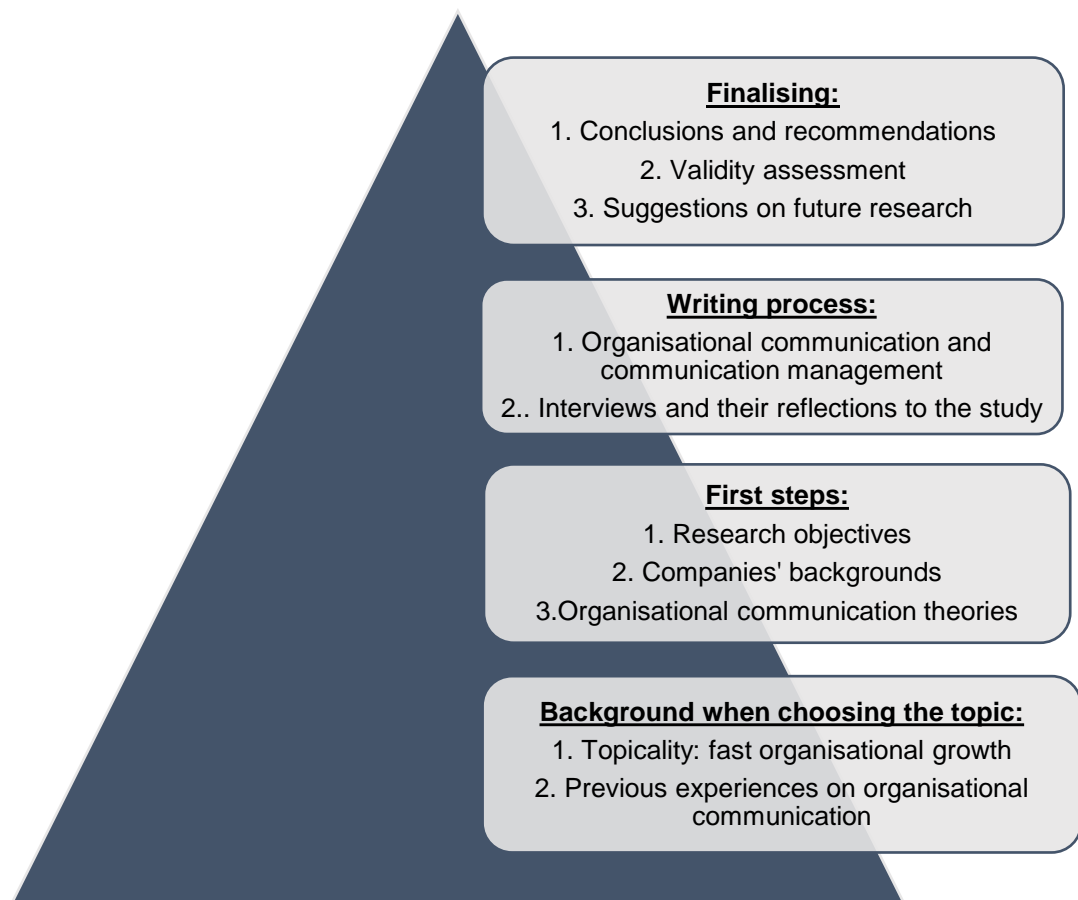


Figure 1: Research Process (Alakotila 2017.)

1.4 Introducing Case Companies

Two companies interviewed for this thesis are both functioning on construction field and share a customer relationship; architectural office Soini & Horto Oy, involved in one of the biggest constructional projects in Finland, is utilising Solibri's software in the building process. Both companies have more than doubled their personnel and sales revenue during last three years so their organisational changes have been significant. As one of the research objectives is the analysis of the influence of fast organisation growth to corporate communication, these companies offer their valid perspectives to the study. Both companies act mainly just on B2B (Business to business) communication.

Both IT (Information technology) and architectural field are going through big changes due to the fast growth in the industry. Sales turnover for both these service industry sectors increased in 2014 and 2015, and they were the sectors with the highest growth during past three years. According to Statistics Finland from December 2016, IT sector grew by a massive 1.3 billion euros in 2015 compared to the previous year. As both companies function in a construction field, it is relevant to mention that construction business is also growing at the moment in Finland, as seen from the table below.

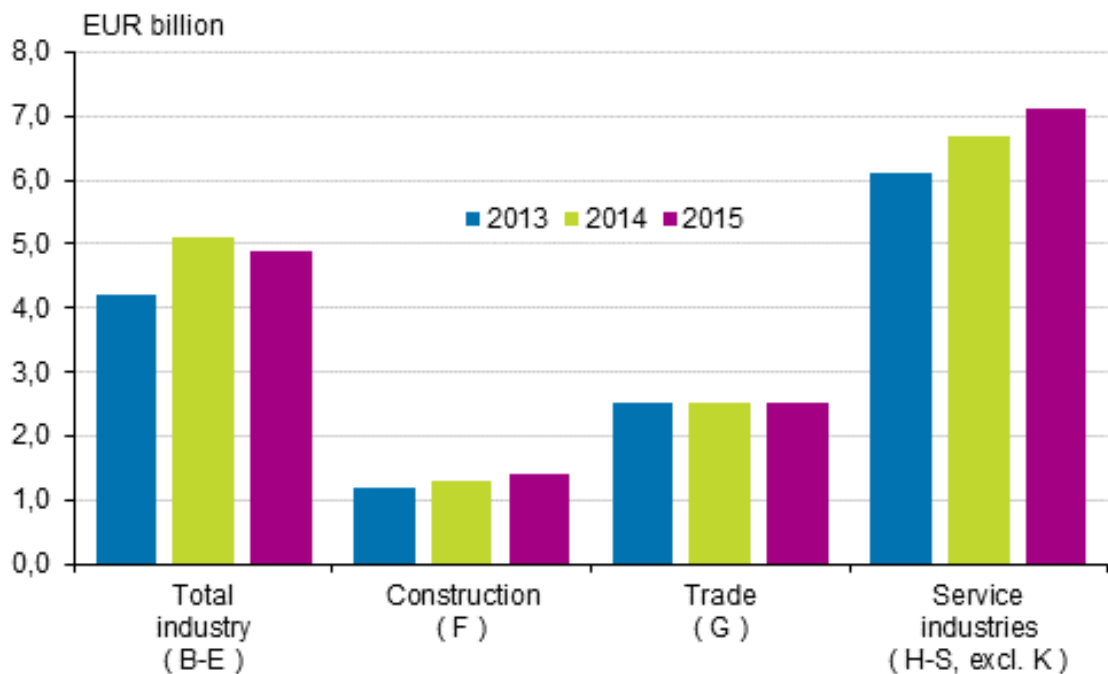


Figure 2: Enterprises' Operating Profit 2013 – 2014 (Statistics Finland, 2016.)

1.4.1 Solibri Inc.

Solibri Inc. was originally established in 1996 in Finland by its present CEO (Chief Executive Officer) Mr. Heikki Kulusjärvi. Company started out as an idea of a software product in construction within three people, but as of today, Solibri is the leader in Building Information Models (BIM) quality assurance and quality control field, providing out of the box tools for BIM validation, compliance control, design process coordination, design review, analysis and code checking. (Solibri, 2016.) In practice, the company provides a digital platform to extract and exchange information to support planning and decision-making on building construction.

Solibri's corporate goal is to develop and market quality assurance solutions that improve the quality of BIM-based design and make the entire design and construction process more productive and cost effective. Solibri's customers include major building owners, construction companies, architects and engineering firms in more than 70 countries.

The company joined European public company Nemetschek Group in the end of 2015, becoming part of a large brand family including 14 different brand products to date. Solibri's headquarters reside in Helsinki, but in addition the company has sub offices in the United Kingdom and the United States of America. In addition, in 2016 independent Solibri company Solibri DACH was established in Germany plus sales representative functions in the Iberia area. In whole, company produces sales in over 70 countries around the globe; one of the biggest sales areas being Scandinavia, DACH area (Germany, Austria & Switzerland), Netherlands and Japan.

From 2013 to 2016 Solibri's sales turnover has grown from 2,1 million (€) to 3,97 million but as of 2016 the growth has become steadier; on 2016, their turnover was 3,7 million euros. 2015 was a year of big growth; the change in turnover compared to the past year was 51,8%. In just three years, Solibri has doubled their personnel from approximately 15 people to 30 people, and the need for more resources is constantly needed as the company grows. Today, at the headquarters there are 32 people working together to reach the company's objectives. (Finder.fi, 2017.)

Flagship product is called Solibri Model Checker, which already itself promotes the corporate brand, with other major products being Solibri Model Viewer and Solibri IFC Optimizer. In the future, the organisation is focusing on developing cloud-based solution to improve the utilisation of the software and to raise the number of platforms used, tablets and smart phones for example. One of the key functionalities of SMC is its rules, which vary

according to the region legalities where construction project is taking place. The user can set them to suit the project's needs and then check and correct the possible flaws in the model.

On the figure below, the operational functions of the software product are explained graphically. First, user enters the Industry Foundation Classes (IFC) model into the software, where it gives the opportunity to view the models in different layers and to look at the details, such as door handles and to which direction window opens for example. The program then creates issue lists, meaning the faults of the model, that are based on the previously designated rules. The issues that arise and the possible improvements, can then be communicated between architects and designers for example, through information take off on the software.

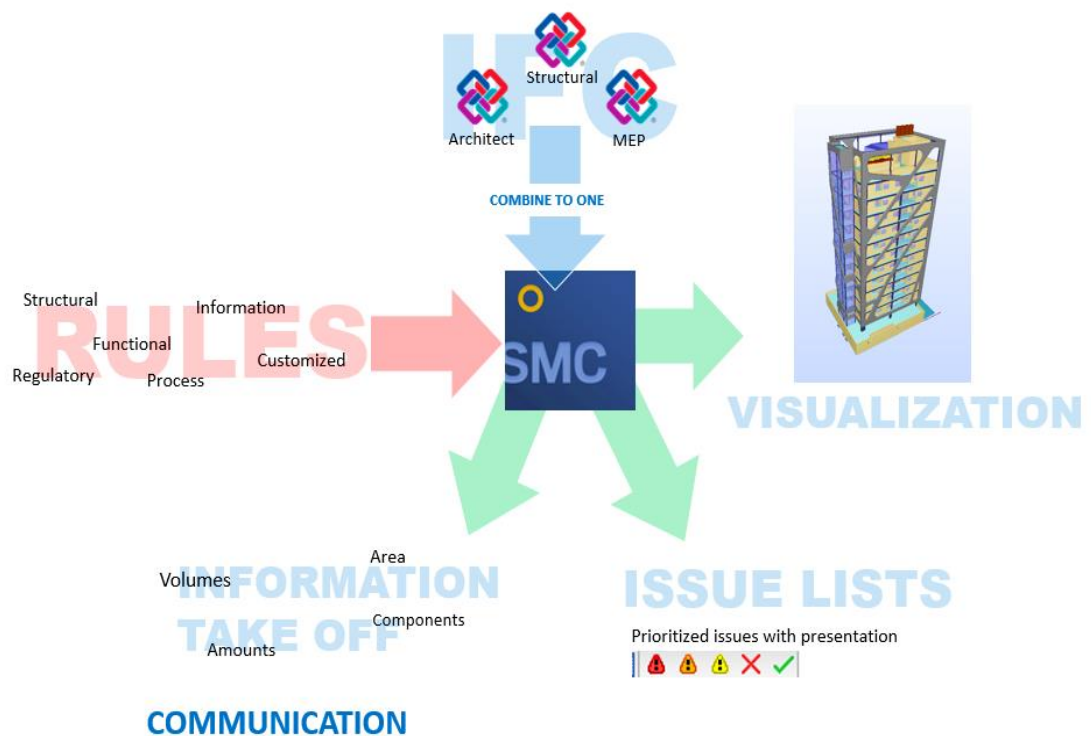


Figure 3: Solibri Model Checker Operational Functionalities (Solibri, 2017.)

Solibri's management team consists of five team leaders of which are Research & Development, Sales team, Branding & Marketing, Support and Training and as of recently, Administration team. Managing Director works as the management's chairman. Various team's functions often overlap each other making the need for smooth communication even more important. As an example, the Support team helps customers with their issues, but if there is a possible bug in the product that is connected to the customer case, Support team needs to communicate this information to the customer. When the bug is fixed and improvements made, R&D team then informs the Support team and Administration team, who then forward this information for the customers.

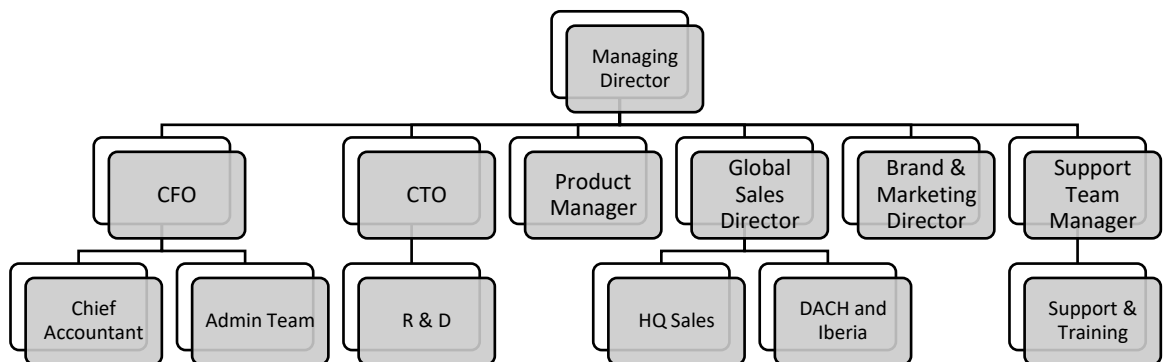


Figure 4: Solibri's Organisation Chart (Alakotila 2017.)

Software Industry in Finland

Information Technology (IT) is a big part of everyday life today; news is seen from television or read on smartphone on the way to work. Bills are paid using an online bank service and music is listened through streaming services. Approximately 90% of Finnish households have a PC or laptop at home and the use of electronic devices and different software increases constantly also at work. Software like Solibri are vital in their respective field of business and everyday more work is done in front of the screen or multiple screens through different applications and software. (stat.fi 03/2017.)

IT industry in general in Finland, had a new chance to perish and grow after NOKIA's success from the 90's, as at the times Nokia was paying about 20% of all Finnish corporation tax. Nokia also cooperated with a lot of universities in Finland, which gave undoubtedly motivation for new for innovative technology engineers to develop their know-how in IT. Nokia also provided a drastic structure change in the Finnish industry setting when IT and ICT sectors started to grow. (Ali-Yrkkö & Hermans, ETLA, 2002.)

According to Statistics Finland's business services statistics, information technology services have been continuously growing during the past three years. Publishing services of computer games and programming services have had the biggest growth in the IT sector. Solibri Inc. falls under the licensing services for computer services, that according to the table below grew in 2015 from the previous year as well. The measurement in the table below, is done by a yearly turnover share.

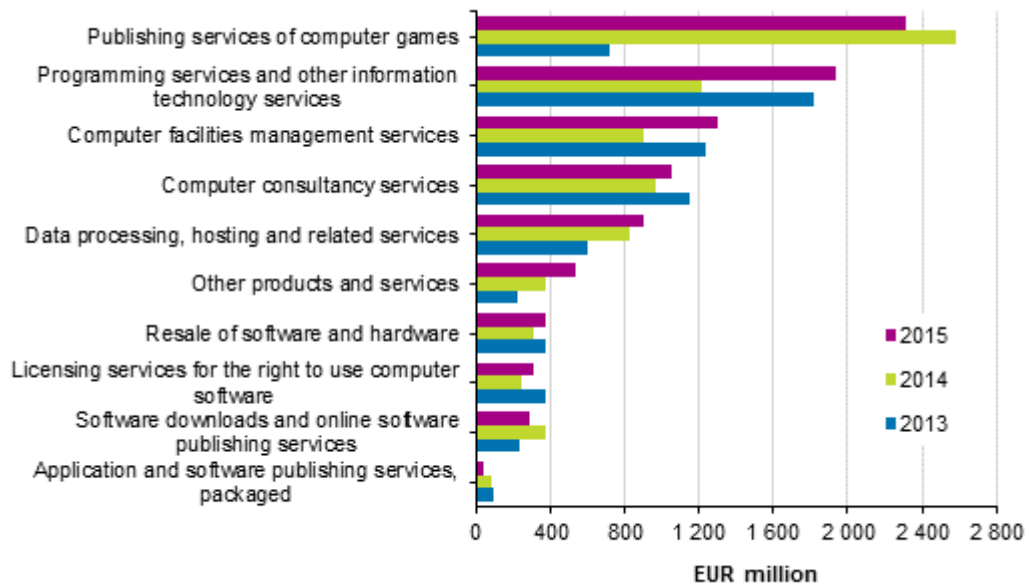


Figure 5: Turnover of Information Technology Services (Statistics Finland, 2016.)

1.4.2 Soini & Horto Oy

Architectural office Soini & Horto Oy was established in 2007 by the name Interarc, but was later changed to represent the company better. Mr. Kalle Soini and Sami Horto act as the chairman of the board and the CEO of the company, both being founders too. According to their website they have determined company's core value as "being able to combine the functional, technical and commercial attributes of different projects, in a skilful and sustainable means" (S & H 2017). Company's BIM Manager Mr. Petri Toivari identified their core values being honesty and sincerity with the customers and the personnel. One of company's aims is to be the best work place for everyone, meaning that the atmosphere in the office is open and equal which improves creativity. Openness shows also in practice, as the company holds two floors of open office space in the centre of Helsinki.

Until 2013, the organisation was able to function with relatively small personnel (about 15 people), but after winning a designing competition in 2013 for re-designing the Pasila railway station in Helsinki, their numbers started to grow. After 2013, their sales revenue has grown habitually; in 2015 sales revenue of Soini & Horto Oy was 4 453 000 € with 7%

sales profit growth from the previous year. As of April 2017, the personnel numbers have come up to 70 people in total, of which about half are attached to the Pasila project. As the numbers prove, their growth has been extensive, which brings on internal challenges in resource and communication management.

Mr. Toivanen emphasised the company's will keep the organisation as flat as possible. Only last year they were compelled to establish an administration team which helps to manage the HR and communication. Company's focus is on Business to Business communication and detailed marketing plan has not been developed. According to Mr. Toivanen, this is partly because of the previous rules stated by SAFA (Finnish Association of Architects) that direct marketing was not allowed. However, industry is going through changes which reflect on the communication plans of Soini & Horto as well, but as of now, their focus is mainly on creating and maintaining the network of business relationships that improve the cooperation and sales.

Project Tripla

The design competition for Pasila railway station, initiated by the Government of Finland and the City of Helsinki, was held in 2012-2013. Eventually the building client YIT together with architectural offices Soini & Horto and Brunow & Maunula Oy left a proposal and are now responsible for the implementation. In whole, there are at least 20 different parties and 300 people involved in the project. Estimated costs for the project are about one milliard euros. The name "Tripla" comes from three different blocks in Pasila that will include a shopping mall, accommodations, offices and a big underground parking lot, where the focus is now. The shopping centre is scheduled to be finished by the end of 2019 and the whole project finalised by 2021. (Joenniemi Yle, 2015.)

It is estimated that in the future, over 200 000 travellers will pass through Tripla daily; at the moment 50 000 people travel through Pasila every day (Helsingin Uutiset, 2014). The aim is to create a second centre of Helsinki, where the fact that every train in the Helsinki metropolitan area already stops in Pasila naturally helps. Also, one of the values for the project is environmental friendliness and energy efficiency; there will be e.g. 2400 parking spots for bikes and almost 350 charging spots for electric cars. (Joenniemi Yle, 2015.)

Through the project the general industrial interest for Soini & Horto has increased, and they have been able to grow and focus on bigger projects which is to be continued in the future. As mentioned, the personnel have been growing continuously and due to the mag-

nititude of the Tripla project, internal project managers have also been appointed. Especially in a project this big and public, clear division of responsibilities must be executed to control the quality and resources. The hiring requirements are also even more pedantic than before, due to the strict supervision of Tripla. (Interview S & H, April 2017.)



Figure 6: Draft Design of Pasila Tripla from the North (Soini & Horto, 2016.)



Figure 7: Draft Design of Pasila Tripla from the Southeast (Soini & Horto, 2016.)

1.5 Presumptions

The first assumption that is made, is that both case companies will continue to grow externally and internally also in the future. Organisational communication becomes more important every day and the scope deepens. Until now, Solibri has had the advantage of being a unique product in the market with no direct competitors, so the external communication has been focused on product. But in the future as the competition increases, even more attention must be put into marketing and customer service. Professional and efficient interaction with customers helps maintaining the customer relationships and increasing sales and cooperation, and customer service is also a great competitive advantage. Clear values and the vision of the company show through the branding as Solibri continues to strengthen their individual brand, as well as being part of Nemetschek brand.

Architectural office Soini & Horto Oy represents the typical customer of Solibri in this study, leading to B2B interaction being the focus. When Solibri keeps on growing and competition becomes harder, the problem of keeping exactly these types of customers is on the line here. Small and medium companies with one or two Solibri licenses does not sound much, but as approximately 80% of Solibri's customer base are companies like S & H, the portion becomes quite big. Hence, the other assumption of the study is that the business relationship between these two companies continues also in the future.

2 Defining Organisational Communication

Organisational communication combines two phenomena, *organisation* and *communication*, that are already complex concepts nevertheless when they are in a relationship with each other. In an ideal world, these two concepts work dynamically together to reach the objectives, but often when the importance of organisational communication is forgotten, it has a direct effect on sales and the motivation of the staff. (Mumby 2013, 6.)

The origin of modern business communication can be linked to the 1860's when land grant colleges were established in the United States of America. Educational courses of business writing in practise were introduced and when business communication gained attention throughout the world, it became a regular subject in business studies. Up until 1960's, business communication consisted mainly of written communication, but by the 80's new scope of business communication started to form including oral communication such as interviewing and presentations. However, in larger sense, organisational communication has its roots in speech communication and communication studies. It became a distinct academic field after WWII, being strongly influenced by psychology and sociology and shifting its focus to the broader role of communication in an organisation. (Angelopu G. 2006, 12-14.)

Throughout the years, the research on organisational communication has deepened and widened, and various theories and definitions of organisational communication were offered, one of them being a long tradition of internal communication considered as communication taking place within an organisation, whereas external communication is targeted to wider audiences outside of the organisational boundaries (Blundel R. & Ippolito K. 2008, 11). These two different areas of organisational communication work as a combining force in boosting the internal motivation so that organisational objectives, as well as the individual ones, can be reached.

Main theory behind this study, and the base of this chapter, is that an organisation cannot function properly without communication, it being the whole base of an organisation. To reach a common purpose and eventually set objectives, people need to communicate and contribute together. In this chapter, organisational communication is defined in detail and its importance in a working community is discussed. Definitions of internal and external communication are offered as their significance in creating a successful business organisation are very notable. Stakeholder communication is also discussed in one subchapter where the business relationship between Solibri and Soini & Horto is reflected.

Characteristics of Organisational Communication

Corporate communication, or organisational communication which term is used in this study, can be defined as “a management function that is responsible for conducting and guiding the communication in different sections such as internal and external communication and stakeholder communication for example” (Cornelissen, 2011, 5). Organisational communication should always reflect the corporative values and objectives set by the management which are shared to the employees openly.

One way to describe organisational communication is communicators transmitting messages through a container, that is the organisation. But it's important to remember the interdependence organisations exhibit on, as no member can function without affecting, or be affected by other organisation members (Mumby 2013, 6). E.g. in the case of Solibri, sales and marketing teams are highly dependent of the product development side, and the information that is shared from there. It is hard to create and maintain lasting customer relationships, if the internal interaction is not working and there is no mutual understanding of what is happening inside of the company.

Communicators within an organisation might not even realise they are actualising organisation communication on daily basis, since it is often seen as something more tangible and goal-oriented such as marketing and public relations. This is another difficulty when characterising organisational communication; to acknowledge its wideness. Organisations are interdependent, collective environments and all complex organisations consist of interconnected communication activities that overlap with each other constantly. (Mumby 2013, 6, 108.)

One of the characteristics of organisational communication in addition to its broadness, is its complexity. As mentioned before, these two complex concepts can create many challenges, when the aim is to build an efficient and communicative work environment. If communication does not run inside the company smoothly, it usually reflects the external communication as well. For example, if customer servants are not aware of a problem or a crisis inside the company, they are not able to provide good customer service without being informed how to act upon. When communication is well planned and managed, internal and external communication are in harmony and the communication flows smoothly and equally on all levels.

Constitutive Approach to Communication

When diving deeper into the definition of organisational communication, one of the theories is that organisation consists of communication as organisations exist as communicative groups. The whole essential of an organisation is based on different interactions; negotiations, contracts, relationships, transmitting messages. This approach gives an opportunity to question not just the communication but the actual organisational structures; forms of power, operations and processes and so on. When organisational structures are questioned, the noticing of the faults in the system is easier and improvements can be made. (Koschmann M. 2012.)

Dennis K. Mumby agrees to this theory, saying that: "Without communication, organizations cease to exist as meaningful human collectives." In this sense, it would be ignorant to say that organisations are just containers that people communicate within, more like organisation exist because people are communicating with each other, creating the complex system of organisation communication. (Mumby D. 2013, 14.)

Rather than treating communication as a feature of an organisation, but as a fundamental and constitutive process, allows to examine the structures and making vitally important notions and changes in an organisation. This can possibly lead to more favourable and efficient organisational processes from which results are better outcomes for more people.

Mechanistic and Interactional Views of Communication

Instead of a single theory of communication, a range of theories has been offered throughout the years that communication has been studied. The appropriate definition of communication is found, when put into the organisation's context as it exists.

G. Angelopulo (2006.) offers two approaches of communication: firstly, that it is a mechanistic phenomenon, the second defines it as social, interactive and often transactional phenomenon.

The mechanistic view of communication states that a phenomenon is causally determined by other phenomenon, and that these phenomena's and sequences of events can be identified and measured separately despite everything else occurring around them. Constituted by two engineers in telecommunication in 1949, this model is a very mechanic and simple perspective of communication. It refers to communication as a transmission of a signal from a transmitter to a receiver and it does not address the meaning or the motive of the message.

A continuous communication loop consists of feedback and transmission but can be easily unsuccessful. Any interruption of the message during its transmission affects negatively on the communication and anything that disturbs the is determined as 'noise'. This results that the meaning that the transmitter intended is rarely understood by the receiver. (Angelopu G. 2006, 6.)

Interactional view of communication approaches it from the social point of view; communication exists as a social phenomenon created by different cultures, backgrounds and social positions. Communication and interaction are core components of society with it shaping the social structures continuously. Communication is viewed as an ongoing process between humans that evolves and adapts to its surroundings. When mechanistical view divides communication as separate segments, interactive view emphasizes the social interaction and the concept of linear signal transmissions falls away. (Angelopu G. 2006, 9.)

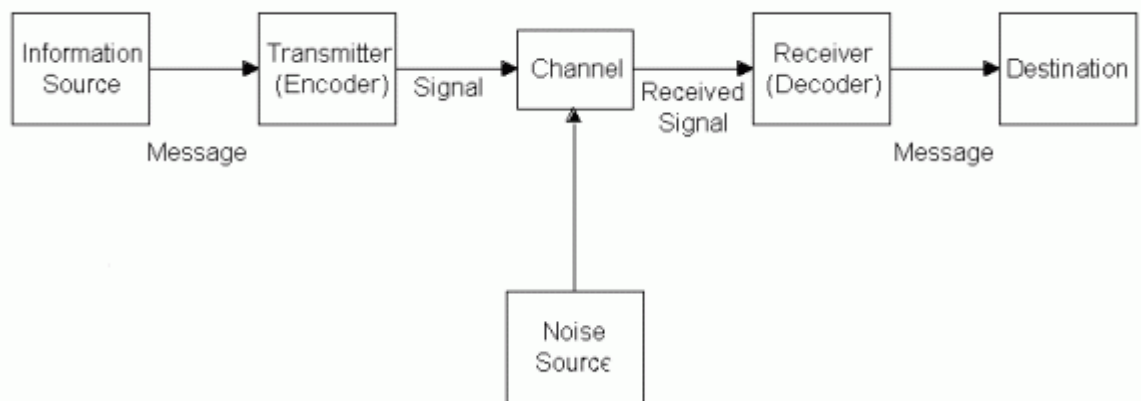


Figure 8: Shannon & Weaver Model of Communication (A Mathematical Theory of Communication, 1948.)

2.1 External Communication

Internal and external communication are both essential for a successfully functioning organisation. Today communicational divisions are more and more blurred, as they overlap each other continuously, what should always be considered when developing them. Both internal and external communication should work towards previously determined goals that serve the company's purposes. The goal of marketing and public relations is to widen the public knowledge of the company and therefore boost sales. In this sub chapter, external communication is examined through marketing functions in an organisation, from integrated marketing communications point of view.

First definition of external communication is that it is mainly aimed at external stakeholders such as customers, resellers and media. If wanting to consider marketing and public relations as separate functions, simple description can be that marketing deals with markets, while public relations deals with all the publics of the organisation, excluding customers. From this perspective, marketing can be viewed as a way of pushing out the product or service for a segment of the population who could be in demand of the product. Publics, on the other hand, focus actively on the actions of the company that affect a large group of people; generally, these publics are already more focused on organisational news and the product-side related information. (Cornelissen 2011, 17.)

After the peek in economy and customer behaviour in the Western world, organisations started to grow which meant that communication had to become more organised. Industrial organisations realised that instead of calling the press when a new product was developed, there was a need for continuous public relations handling and a marketing plan. This is how public relations and marketing emerged as separate disciplines. However, over time rather than seeing these two as separate and distinct in their objectives, they were recognised as correlating concepts. For example, if the mass media raises questions over concerns of the prices in groceries, this might bring pressure for the marketing teams to steer customers' focus i.e. on the brand and quality. (Cornelissen 2011, 16.)

Another generalisation between marketing and public relations, is that marketing is a more proactive and planned action, when PR is more reactive and quick. Still both concepts are strongly related to one another. For example, Solibri has put their effort on the marketing and branding instead of direct PR; one of the reasons for it has been the budget. Even though Solibri's sales have grown 35% per year on average, the marketing budget has not been growing on a comparable level. This has steered their external communication more

to social media and successfully so; as of April 2017, Solibri has almost 3,500 followers on Twitter; this is showing the strength of Solibri's business value publicly.

For Solibri, social media has been very successful and a way to push out information about the brand, news from the industry and communicate with customers, so in this case social media ties marketing and public relations together. Mr. Anderson points out that they are however constantly trying to push articles and news concerning Solibri to industrial publications, but at the moment no money is being put directly into PR, but creating a sort of Solibri community between the customers, partners and the company in the industry is their aim.

Mr. Toivari from Soini & Horto, states that in the architecture industry in general the marketing and PR hasn't been very prominent, in fact he mentions that at one point direct marketing was denied by SAFA, the Finnish Association of Architects. Instead, architectural field is highly based on creating and maintaining a network of business relationships, which is also the goal for Soini & Horto. "The industry itself is going through changes and the ways to market are developing, so we also have a lot more possibilities regarding marketing in the future", Mr. Toivari says.

Integrated Marketing Communication

Marketing communications is the single most important opportunity for companies to prove the value of their products or services to the potential consumers. Instead of focusing separately just on marketing and public relations processes, one of the concepts that is beneficial for an organisation to understand, is integrated marketing communication (IMC). The base idea of IMC is to "Force all aspects of the communication programme to deliver a single-minded and unified message to the target consumer". For many years marketing elements have been viewed as separate individual elements, but through IMC their relationship to one another is also considered. (Yeshin 1998, 3, 14.)

IMC is both a concept and a process. It approaches marketing holistically by recognising the added value of comprehensive communication plan that evaluates the strategic roles of general advertising, sales promotion and public relations in an organisation. Combining these different fields can improve clarity, consistency and maximise the impact of marketing communication. Although many organisations aim to have a focused and clear advertisement plan, it is still hard to grasp what IMC truly means and "how to do it". And as both concepts and processes evolve, it is even more confusing, but the point of IMC is to help

organisations focus and coordinate their marketing communication strategically in a way that will create a synergistic result. (Duncan & Caywood 1996, 17-18.)

For IMC to be effective, there must be an understanding of the contribution of the elements within and organisation. And even more than that, an understanding of the effects that these elements might have to overall communications process. (Yeshin, 1998, 14.) Solibri, for being a relatively small company, has a quite complicated stakeholder network, so it is crucial to understand how e.g. possible changes in Nemetschek's marketing plan would affect Solibri's own. So far, there has not been any significant changes, but even though Solibri is still strongly its own brand, it's important to take both brand images into account when changing things, and to stand together and represent same type of values.

Brand identity is a combination of various factors, such as the name, logo, performance of a product or service or any image or association that consumer has when thinking about a brand. It is the summary of all encounters and contacts that a customer had with the brand, not just using the product or a service. The grand variety of different methods for reaching customers and prospects brings immense amount of opportunities, but the actual challenge is to understand how to use the IMC tools for contacting and delivering the branding message effectively. (Belch, 2003, 14.)

As Mr. Anderson, the Brand and Marketing Director of Solibri explains, the first step for building a marketing strategy is to identify the target groups and the core message wanted to put out. In Solibri's case their core message for customers is that "Solibri helps you to build properly and sustainably". However, the message must be shaped for different types of customers i.e. architects and constructors. The message needs to have value in it for the customers, or prospects, for it to have an effect. And here is where the branding takes part; even before the actual direct contact with a prospect, company's logo, website and customer service give a preconception of the product and the company behind it.

2.2 Stakeholder Communication

Every organisation has various stakeholders they need to consider when making business related decisions. To obtain successful communication models with their stakeholders, organisation needs to first identify the stakeholders and the level of stakes that they hold. The content of stakes for different stakeholder groups varies and is based on their specific individual interests. In a nutshell, the company needs to provide the stakeholders type of information about the company's operations which they have an interest on. (Cornelissen 2011, 42-44.)

Solibri has a relatively complicated web of stakeholders, for being still a relatively small organisation. Customers and resale partners need to be on top of things all the time, there's pressure towards the employees from the management team whereas management has Nemetschek pressing them. Mainly the pressure concerns sales, product development and interactive information sharing, but when analysing the stakes, one way is to assess if the stakeholder's interest is primarily economic or moral towards the organisation. "There are primary and secondary groups of stakeholders, with primary groups being those that are important for financial transactions and necessary for an organisation to survive" (Cornelissen 2011, 43). For Solibri this basically means the Nemetschek Group and customers purchasing the products.

Secondary stakeholder groups can be defined as the "influencers" or those who generally affect company's actions, or are affected by them. But opposite to the primary stakeholders, they are not in financial relationship with the company and are not essential for its survival, in economic terms. This usually means the media and in Solibri's case also partners and construction building authorities who set the regional building rules that Solibri's product must follow for it to be legally admissible.

After Solibri started to acquire more customers the pressure and the demand grows, Mr. Anderson says. "The style of doing business has also changed in a few years with some customers as the stakeholder numbers have grown. Geographical growth has also brought in a lot more work for example for me personally: in Germany detailed company brochures are still very much alive and working, which we do not really have here in Scandinavia anymore." This study does not discuss the partner communication in detail, but the importance of partner communication for Solibri should be acknowledged.

Partner communication is an on-going process that mostly touches sales and invoicing division, but partners are also supporting customer with technical issues, where Solibri supports them with cases where more expertise is needed. A lot of Solibri's customer communication happens through partners but they are also constantly giving direct feedback of the product. The company tries to modify their actions accordingly but also focus on their own objectives and try not let the partners' and customers' wishes override them too much. In addition, the personnel's welfare and motivation and individual needs must be considered, thus strong human resource management is needed when the company is growing.

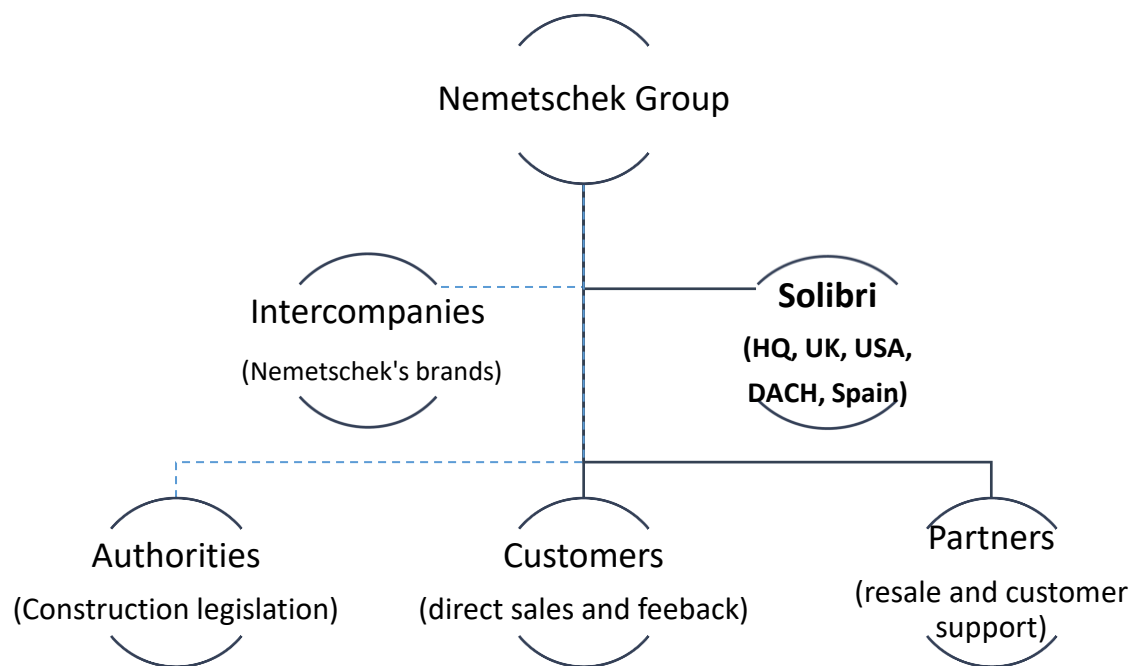


Figure 9: Solibri's Main Stakeholders Chain (Alakotila, 2017.)

For Soini & Horto most important stakeholders regarding the Tripla project, are the Finnish Government, the City of Helsinki, other companies involved in the project and the employees. "Cooperation needs to be continuous and open all the time for the project to succeed. Communication between teams and authorities is constant and as the supervision is also quite strict, it is usual for different authority teams to show up at the S & H office and supervise without any specific previous agreement." Mr. Toivari says. The company also puts a lot of emphasize on employees, listing them as the key to success.

2.2.1 Customer Communication

Creating and maintaining a customer relationship begins usually at the hands of the sales team. They make the first contact, if the customer did not approach the company already, and they push the product through direct marketing when making the sale. Even so, it is important to understand that customer communication does not end when the sale has been made. The connection should be maintained afterwards, at least on some level. For Solibri this means customer service and support, and informing the customer of important organisational actions and events and how they affect the customers.

Customer service can also be presented as part of marketing; if the customer is not getting professional help and support, it is very unlikely that they will continue to speak on behalf of the company, or buy the product or service for that matter. In this sub chapter however, the customer communication between Solibri and its customers is presented, the example being the architectural office Soini & Horto Oy.

As the BIM Manager Petri Toivari of Soini & Horto could confirm, they have been cooperating with Solibri for a long time and SMC has a huge part in their Tripla Project. Mr. Toivari has been directly in contact with Solibri's CEO during their mutual path and says that Solibri's customer communication has been well managed from his perspective, although their business relationship has been long-term but the first contact with the company when purchasing should be clearer for new customers.

Solibri strives to inform its customers of the changes on the product or user interfaces in advance through e-mail newsletters. Mr. Toivari personally states that sometimes the amount of e-mail might be too big, but it is obviously better to get information than not to get it at all. Mr. Toivari also gives praise to SMC in terms of information sharing and communication: as the communication within the software has been improved lately, many head designers have been able to use SMC for communicating with different parties and making notes, reducing the amount of time used for searching notes etc.

Customers like Soini & Horto are extremely important for branding and marketing as well, as Solibri has been successfully building its customer endorsement network the past three years. These types of customer endorsements are beneficial for both parties, as Solibri gets to interview the customer about the benefits of the product and gets good promotion through that, and the customer gets to have his name on the publication and maybe give some feedback to Solibri on how to possibly improve their actions. This is exactly the type of cooperation that is vital for Solibri's customer communication and marketing also in the future.

Customer Communication Channels

As mentioned before, social media has been a very successful way for Solibri to communicate with its customers and prospects. In addition, the company sends newsletters to its subscribers in the form of e-mail. When new user registers into Solibri, he/she they can choose to subscribe for the newsletters. According to Mr. Anderson, Marketing and Brand Director of Solibri, the purpose of the newsletters is to create value to the customership when creating a community by sharing information.

The types of newsletters sent are:

- Monthly Newsletter for Subscribers
 - Regarding news of the product, BIM and the industry events
 - Length usually 2 pages maximum so that the attention span of the reader is not lost
- Admin Newsletter of Updates
 - Product improvements and maintenance releases
 - Only for Admin users who can then inform regular users if needed

In addition to newsletter and social media, all important new updates are put into Solibri's website from which they are publicized through different media channels the importance of the news being high. For a few years now, Solibri has been organising a yearly customer event, where technical and business plans and actions are presented in an interactive way with the participants. Then in addition sales department aims to maintain the customer relationships by personal meetings and discussing about the product and how it would suit the customer's needs in the best possible way. Solibri offers also two different training packages, in where the customer can really get value for the product when deepening their knowledge and finding the best functionalities for them.

2.3 Internal Communication

Cornelissen (2011, 164.) states that the most difficult thing in organisation's internal communication, is to find a way to combine its employees' individual needs and stimulate their work motivation and creativity while persuading them to operate in ways that correlate with organisation's overall objectives. Company's vision and values reflect on its actions which naturally leads to the employees and the interest they take on the company's success. Results do not happen without efficient and organised labour force and in order to achieve that, the importance of internal communication must first be understood.

Traditional definition of internal communication is that it is communication that happens within an organisation, meaning employee or staff communication, which is the approach in this study. Internal communication was distinguished from external communication as a stakeholder communication, stakeholder being the employee. Internal communication is a crucial part of the organisation's functionalities. Successful internal communication can lead to stronger organisational identification which then improves work motivation and efficiency and commitment to the organisation. (Cornelissen 2011, 164.)

Often it is the management that sets the example of communication models and methods; how much verbal face to face communication is there? How open and honest is the communication between the staff and the management? What are the aims of communication and how can they be reached? Internal communication is not simple as people interpret things differently, whether it is because of the cultural backgrounds, different point of views or personal attitudes. It is natural for communication to be difficult between different characteristics but honesty and mutual respect towards colleague usually goes far. If there is a disagreement or misunderstanding, talking about it is often difficult but highly recommended, and that is where the management can truly be an example. In the recruiting, management and human resources can also affect by identifying the corporate values and then recruit people with same kind of values.

The challenges in internal communication have been quite similar for both case companies; decentralised information sharing, too many communication channels and information overload are usual as the company grows. New communication technologies bring also more scope into internal communication as it is now easier and faster to produce and distribute documents within the organisation. This can bring challenges as the information is not stored just in one place, hence it is not centralised. E-mails, intranets, chat services and internal hard drives can be difficult to manage at the same time.

Cornelissen (2011, 164.) presses, that the art of internal communication management is to manage the communication systems used and their purposes. Both Solibri and S & H could confirm that their main communication channel is still e-mail, although intranets are also being used and developed in both companies. Mr. Anderson and Mr. Toivari also admit that it becomes more difficult to keep just a few efficient and relevant communication channels, when the organisation and the personnel grows.

3 Managing Change Through Communication

Few reasons for failing in organisational communication are the distance between management and staff level, employee's confusion of his/hers role in the company and decentralised information. Organisational growth and changes bring in challenges and complications for the management as well as the personnel. Growth forces the organisation to change its internal policies and management and communication structures to respond to the growing demand of information.

In communication strategy, main stakeholders and target groups must be identified and the strategy built around them. For the external communication to work, internal communication must also be managed in a way that the whole organisation works together towards a common goal. Therefore, communication must be managed in an equal yet distinctive way, which is the focus of this chapter.

As a company grows, change is inevitable. The difficult part is to find the right manners and methods to adapt to the change but still maintain the company values. One way to manage organisational change internally is clear communication. Honesty, openness and equality are few of the many important things that should be taken into consideration when communicating about change. When communicating about change, management needs to be honest of the upcoming changes and how they will affect employees and the whole company. The reasons behind the changes should be explained and rationalized. The main questions that managers should regard when communicating about the upcoming changes to the employees are:

1. From what to what? What are the differences in specific, and in what way should everyone think, act and perform to answer to the change?
2. What does this change mean for the employees individually on a daily basis and how should they operate in the future?
3. What is the reasoning behind this change? How will it help the company and how will it make a difference to better?
4. How will success be measured? The measurement of success should be and specified.
5. What is the support level for this change? Are the closest superiors behind the decisions or are they being mandated from a higher level?

(Goman 2013, Forbes.com)

Discussing about the evolution of organisational communication and marketing in a growing business environment, Mr. Anderson confirmed that the complexity immerses when the organisation grows. Few years ago, when Mr. Anderson entered Solibri, communication strategy was basically non-existent. When they started to develop it with the CEO, the company being relatively small at the time, it was “easier” to start developing it when there were less opinions and less stakeholders. Today, as indicated previously in this study, Solibri’s stakeholder chain itself is quite diverse and tricky, which makes communication management even more complicated. The importance of planning a communication strategy that is realistic, adaptable and aims to reach the goals of the company, cannot be emphasized enough.

3.1 Communication Strategy

At some point, every organisation must go through the pressure caused by the demands on time, budgeting and providing quality for their customers. The key for succeeding in communication management, is always in the planning. The purpose of communications strategy is to help the organisation communicate effectively, internally and externally, and meet core organisational objectives. The word “strategy” causes shivers in many, as it is experienced as something abstract. In reality, it means thorough planning, executing and bringing in the profits through communication. (knowhownonprofit.org 2017.)

Communication strategy reflects on the corporate mission and vision and it should always correlate with the company strategy. Company strategy is the reflection of the overall purpose and scope of the organisation and it provides a strategic vision of the whole organisation. Vision usually envisions what the company wants to be to various stakeholders, whereas communication strategy turns it into a functional or operational development plan. The figure 9, illustrates the dynamics between the company strategy and communication strategy; decisions made at the corporate strategy level need to be translated into specific communication plans. At the same time, information gathered through communication strategy helps improving the company strategy and predicting the future operations. (Cornelissen, 2011, 84-85.)

Mr. Anderson from Solibri advises, that: “The first steps when building a communication strategy are identifying company values, target groups and then the message company wants to put out.” With the help of identifying the previous mentioned factors, the message should be shaped in a way that it offers value for the target groups. It’s also important to realise the differences between communication strategy to marketing and branding, Mr. Anderson says. “Marketing is much more black and white, in our case for example “Get

Solibri trial for two weeks to see how good our product is”. As communication strategy is more based on values, it is more emotional and intangible, he says, but communication strategy is highly reflected on the corporate message.

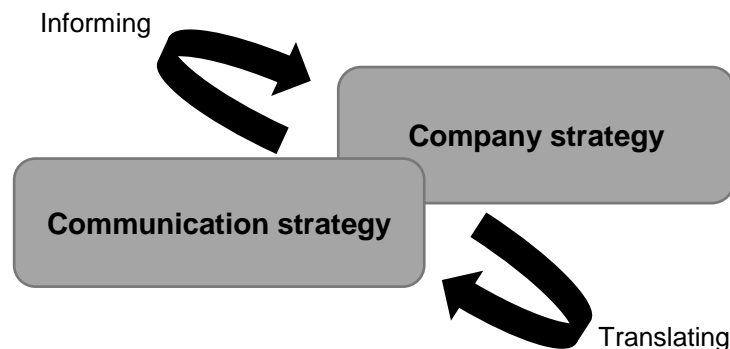


Figure 10: Company and Communication Strategy Link (Alakotila 2017.)

Inside an organisation there can multiple goals, but it is easier to share and divide them between the teams, when management has set clear objectives first. For example, Soini & Horto being involved in a very large and long project Tripla, middle mile stones between bigger goals need to be set and then communicated to teams clearly for them to be executed effectively. Values of the Tripla project are environmental friendliness and sustainability, which need to be communicated to all the individuals involved in the project, for them to be able to follow them throughout.

3.2 Communication Management

When experiencing rapid organisational growth, management must be able to adapt to technological and social changes and use the change to produce results. When growth is anticipated, management can be more precautionous and set forward-looking goals which can be then changed to suit the changes. This must be communicated to the staff honestly and explain them clearly how the changes are going to affect them individually. This way the organisation can maintain the control of the communication environment and improve company identification and commitment of the staff. (Thomson 1998, 1.)

Even though it's practically impossible to control how people communicate, there are tools for management to guide and control it into the desired direction. This will be discussed more in detail in the following chapters but in general, it means steering the actions and communication of the employees into the wanted course by example. If the management

encourages open discussion, it usually results to more openness in the whole organisation.

Traditionally, there are different levels of authorities within an organisation where communication is transmitted from superiors to subordinates. Regarding organisational change, communication today focuses more on neutralising the negative effect of the uncertainty and instability caused by these changes. Management can use formal channels of communication, which in practise means rules, regulations and procedures as in written or oral instructions, training programmes and reports. Respectively, informal channels of communication are born through interpersonal relationships within an organisation. These are utilised for exchanging unofficial or informal information, for example individual conversations on coffee breaks between employees. (Barker 2006, 75.)

As an example, both case companies have weekly meetings over Friday bun or breakfast as mentioned before. These occasions are opportunities for the personnel discuss freely and work-related matters can be brought up also in informal custom. This is also one way for management to set themselves on the same level with the personnel and for the employees to improve their work relations. Both companies, Solibri and Soini & Horto, also share current news and major events in these informal settings from time to time, which is again another way to fade out the borders between different levels.

One important part of communication management is to monitor and analyse it. It should be done continuously but especially after the goals have been or have not been reached. Did the company reach the sales goals set for example within six months? Or was there a delay in the building process? It is crucial to be critical of how timetables or sales processes have been managed; by looking the good and the bad things done in the past, is the only way to manage them better in the future.

Mr. Anderson brings out an example of deficient communication management when the company was sold to Nemetschek. "The communication between the management and personnel wasn't exactly a flaring success back then, because the reasons behind the sale and its effects on personnel weren't communicated clearly." For Solibri the sale meant safe jobs and possibilities to advance within a bigger company. "In situations like these for example, the challenge is to communicate regularly and provide relevant and detailed information. Honesty is important when talking about how the business is going, how is the parent company planning to develop its business in the future", Mr. Anderson says.

Internal Communication Control

Organisations are based on control. For an organisation come to into existence and to function, social interactions need to occur and people need to communicate with each other. However, though the management cannot completely control the organisational communication, control needs to be implied. Realisation of the fact that organisation members are not simple passive recipients of these control mechanisms, but interactive humans, needs to be made. (Mumby 2013, 5.)

The most usual and most simple way to control employees is directing and monitoring of their behaviour. Indeed, most organisations follow the superior-subordinate relation method, where the superior has the authority to supervise, monitor and evaluate the subordinate. (Mumby 2013, 9.) Important things in the superior-subordinate relationship are honesty and mutual respect. As explained in the preceding chapter, upward communication has a big role in employee acknowledgement and efficiency, so the role of superior can be very challenging and diverse.

There are different directions of communication flow within the organisation; communication can be downwards, upwards or lateral. In downward communication managers communicate with the employees in a downward line. This is usually includes introducing company policies and plans, instructions and training and evaluation of work performance. Upward communication is the feedback correspondence from the employee to the manager or the management regarding policies and practises that affect employee's work. This can be expressing concerns or complaints, but it's good to give also positive feedback about managing. Upward communication gives the internal communication more openness and equality, when both parties can give feedback. (Barker 2006, 75.)

The level of importance of especially upward communication is set by the management as they are the ones executing it by example. Cornelissen (2011, 176.) explains its importance well:

“Allowing employees to communicate upwards is important because employees' ideas, responses to their working environment, or critiques of the plans and ideas announced by managers may be used to find ways to improve an organisation's overall performance and profitability” (Cornelissen 2011, 176).

Lateral communication between employees on same hierarchical level appears to be more common and informal on the lower levels of the organisation. It usually focuses on

solving problems or conflicts appearing with work tasks, and as well on work flow coordination and continuous information sharing. (Barker 2006, 75.) Regarding Solibri, communication within and between team members can be described as lateral communication.

The more people there are in an organisation, the more difficult the communication becomes. More people results to more individual bias's and more opinions. For the organisational objectives to be reached, the best way is to plan, communicate and prioritize together. Dictatorship rarely results to any organisational accomplishments, so it is crucial to communicate and listen other's advice, even though the management eventually makes the decisions.

Successful Management by Objectives Results to Roadmap

As discussing a software company in this study, the term roadmap is often used in the IT environment. Developers use road mapping as a planning tool and for scheduling. When starting the creation of a road map, the team manager should be on the clear of the earlier discussed vision and strategic objectives set by the management. Management by Objectives (MBO) developed by Mr. Peter Drucker, is a great example of how all different levels of the company should have a common goal, even though teams are working from different angles. (Communication Theory 2011.)

Drucker questioned why at the time effectiveness was considered as a natural and expected outcome in an organisation and according to him effectiveness was more important than efficiency, when in fact effectiveness is the base of every organisation. For organisation to be successful, common goals need to be set as in objectives need to be identified and decided between the management and employees. When the staff is involved in the decision-making process, they are more motivated to reach their targets. (Communication Theory 2011.)

Managers identify their goals in their areas of responsibilities based on strategic objectives set by the management, and then share it with their teams directly. The employees understand better what they are expected of when the objectives are clear, and at the same time it is easier for them to set their individual goals. Drucker challenged the division between management and the staff, stating that integration between different hierarchies needs to be made.

One of the important aspects of the MBO approach, is an agreement of open evaluation between the managers and employees. When both parties are involved when setting

team and personal goals, they are more likely to fulfil them. As stated before, it is good for the organisation to look back to where they started and how things should be developed, but according to MBO the focus should be on future rather than on past. (Communication Theory, 2011.)

The Five-Step MBO Process

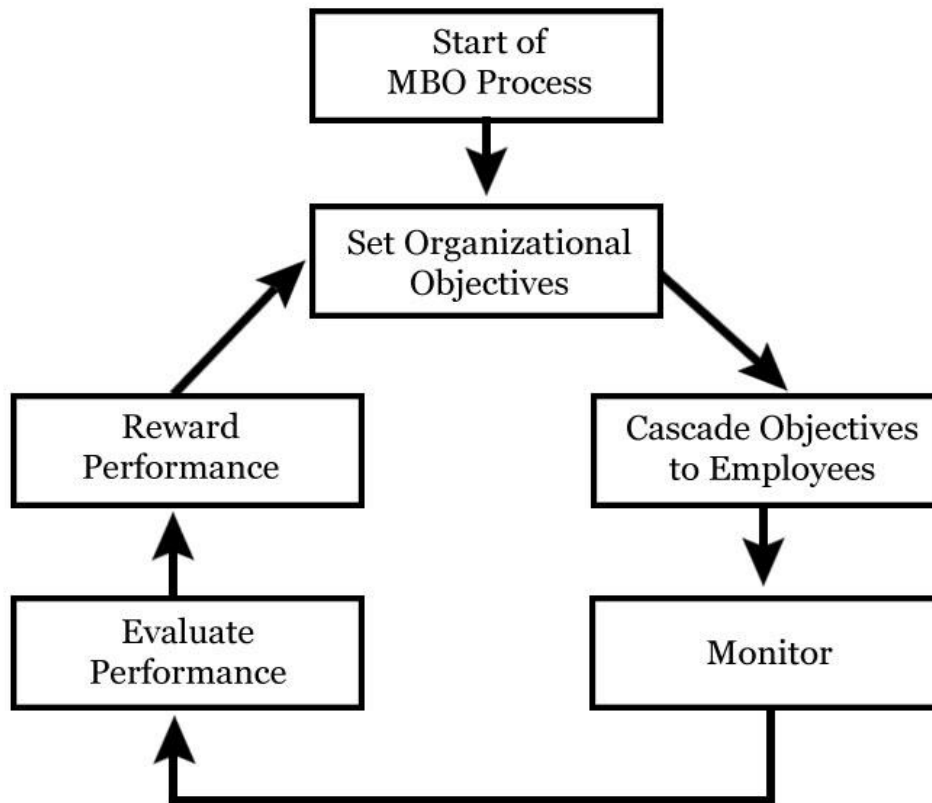


Figure 11 : Management by Objectives by Peter Drucker (communicationtheory.org 2011)

3.3 Information Sharing

Rather than communicate *to* someone, it would be important to communicate *with* the partner. During internal growth and change, the personnel needs to be informed as much as possible. If the company objectives are not shared with the personnel, it is harder for the employees to set individual goals and through them find the work motivation. It is beneficial for the management, and the teams themselves, to set concrete goals and a timeline to reach them so that the employee as an individual knows what is one aiming towards. Relevant news or events regarding the company are good to communicate with the personnel through the right channel.

Both case companies are aiming towards this through the creating of intranets, decreasing the unnecessary use of e-mail and launching monthly newsletters. Mr. Toivari mentions the problem of high number of e-mails when the possibility of losing important information increases: "E-mail communication is challenging because of the large amount of e-mails coming in, this is why the company advises the personnel to use Skype business in one on one discussions." Information overload is a usual phenomenon when the company grows, which is why the information shared should always be clear, current and centralised.

Solibri established an internal administration team in 2016, who focus on the information sharing within the company. Administration team aims to find the best platforms and methods to share current news and events that affect large part of the personnel. Even when some piece of news would not concern all the individuals, sharing it with everyone makes the workplace more equal and helps everyone to see the big picture of what is happening.

Solibri's internal teams aim to have weekly meetings, including the management's team own weekly meeting, but there are sometimes challenges to find the purpose of these meetings, Mr. Anderson says. Team meeting is an opportunity to discuss with one another, which is very important, but hopefully monitoring and evaluating team's own processes takes place as well. Team meetings are important for discussing in equal and honest surroundings and hopefully for finding solutions to possible problems within the team and the company. Mr. Toivari says, that in his opinion they have been successful regarding their team meetings: "We strive to keep our communication fast, topical, honest and open. Once a week on Fridays, there's a mutual breakfast for the staff where relevant topics are discussed lightly. "

Regarding external information sharing, Mr. Anderson names the marketing budget and press relationships as biggest challenges for a small company. When the resources are limited, it's important to first identify the channels that work for the company", he says. Mr. Anderson also believes that in the future real-time information sharing is becoming more and more important, and especially the sharing of trustworthy information. This will also push companies to always share more valuable information, when customers are involved through social media.

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter presents the conclusions of the study based on the analysis in the previous chapters.

4.1 Conclusions

This study is focused on analysing the importance of organisational communication for Solibri, in addition to stakeholder communication with their customer Soini & Horto Oy. Aim was to identify the challenges that growth brings onto organisational communication, find the improvement areas and offer corrections for them. This study's value for the case companies is to offer different points of views regarding growing organisations' communication and offer solutions for organisational communication problems. As a result, companies get practical recommendation ideas for adapting to changes better in the future.

Even though the two companies interviewed for the study function on the same business field (construction building), they approach the building industry from different directions. Solibri, being a product-driven software company, has been able to advertise the strengths of their product with a small marketing budget on i.e. social media and has managed to create multiple new customer endorsements who increase their popularity and promote SMC also through grapevine.

Soini & Horto, being an architectural firm providing services, focuses almost solely on B2B networking in terms of marketing, but the Tripla project has brought them more press attention and helped the company to grow in big numbers. Both case companies have been able to build a strong brand name for themselves and deploy their values in their external communication, but as the companies grow stakes become higher. How then should the companies answering to the growing demand and challenges with the brand?

Both industries, IT software and architecture are going through changes regarding marketing and technology, to mention a couple. One of the trends is the real-time information sharing that most likely takes on from traditional marketing in the future. Communication technology is improving fast and becoming more sophisticated but at the same time communication is getting more complex. Is it because of the vast amount of information being shared or because there are possibly too many channels in use?

Direct competition for Solibri, has been quite little as of recently, but as the BIM industry grows and technology improves, the importance of customer service increases. As the competition hardens, more effort in external and stakeholder communication is needed.

Stakeholder communication needs to be planned and implemented so that it matches companies' values and answers the stakeholders' expectations and demands. Clear, realistic and adaptable communication strategy helps in this case, which should be communicated clearly to the personnel.

As discussed in the study, good internal communication results to successful external communication. Company objectives and a concise plan to implement them must be shared with the staff clearly for it to be functional. This can be enhanced even more if the personnel can take part on the discussion on objectives and the working processes. Objectives and schedules must be realistic so they meet the resources, even though it is good to be ambitious enough to grow. Middle milestones give employees more motivation to strive towards the final goals. Management should also encourage employees by offering solutions to possible setbacks and disappointments through honest communication.

In both companies, there has been challenges regarding internal communication, but both companies have taken steps in terms of HR and Administration during the past year. In Solibri, internal admin team was established, Internal Monthly Newsletter was launched and the admin team is also developing company's intranet. Soino & Horto also established an HR team which focuses e.g. on administrating resources, marketing and internal communication.

Both case companies must concentrate on centralised information sharing and to make sure that the information being shared is relevant. Employees need to be aware of the changes and the reasoning behind them; this way it is easier to modify your own work and objectives, which leads to better work motivation and better results. Open, honest and equal communication upwards, downwards and laterally are keys to good work atmosphere which also improves the working efficiency.

Soini & Horto has been able to push their employees to good results by putting emphasis on employees' well-being by communicating with them honestly and regularly. As both companies continue to grow and business gets busier, direct communication between management and staff becomes more and more difficult, hence management should decide the level of interest and effort they want to put in downward communication and how it should be executed.

4.2 Recommendations

In this chapter recommendations for improvement areas identified in the last chapter are offered. The recommendations are grouped by themes and include practical suggestions to improve organisational communication amongst changes.

External Communication

For Solibri, the most important thing is that the process of marketing and branding is attached to the sales team. Both teams need to work closely together so that the customer relationships are built strong from the beginning. The company values must be brought up clearly so they can be used as leverage in sales. A clear sales process based on values, that is communicated clearly to all the parties should be implemented. Solibri is already working on a separate brand site that will be launched in 2017, which aims is to clearer focus on the values, and separating the selling of the product.

In the future, Solibri aims to become a bigger news sharer on social media as the Branding & Marketing Director Mr. Anderson wants to build a larger Solibri network online. For the company so succeed in this, the focus should be on clear messaging and branding on social media. This can be achieved by a social media implementation plan, from which the whole personnel could see what are the main themes and events that Solibri is marketing at the moment on SoME and how are they supposed to react to them. As the news are shared instantly today on social media, the plan should be adaptable and realistic and the roles of the staff have to be distinct.

Soini & Horto has also been able to build a strong brand for themselves, but through the marketing and press attention regarding Tripla, the risks are higher and more publicised than ever before. As an example, Project Länsimetro in Helsinki has gained a huge amount of negative press which affects the public's opinions. If there are delays or failures in the Tripla project, the press and the public needs to be informed of them clearly and honestly. If the company is not able to deliver, the risk of Tripla being a failure part of Pasila increases due to the negative image of the company.

Stakeholder Communication

Solibri being quite a unique and developed product on BIM industry until now, the effort has been on product instead of services. As the competition increases, in addition to social media implementation plan shared with the staff, a customer service communication plan should be made. This would combine all the teams' objectives and their functionalities into one, where the goal is to offer best service for the customer throughout the whole customer relationship. Clear instructions on how to act in different customer situations and what information to share for the customer, and most importantly, how is the information shared. Honest but strict and planned customer communication offers also value for the customership.

In addition to customer communication, Solibri also needs to take Nemetschek into consideration; how does their communication strategy affect Solibri's and how is Solibri able to respond to it? As this is something that customers might have also questions about, clear guidance should be given for the personnel.

In terms of the Tripla project, Soini & Horto have a very large number of stakeholders that they need to constantly communicate with. For the project to be successful, the communication should be clear and honest, also so that the possible delays and failure mentioned in the last chapter, do not happen. In the future, if the company plans to establish themselves abroad, new stakeholders need to be identified and prioritised and a communication strategy developed.

Internal Communication

As mentioned before, clear instructions for the personnel should be constructed. This is the only way for the companies' to be able to maintain their strong brands and customer communication. The channels for sharing these instructions, and other information, need to be centralised more. Recommendation is to have three channels at most, in addition to e-mail, where the personnel can communicate upwards and laterally. As an example: an intranet for sharing general information, a direct chat service for individual discussions and a platform to share current events and achievements of the personnel. Also face to face discussion should be encouraged for one on one communication to develop and improve, but it can only be successful if it's continuous and honest.

In terms of company values and how team and individual objectives are set, I would advise both companies to make sure that the employees are involved from the beginning. This increases the work motivation and efficiency, when the reasoning behind the objectives is agreed mutually between both parties: the employee as in the executor and the superior who monitors the actions. This way objectives are also more realistic and can be met more certainly.

Monitoring and evaluating performances are important part of organisational development. In addition to personal development discussions and habitual work motivation and atmosphere evaluation, I suggest that teams make a project plan table, where they list and prioritise their on-going projects and set different deadlines. Teams then get together once every three months for example, to evaluate and discuss the team's success level: were the objectives reached? If yes, what was done well and what could have been done better, if not, where did the failure occur and how to prevent in in the future? Individual goals and their success level can also be presented. Below an example of the table written from administration team's point of view.

Objective/project	Status	Achievements of the project	Improvements for the future	Responsibility
New intranet features' launch	Delayed > moved to July 2017	Almost ready, only 10% of the planned improvements left to implement (20.5.2017)	Take resources better into account and plan the implementation better individually	Persons 1, 2 & 4
Spring recreational day for the staff	Held in April 2017	Generally good feedback from the staff: location, activity and food were excellent	Inform the staff more clearly in advance of the details	Persons 2 & 5
Redecorating of the lobby	15.5.2017: Sofas missing, otherwise ready	Well planned and executed, good feedback from the staff and customers	Sort out more companies for options in the future	Persons 1, 2 & 3

Figure 12: Measuring Success Level of Projects (Alakotila 2017.)

5 Validity Assessment

In this final chapter, the validity of the research is evaluated. Comments on the researcher's role are given, as well as a short reflection on learning and assessment of business value for the case companies.

5.1 Validity and Reliability

Research validity can be divided into two groups: "Internal validity refers to how the research findings match reality, while external validity refers to the extent to which the research findings can be replicated to other environments" (Pelissier 2008, 12). In addition, reliability of the study analyses the extent to which the research findings can be replicated. (Pelissier, 12.)

This study was made based on interviews from two case companies that share a customer relationship, but function in very different fields of business idealistically. This causes the findings to be rather generic and not as specific as hoped. However, the problems and development areas are usually the same in growing companies, no matter what the size of the company. In the sense of replication of the challenges in organisational communication, these results can be considered as reliable.

Qualitative research method was chosen for this research in terms of it being more personal and interactive, but as the representatives of the company were interviewed, due to their company bias', answers were left slightly superficial. Also, when using qualitative research method, the possibility of the results being opinionated can be expressed. However, the author considers the results being valid in terms of identifying the phenomenon that is organisational communication and the analysis on its importance successfully. Author feels that the research questions were answered, but that there are a lot of possibilities for further research in the future regarding the subject.

Role of the Researcher

The author has been working at the case company Solibri for a year now, and has also been acquainted with Soini & Horto through customer event. This can affect the researcher's point of views as the author has developed preconceptions and opinions on both companies beforehand. Being part of the Solibri team gave the author also more insight to company's methods and manners, which made it harder to narrow the extent of the research, as there are quite a few improvement areas internally.

5.2 Reflections on Learning

Organisational communication is something that I feel quite passionate about, which made it easy to go through literature for the study. As there is so much information and so many theories to organisational communication, so it was hard to find the right proportion for it.

I feel that I learned a lot of new things about organisational communication and how crucial it is for an organisation to function and be successful. I'm especially interested in internal communication and its effects on the work motivation and efficiency, which is something that I will continue to study furthermore. I can also utilise the learnings of this study in the future as I will continue to work with communication and administration tasks in the company.

5.3 Business Value Assessment

This research offers practical recommendations for the case companies, based on the information received from the interviews. As the presumption is that both companies will continue to grow, the efficient organisation of communication becomes more and more important. This research will be shared with the representatives of both case companies and the aim is to encourage management's input in organisational communication.

Even though the recommendations will most likely not all be implemented as they were presented, the aim is to shake both companies' managements and offer solutions and examples for the existing challenges that come with the organisational growth. I, the author of this research, also hope that the focus is not only on improving all the things, but to find the best solutions for the companies in question and use these examples as possibilities.

Suggestions for Future Research

Organisational communication can be, and will be certainly studied in very large extent in the future. Regarding its connection to organisational growth, I would suggest going deeper into internal communication with measuring the personnel's attitude towards change with quantitative research methods such as anonymous questionnaire.

Company identification is also a major factor in work motivation, efficiency and atmosphere. The companies could study how these can be conducted which can result to less turnover in personnel.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Solibri Inc. Interview

Interview was carried out on the 31st of March 2017 with Mr. Russell Anderson, the Brand and Marketing Director of Solibri Inc.

How has Solibri developed after you joined the company? What do you think are the first steps when starting to plan a communication strategy? What should the organisation keep especially in mind?

Solibri has grown 3 or 4 times its size the past 4,5 years that Mr. Russell Anderson (Brand & Marketing Director) has been working at Solibri. When Mr. Anderson joined Solibri, the company had the product itself, but the communication strategy was almost non-existent so it had to be developed from the scratch. At the time, he sat down with the CEO to discuss about the values of the company, focus being especially on intangible values like sustainable building, well-being of the environment and saving resources such as money, time and construction materials.

Mr. Anderson states, that “The first steps when building a communication strategy are identifying company values, target groups and then the message company wants to put out.” In Solibri’s case the core message for its customers is simple: “We want to help you to build properly with our product”. However, the message has to be shaped for different types of customers i.e. architects and constructors. The message needs to have value in it, and Mr. Anderson pointed out that the Solibri values usually matches to customers’ values as well, when offering to help them to build properly right from the start.

Positive spin on communication has always been an aim for Solibri, says Mr. Anderson. Next step in Mr. Anderson’s opinion when putting the strategy into action, is to find the right people internally who can help you to forward the message, meaning for example the sales team. The message needs to be shared clearly so that the sales people can demonstrate it easily for the customers.

We also talked about the connection between company strategy and communication strategy. Corporate message reflects strongly to the communication strategy. It’s also important to realise the differences between communication strategy to marketing and branding, Mr. Anderson says. “Marketing is much more black and white, in our case for example “Get Solibri trial for two weeks to see how good our product is”.

As communication strategy is more based on values, it is more emotional and intangible, he says.

Could you tell about the process you have gone through in your organisation the past three years? What would you say are the major changes that your organisation has gone through?

“Three years ago, Solibri did not have a clear message for its customer so it had to be put together. Also, a major difference are the customer endorsements; three years ago, Solibri did not have any customer endorsements meaning people who are willing to speak on behalf of Solibri to improve a B to B marketing. Sort of, Solibri ambassadors.” Mr. Andersons purposefully approached different kinds of people who were interested in Solibri and had positive experiences with the product. Mr. Anderson wanted to choose interesting, enthusiastic Solibri “fans” with different backgrounds. Today, Solibri has more than 20 customer endorsements.

In the future Solibri’s goal is to focus more on bigger projects and bigger customers to bring more value to our marketing. Solibri was sold with 53 million euros to Nemetschek in December 2015, which has allowed the company to concentrate on bigger projects. Still, the company has been aiming to keep the image that Solibri has now but also search projects that might be attached to the intercompanies and bring in more attention.

Sales have grown 35% on average per year, but the marketing budget has not grown gradually, which brings challenges to Mr. Anderson’s work. “Social media has been a big part of external communication for Solibri and we are very happy that it is starting to find its foothold in Twitter and LinkedIn.” Solibri magazine is also one of the successful stories that Mr. Anderson has launched. “For us, social media has been a very important marketing tool and also a way to connect with the customers and operators in the industry. Three years ago, Solibri had no social media pages so it has been very rewarding to see that the effort on that area has paid off”.

What do you think are the biggest challenges in communication in a fast-growing organisation? How would you advise the management and personnel to face these challenges?

“On external level, few of the challenges for a small company are the marketing budget and creating press relationships. When resources are limited, it’s important to first identify

the channels that work for the company.” As mentioned earlier, Solibri did not use any social media few years back, hence creating the sort of social media “community” has been one challenge. Solibri has also been actively pushing the company message on different public press outlets, as no direct money is put on PR. Solibri’s own website is also updated constantly and they have started to track the trafficking and try to find the best solutions to attract potential customers.

Internally, biggest change has been founding the administration team last year and focusing more on human resources. “Internal communication has been quite badly constructed and especially when the growth is fast, it becomes more challenging to share information with personnel.” For improving the internal communication, Internal Monthly Newsletter was launched in December 2016, to try to centralise the information. “The aim of the Newsletter is to share relevant and current information that concerns the whole personnel.”

For a small company, Solibri has quite a complicated communication network, “spider’s web” as Mr. Anderson describes it. Being a part of Nemetschek and having over 15 different partners around the globe and four sub offices in Europe, creates challenges for information sharing. At the moment, Solibri and Nemetschek are developing their intercompany communication with different kind of platforms.

Solibri releases Monthly Newsletter that a customer or a prospect subscribes to when registering as Solibri user. Mr. Anderson describes this is as another way of trying to create value to the customership. Newsletter includes current events regarding Solibri and the construction industry.

Mr. Anderson’s advice for the management and the personnel, is to be humble and honest when communicating midst big changes. “Good example of this was when Solibri was sold to Nemetschek; the communication between the management and personnel wasn’t exactly a flaring success because the reasons behind the sale and its effects on personnel weren’t communicated clearly.” For Solibri the sale meant safe jobs; no one was going to be fired because of the sale. Also, possibilities to advance within a big company increased.

“One of the challenges in communication between management and staff in situations like these for example, is to communicate regularly and provide relevant and detailed information. Honesty is important when talking about how the business is going, how is the parent company planning to develop its business in the future etc.” Mr. Anderson also

brought up humility: "It's important to remember who you are talking to and what value does your information bring to them".

How has the organisational growth affected your job on a daily/weekly level?

Mr. Anderson says, that three years ago there were less voices affecting the decisions, so he could work quite independently and business activity in general was obviously a bit easier then when it was smaller. After acquiring more customers, more personnel and bigger management team while creating a stronger brand image, they had to consider a lot more. "People are also more demanding than for example three years ago, and the style of doing business has changed with some customers when the stakeholder numbers have grown. Geographical growth has also brought in a lot more work, i.e. in Germany detailed company brochures are still very much alive and working, which we do not really have here in Scandinavia anymore."

What to you is successful communication management? Do you think your company has succeeded in it? If so, how and what could have been possibly done better?

Social media has proven to be very successful for Solibri as mentioned, as well as creating the web of customer endorsements. Successful marketing has managed to grow even though the budget hasn't been increasing and no money has been spent on customer stories, so the marketing resources have been well used.

Structured internal communication has been a challenge for Solibri, especially before Monthly Internal Newsletter and Admin team were launched. The company is trying to centralise the internal information and always bring value to what they are sharing. Also, basic information like the values, strategy and the knowledge of other teams' work is sometimes lost on the personnel. "Employee identification is also highly influential on work motivation; identification comes when the values of the company show in everyday life of an employee."

Mr. Anderson pointed out that in the strategy meetings held twice a year between the management team, they rarely reflect on the past, they only focus on the future which might cause that some problems or mistakes made are never processed or fixed.

When it comes to sharing information from management team to the rest of the personnel, Mr. Anderson finds that information sharing should always be honest and detailed, but the decision-making process should not be shared since it can cause a lot of confusion and

unnecessary conversation. Even when sharing bad information, it would be beneficial for everyone to again bring out the value of that information for example saying: "If you push a bit further, we can reach our goal, even though we are not there yet". Good communication management and leading the personnel successfully shows when you are presenting a problem or a disappointment, but at the same time provide a possible solution to it, Mr. Anderson says.

**What do you think will happen for organisational communication in the future?
What route would you like Solibri's communication to take?**

Mr. Anderson believes that in the future real-time information sharing is becoming more and more common, and especially sharing trustworthy information. This will also push companies to always share more valuable information, when customers are involved through social media.

For Solibri, Mr. Anderson would like to develop an editorial calendar as in choose monthly or quarterly themes etc. or relevant topics to focus on and then develop the "Solibri news" around it. Mr. Anderson also aspires for Solibri to become one of the important news leaders in the industry. "But it's still important to retain the company values and the image we have. Big possibilities lie on Solibri's different platforms like SSC (user interface) and web-site and a new brand site is also being launched next month.

"One of the ambitions for the company is to show different aspects of the company on separate sites, like the brand site, and then a more commercial or shop like platforms or channels. In order to improve customer relationships and communicating, one step would be having a daily interactive blog or chat when information could be shared real time so it would more personal. However, as mentioned before the core message of the company should still stay the same. Solibri is also moving to a new open office the following summer, which brings new challenges and possibilities in Solibri's communication."

Appendix 2: Soini & Horto Oy Interview

Mr. Petri Toivari, the BIM Manager of Soini & Horto Oy was interviewed with additional comments provided by the Marketing Assistant Minna Miettinen. Interview was done in 11th of April 2017.

Could you please introduce the company and your own position in a few words?

“The company was established in 2007 with the name ”Interarc” which was then changed to Arkkitehdit Soini & Horto about four years ago to describe the essence of the company better. Core values for the company are honesty, sincerity with its customers and personnel and to develop and maintain the already successful image as a good work place.” On their website, Soini & Horto describe their values as being able to combine the functional, technical and commercial attributes of different projects, in a skilful and sustainable way.

Mr. Petri Toivari, BIM Manager, has been working at Soini & Horto for three years now, having previously cooperated with his current colleagues. Marketing assistant Minna Miettinen started with the company in fall 2016. Shareholders of the company are Kalle Soini, Sami Horto and Santtu Rothsten, Kalle Soini working as the CEO, respectively.

As of 2017 May, they have about 70 employees when in 2014, they had 28 employees. In 2015, company’s sales revenue was 4,453 million euros.

Please introduce the Project Tripla in Pasila in few words? How has the project affected your organisational communication?

The project originally started in 2011 but through the architect design competition for re-establishing the Pasila railway station in Helsinki. The competition was held from 2012 to 2013 and in the end, YIT (the building client) was the only one who left an offer, Soini & Horto being one of the two companies behind the architectural plan. Project is done in different stages; at the moment, the focus is on building the underground parking lots. By 2019, the shopping centre should be finished and the whole project is scheduled to be finished by 2021, when the last section of residences has been finalised.

Through this project the whole organisation has grown immensely: the staff has more than doubled and the organisation has also gotten a lot of attention through the press interest. Big organisational changes have been a challenge especially in the HR and internal communication and resourcing. Their goal has been, and still is, to strengthen the company brand and maintain the values they restore.

“As the project was initiated by the Finnish government and the City of Helsinki, authority restrictions are very strict regarding the whole building process, and this concerns the hire process as well. As a big, public building project which represents the City of Helsinki eventually, the requirements for architects and designers in the project are pedantic”, Mr. Toivari shares.

The project itself takes about half of the staff at the moment. Within the project, we have appointed project managers who take care of the project at the site and here at the office. The division between responsibilities must be clear in order to control the quality. Cooperation is a huge part of the project, as an example City of Helsinki has developed their own Tripla team. Communication and coordination with YIT is also continuous.”

About a year ago the human resource management took another step when they established an administration team. Administration team assists different team, helps with marketing, human resources and any current matters needed.

Mr. Toivari confirms that through Tripla, the company has gotten more publicity and press attention, that has come partly as a surprise. “Luckily we have managed to strengthen our brand despite the big organisational changes and challenges the growth brings.”

Could you describe how organisational communication has been managed in your organisation? What are your focus points regarding communication?

The focus of the external communication at S & H is in direct communication with the customers. Through the interview, I found out that instead of developing a detailed communication or marketing plan, their focus is in B2B communication. In fact, SAFA (Finnish Association of Architects) has stated previously that direct marketing is not allowed. (No direct source found from SAFA’s website.) Instead, architectural field is highly based on creating and maintaining network of relationships, which is also the goal for Soini & Horto. “The industry itself is going through changes and the ways to market are developing”, Mr. Toivari says.

“The organisation has wanted to keep the management and personnel as equal as possible so that the communication would run as smoothly as possible. It fairly normal for the CEO to go and talk directly to any of our staff members and the management aspires to keep the atmosphere as positive and open”.

Mr. Toivari describes their internal communication being fast, topical, honest and open. Company's internal communication is done mainly through intranet, e-mail and face to face. Once a week on Fridays, there's a mutual breakfast for the staff where relevant topics are discussed lightly.

"E-mail communication is a challenge for us because of the large amount of e-mails coming in, this is why the management also advises the personnel to use Skype business in one on one discussions." In the future, they aspire to develop their communal atmosphere and move more on project-based thinking related to communication and resourcing.

How is your stakeholder communication executed for example regarding the Tripla project? How has your relationship with Solibri been in the past and do you have any feedback for Solibri?

"There are over 20 different parties designing Tripla, but probably about 300 different parties involved in the whole project. Cooperation needs to be continuous and open all the time for the project to work. Communication with authorities is constant between teams. As the supervision is quite strict, it is usual for different authority teams to show up at the S & H office and supervise without any specific previous agreement."

B2B communication is the main way to do sales for the company, in addition website and social media image is kept very clean and concise. "We haven't really put much effort on social media to be honest, our main focus is on networking and cooperation."

"Cooperation with Solibri has been long-term and when the Tripla project started, it was clear that Solibri is to be involved. In fact, the project could not be done without the advanced BIM checking in SMC, as the designs models are very complicated and big size." Mr. Toivari mentioned that recently, many head designers have been using Solibri to communicate with different parties and to make notes internally as well. "Previously I was in direct contact with the CEO of Solibri frequently, but as both businesses are growing, there hasn't been that much time for that, understandably. Sometimes too much e-mails coming from Solibri, but I understand that it is important to inform customers about the changes and improvements", Mr. Toivari says.

In the future, the company plans to focus on bigger projects, for now just in Finland, and aims to keep their brand image and values same. Being a good employer is a very important goal for the company, and in fact they are named as a "Great place to work at" by

Suomen parhaat työpaikat. One of their upcoming projects is going to be a luxury hotel built in Kalasatama.