



SAVONIA

THESIS - BACHELOR'S DEGREE PROGRAMME
TOURISM, CATERING AND DOMESTIC SERVICES

TOP-DOWN COMMUNICATION: THE INFLUENCE OF MANAGERS ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Author: Nico Thielen

Supervisor: Jorma Korhonen

Field of Study Tourism, Catering and Domestic Services			
Degree Programme Degree Programme in Hotel and Restaurant Management			
Author(s) Nico Thielen			
Title of Thesis Top-Down Communication: The Influence of Managers on Employee Engagement			
Date	17/11/2019	Pages/Appendices	60
Supervisor(s) Jorma Korhonen			
Client Organisation /Partners N/A			
<p>Abstract</p> <p>This paper analyses top-down communication and its possible hinderances. The goal of this paper is to inquire to which extend managers have an influence on organizational communication and what effects different management styles have on employee engagement.</p> <p>For this purpose, communicational concepts are defined and communicational problems analysed. In addition, a review and comparison of four management styles will be conducted. To support the relevance of this thesis, interviews with managers are performed and compared to each other and to the theoretical research findings.</p> <p>Findings: Employee engagement is at a very low global level. Managers have a significant influence on organizational communication as well as employee engagement. Communication malpractices of managers can be considered one of the main obstacles to fruitful communication. Authentic leadership and transformational leadership show significant benefits to the company and its employees as opposed to destructive leadership styles. Not all of the interviewed managers have awareness of the communication challenges and some of the listed hinderances to communication apply to the interviewees. Managers who have better awareness of their impact on employee engagement report better results with their teams as opposed to the ones who are less aware of this situation.</p> <p>In order to increase employee engagement, top-down communication and the manager in charge are important factors to consider.</p>			
<p>Keywords Management, Problems, Communication, Tourism, Hospitality, Employee Engagement, Top-down</p>			

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5
1 IMPORTANT CONCEPTS - ABOUT THE VALUE OF COMMUNICATION	6
1.1 Definitions of Communication	6
1.1.1 Basic Definition of Communication	6
1.1.2 Detailed Definition of Communication	6
1.2 LMX – Leader Member Exchange (Wayne, Liden, Sparrowe 1994)	6
1.3 Emotions in an Organization	7
1.4 Types of Communication	7
1.4.1 Formal/Professional	7
1.4.2 Informal/Personal	7
1.4.3 Vertical and Horizontal Communication	8
1.5 Communication Channels	8
1.6 The Importance of Communication in the Workplace	9
1.7 The Results of Good Communication	9
2 PROBLEMS IN COMMUNICATION	11
2.1 A View on Employee Engagement	11
2.2 The Importance of Employee Engagement	14
2.3 Disruptions in Communication	14
2.3.1 Originating from the Environment	14
2.3.2 Originating from the Giver of Information – Blockage of Communication	14
2.3.3 Originating from the Receiver	14
2.3.4 Originating from the Relationship of the Communicators – Bias/Prejudice	15
2.3.5 Originating from the Organization – or the Manager	15
2.4 The Emotional Impact of Communication	15
2.5 The Link between Employee Engagement and Management	16
3 THE MANAGER	18
3.1 How Bad Managers Come into Office – The Possible Result of a Flawed Manager Hiring-process .	18
3.2 Inconsistencies in Communication	18
3.2.1 The Ingratiation Theory	18
3.2.2 Ingratiation Theory and its Application to Gender	19
3.3 Managers Hesitate to Evaluate Themselves Properly	19

3.4	Communication Practice is not a Priority for Some Managers	21
3.5	Managers are Bad at Evaluating Themselves	21
3.6	Evaluation of Different Leadership Styles	22
3.6.1	Destructive Leadership	22
3.6.2	Types of Destructive Leadership.....	24
3.6.3	Authoritarian Leadership.....	25
3.6.4	Authentic Leadership.....	27
3.6.5	Transformational Leadership.....	31
3.7	Comparing Leadership Styles	33
4	EMPIRICAL RESEARCH: QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS	35
4.1	Methodology.....	35
4.2	Qualitative Research	35
4.3	Research Procedure	35
4.4	Interview Analysis.....	36
4.4.1	Analysis of Interview - Interviewee 1.....	36
4.4.2	Analysis of Interview - Interviewee 2.....	38
4.4.3	Analysis of Interview - Interviewee 3.....	40
4.5	Comparative Analysis of the Interviews	41
4.6	Qualitative Analysis: Conclusion	43
5	CONCLUSION	44
6	REFLECTION	47
7	BIBLIOGRAPHY	48
8	APPENDIX.....	51

INTRODUCTION

Communication is as important in business as it is in personal life and both types of communication are often correlated in the workplace. In the workplace, managers are in charge of the operation and have great influence on the structure of an organization.

Throughout my short career of a total of 3 years in the business world, I have seen a variety of ways that managers communicate to their employees, both effective and less effective. This is part of why I chose this topic for my thesis: to explore the facets of communication, spotlight its pitfalls and discover alternative strategies towards a more effective way of communicating.

In this paper I will elaborate on the subject of communication between managers and their employees. The relationship between these two groups of key personnel of a hotel and any company is important, yet sometimes underestimated. In the workplace there are a great variety of distortions, blockages and abuses of communication. Top-down communication is the pivotal topic of this paper, since normally managers set the frameworks for communication or have the power to change it. Bottom-up-communication has great influence in an organization as well as it constitutes the environment in which the communication is held. Its in depth analysis should however be subject to a different paper.

At first, this paper will go over some basic concepts of communication that are important for the thorough understanding of the topic at hand and will serve as a common basis with the reader.

Secondly, common problems in the communication structures will be addressed. Particular focus lies on the situation of international employee engagement and how to improve it. Furthermore, some common forms of disruptions and distortions in communication will be listed and analysed.

The goal of this paper is to find out to what extent managers are involved in the process of communication, if they are responsible for its pitfalls and what the possible consequences for employees are.

Thirdly, to better understand the influence of the manager, this particular position and its impact on employees will be analysed in more detail, going over 4 different leadership styles, namely: Destructive Leadership, Authoritarian Leadership, Authentic Leadership and Transformational Leadership. In order further support this thesis and to confirm its relevance, interviews with hotel managers will be held and compared and analysed to the theoretical findings. In the end, a conclusion will be drawn, shedding light on the impact that managers have on the communication of an organization.

This thesis findings will be based on a combination of the following elements:

1. Theoretical research and explanations
2. An empirical study, namely qualitative interviews with hotel managers on this particular topic.
3. My personal experience, gathered in three hotel businesses as an employee and in one hotel/restaurant as a manager, included in this paper through anecdotal examples.

1 IMPORTANT CONCEPTS - ABOUT THE VALUE OF COMMUNICATION

In this first chapter, I will go over the basic concepts and definitions of communication, as well as the types and means of communication, in order to give a basis and starting point for my research.

In order to improve communication, we first have to better understand what it really is and what it includes. For this, we will first have a look at the basic dictionary definition and a more detailed definition of communication.

1.1 Definitions of Communication

1.1.1 Basic Definition of Communication

"The imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium." (Lexico by Oxford)

This definition englobes the general understanding of communication between two human beings as perceived by many employers. It is the exchange of information through a medium, be it speech or a visual form.

1.1.2 Detailed Definition of Communication

Webfinance Inc. (2019) B.D. gives a more detailed definition:

"Communication is a **two-way process** of reaching mutual understanding, in which participants not only exchange **(encode-decode)** information, news, ideas and feelings but also **create and share meaning**. In general, communication is a means of **connecting people** or places. In business, it is a key function of management - an organization cannot operate without communication between levels, departments and employees. " This definition shows us 4 vital elements needed to assure an effective communication between two or more parties.

1) Communication as a 2-way process

If communication takes place, there is always activity going out from both parties involved. The one that gives the message and the one that receives it. Both parties actively either send or receive a message.

2) Communication as a way to encode/decode

The way a message is communicated always involves a code that needs to be understood by both communicators. If the code is unclear, an order cannot be processed in the most effective fashion.

3) Communication as a way to share meaning

When communicating with each other, it is important to create meaning. If a message is meaningful it is easier to understand.

4) Communication as a means to connect people

Communication connects people and communication can be used to connect people to their actions. The synthesis of information at hand and the actions that will be taken in accordance is a powerful means of communication towards another party.

1.2 LMX – Leader Member Exchange (Wayne, Liden, Sparrowe 1994)

Across research, LMX theory comes up time and again as it is an important element of communication in organizations. LMX describes a dyadic relationship between employees and their managers. Leaders will use different strategies to deal with different employees, resulting in either a high or low quality LMX.

High quality LMX is marked by high support and trust into the other party and a mutually beneficial relationship. Low quality LMX is merely based on the completion of a job.

Wayne et al. (1994) point out that LMX is developed fairly early in a relationship and tends to stay stable throughout the duration of it.

1.3 Emotions in an Organization

Organizational analysis often focuses on rational aspects of an operation, sticking to the plainly professional aspects. (Fiebig and Kramer 1998) However, emotions in the organizational context, often associated with communication, can have a significant impact on the operation. According to Fiebig and Kramer (1998), emotions are linked with expectations and can serve as positive or negative catalysts for the organizational members.

A primary component of emotion is the “[...] discrepancy between the expected and the actual” (Fiebig and Kramer 1998). For instance, if a manager is being impolite and thus failing to meet the expectation of an employee, negative emotions are the consequence. On the other hand, if a manager offers unexpected help, positive emotion can occur.

1.4 Types of Communication

1.4.1 Formal/Professional

Formal communication is described as a general demeanor in communication that should be used in a workplace context. It has the following traits (HR Development Info, 2019):

a. Accurateness and correctness

Both in terms of information and grammatical matters in order to ensure an effective business relation.

b. Clarity and conciseness

People on the job do not have time to read through superfluous information or sort out ambiguities. Communication should be brief and to the point.

Professional communication can use any type of medium from the spoken form to written or digital or even via social media (internal/external). Overall, professional communication is based on efficiency and is result oriented. The matters discussed by strictly professional communication are mostly business related and tend to be impersonal.

1.4.2 Informal/Personal

Personal communication can take on any form from spoken or written to digital communication between two or more individuals in a professional environment. Five traits emerge in this type of communication (Fay 2011):

a. Personal disclosure

The disclosure of pieces of personal information, sometimes on a deeply intimate level to another person. This can create a sense of trust.

b. Sociality

Sociality includes interactions like greetings or references to past knowledge of the other or anticipation of future interactions. The goal is often to bond with the other person. Sociality is associated with positive workplace relationships, decreased turnover and organizational commitment.

c. Support giving/getting

Support giving/getting refers to help or advice given or gotten between parties. Supportive communication has been associated with stress reduction and enhanced innovation.

d. Commiseration/complaining

The action of complaining about the job, colleague or supervisor. This action suggests a level of trust that has been established between interactants. Although this trait of personal communication is often seen as negative, it can help to strengthen the team.

e. Business updates/exchanges

Although updating messages or exchanges often have a pragmatic business function, they are often transmitted in conjunction to other types of interaction that serve a social purpose.

As we can see, personal communication is an important part of communication, even in professional environments. It can be associated with positive effects on the work place and can be considered the default mode of communication.

1.4.3 Vertical and Horizontal Communication

- Horizontal: Communication between groups or individuals on the same level of the hierarchy of an organization. Horizontal communication can be formal and related to work as well as informal and unrelated to work such as conversa. (Bartels, Peters, Jong, Pruyn, Van der Mollen 2010)
- Vertical: Top-down and bottom-up communication from employees to their superiors and vice versa. Frequently, vertical communication is work-related. (Bartels et al. 2010)
- Top-down communication can be used to communicate company vision and strategy to the employees as well as operational instructions. (Bartels et al. 2010) This is the type this paper will mainly focus on.
- Bottom-up means from employee level towards management. It can be used to create opportunity for employees to take part in decision making or communication of grievances. (Bartels et al. 2010)

1.5 Communication Channels

In order to establish a proper communication in the workplace, there are different channels that can be used. The most common ones being the following three:

a. Personal meetings

In the form of formal briefings or informal discussions, face to face communication can be considered the richest mode of communication as it allows for immediate reaction and enables questions. Non verbal cues can be observed as well which is not the case for any of the other channels. (Zondi, Cassim, Karodia 2015)

b. Telephone conversation

Is still considered personal, but misses the non-verbal cues. It has been surpassed by e-mail due to the latter's more diverse use and features. (Zondi et al. 2015)

c. Computer based communication: In business, e-mails are the most widespread channel of communication, since it enables information exchange regardless of location and time-zone at relatively low cost. Pitfalls of e-mails are overload of information and the absence of instant feedback. (Zondi et al. 2015)

1.6 The Importance of Communication in the Workplace

Communication is a vital part of any organization as one of the pillars that keep the whole system up and running. The impact of a flawed or disrupted communication system can have highly negative impact on the organization as a whole. (Blidaru, D.M.A., & Blidaru, G.R.A. 2015) Indeed, many studies and papers acknowledge communication as a prime factor to an enterprise's success. (Paul Robson, D. Tourish 2005)

Hansen and Wernerfeld's (1989) study showed the evaluation of 40 companies over a five year period and concluded that the internal organizational factor like effective communication was the first dependable indicator of a firm's success: Next to other factors like market share, capital intensity, size and sales growth, good interpersonal relationships between management and their personnel was the most important indicator of a firm's profitability.

Bartels et al. (2010) in part confirm this thesis in their work and show that vertical communication enhances the employee's understanding of company values and standing. Furthermore, it can help to differentiate the company as an organization which improves employee's identification with it, as long as the communication is positive.

When it comes to positive horizontal communication, this communication has an influence on the perception of the employees on the group they work in. If they support each other, a stronger identification towards their profession is built.

1.7 The Results of Good Communication

The relation of productivity and communication is complex. However, benefits of good communication can be observed in firms that practice high quality communication (P. G. Clampitt, C.W. Downs 1993; Bartels et al. 2010):

- Increased organizational identification
- Increased professional identification
- Increased levels of innovation
- Reduced number of strikes
- Higher quality of products and services
- Decreased operational costs

- Decreased absenteeism
- Improved productivity

Further research underlines that a stronger drive towards innovation involving employees from every level can be achieved by good communication inside a company. Through good communication in the company, but also between departments of that company, linking as many echelons as possible, a solid network of innovation and involved employees can be created. (Kanter 1988)

Synthesis Chapter 1

As we can see, the nature of communication is very variable and can take on many shapes from vertical/horizontal over formal/informal and fulfill various functions like encode/decode a message or even connecting people.

Communication is both indispensable in business in the same way it is in personal matters. Professional and private use of communication are sometimes mixed and tend to go unregulated in companies, which can be the origin of communication problems. Communication is often linked to emotions that have an impact on the involved.

Excellent communication appears to have benefits, like decreased costs and improved productivity and can be linked to company success. However, establishing a good communication structure is a task many companies fail at. Another important factor is LMX, leader-member-exchange that in part defines the quality of the relationship of two parties.

2 PROBLEMS IN COMMUNICATION

Chapter one points towards the benefits of a good communication in the workplace. However, there are certain obstacles that can hinder the smooth course of communication. In this chapter, I will analyse some of these hindrances and find out if they have a common origin, in order to guide an approach to finding a solution.

2.1 A View on Employee Engagement

In chapter 1 we have discovered that communication plays an important role in a business and has an impact on the profit of any company through the employees who are affected in a positive or negative way by communication. Generally speaking, let us have a look at the situation of employee engagement at work. Doing so, we will find out if and how much potential for improvement there is in communication.

Let's have a look at the numbers.

(Gallup, Report: State of the American Workplace, 2013)

This poll *Figure 1* -by Gallup, a global analytics and advice firm-summarizes the results of over 25 million interviews gathered over a few decades.

The vocabulary in the poll describes:

ENGAGED: The employee was passionate about their job and invested time and energy to accomplish their tasks.

DISENGAGED: The employee invested time, but no energy or passion into their job and see it as a mere means to earn money.

ACTIVELY DISENGAGED: The employee actively disengages in their job undermining coworker's work and actively show their unhappiness.

The figures of employee engagement are staggeringly low. Bersin (2015) confirms this trend in his analysis, claiming that many modern-day companies are having difficulties to engage today's workforce.

Osbourne and Hammoud (2017) even put a number on the losses of businesses in the USA through employee disengagement: \$350 billion in losses. The potential of improvement to be made is enormous.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AMONG THE U.S. WORKING POPULATION

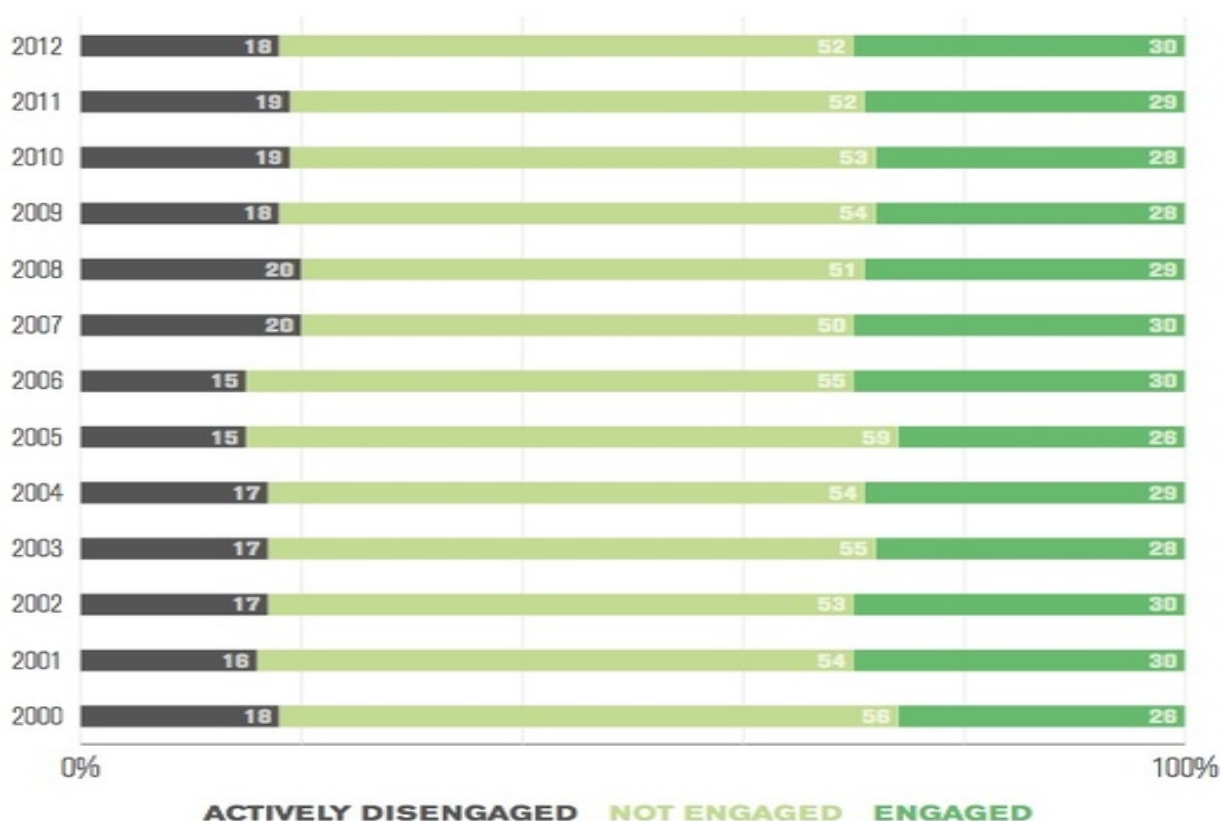


Figure 1 (Gallup survey)

In another article, Gallup also analysed the state of the global employee engagement level across diverse industries and states it at a general low of 13%. (Table 1)

Regionally, Engaged Employees Most Common in the U.S. and Canada

More than one in three workers in the Middle East and North Africa region are actively disengaged

Region	Engaged	Not Engaged	Actively Disengaged
United States and Canada	29%	54%	18%
Australia and New Zealand	24%	60%	16%
Latin America	21%	60%	19%
Commonwealth of Independent States and nearby countries	18%	62%	21%
Western Europe	14%	66%	20%
Southeast Asia	12%	73%	14%
Central and Eastern Europe	11%	63%	26%
Middle East and North Africa	10%	55%	35%
South Asia	10%	61%	29%
Sub-Saharan Africa	10%	57%	33%
East Asia	6%	68%	26%

2011-2012

GALLUP

Figure 2 Gallup Statistics on empl. enqag. (2011/12)

Here are a selection from the report regarding specific countries.

Table 1: personal picks of specific countries

<i>Country</i>	<i>engaged</i>	<i>not engaged</i>	<i>actively disengaged</i>
<i>Belgium</i>	12%	66%	22%
<i>Denmark</i>	21%	69%	10%
<i>Egypt</i>	13%	55%	32%
<i>Finland</i>	11%	76%	13%
<i>France</i>	9%	65%	26%
<i>Hong Kong</i>	4%	68%	29%
<i>China</i>	6%	68%	26%
<i>Luxembourg</i>	14%	72%	14%
<i>Thailand</i>	14%	84%	2%
<i>Tunisia</i>	5%	41%	54%

Analysis of the Gallup figures:

According to the results of the research by Gallup, general engagement around the globe hovers at around 20% or lower with the exception of the Americas. There is no clear pattern visible as to why engagement is higher in certain regions, whereas it is clear that the general level of engagement is concerningly low.

While none of the world's countries really excels at ensuring employee engagement, some countries show worse results than others. The research has been conducted over a wide array of sectors, so the decisive factor is most likely not the industry in which employees are engaged.

Reviewing the different countries, culture might play a significant role in the equation. Asian countries have a low engagement (China: 6%), but are less likely to negatively engage in the workplace as well (Thailand: 2%). Countries like China have a more collectivist culture, in contrast to Europe where individualism is more common, or the USA, considered most individualist country in the world (Fernandez, Carlson, Stepina, Nicholson 1998; Hofstede 2001). In collectivist countries, people care more about the collective than their individual needs, and might therefore actively disengage *less*, as personal needs are seen as of lower importance.

In individualist cultures, engagement might be slightly higher, as individuals will engage at work more to advance their personal career and achieve their goals.

In strong contrast to the low percentage of disengagement of Asian countries stands the high disengagement of Sub-Saharan Africa (33%) and North-Africa/Middle East (35%). Countries like Egypt (32%) or Tunisia (54%) have high levels of active disengagement.

While the cultural impact on employee engagement lies beyond the scope of this paper, low engagement at work is one of the problems that management everywhere in the world has to deal with and that may be remedied by a better communication from managers towards their employees as will be shown in this paper.

2.2 The Importance of Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is important for an organization, because it is linked to the longevity of a company as well as the productivity of its employees. (Osborne and Hammoud 2017) This is important for the financial outcome of the organization. However, employee engagement is important beyond that: The feeling of competence and being needed and appreciated by the organization are psychological needs that increase individual behaviour to maintain psychological health. In turn this leads to a cycle of growth in each individual. (Osborne and Hammoud 2017)

2.3 Disruptions in Communication

2.3.1 Originating from the Environment

Sometimes, communication problems are linked to the medium through which they are communicated. (Blidaru, D.M.A., & Blidaru, G.R.A., 2015) An unclear phone line, a bad internet connection, mistakes in writing or noisy surroundings during a conversation are examples of external factors that can impede the flow of communication.

2.3.2 Originating from the Giver of Information – Blockage of Communication

The giver of information can both be the manager or an employee. We will focus on the manager as giver in this case. Sometimes, the giver of information has a different frame of reference than the receiver of the message. If this situation goes undetected, a blockage of communication can take place where both parties will be unable to transmit their message to the other. (Blidaru, D.M.A., & Blidaru, G.R.A., 2015)

Another cause of disruption can be information overload. Giving too much information can overcharge the receiving party, causing confusion and message distortion. (Blidaru, D.M.A., & Blidaru, G.R.A., 2015)

2.3.3 Originating from the Receiver

The receiver of information can both be the manager or an employee. We will focus on the employee as receiver in this paper. Sometimes, the receiver is influenced by subjective elements that will make him/her filter the given information and select only what is matching with his/her emotional and intellectual level. If this is the case, a message will be disrupted and thus not be processed as a whole by the receiver. Certain content is not easily understood and requires effort in decoding, interpreting and comprehending. If one of those actions is not performed, message disruption is imminent. (Blidaru, D.M.A., & Blidaru, G.R.A., 2015)

An inability of the receiver to listen is an important cause of disruption as well. (Blidaru, D.M.A., & Blidaru, G.R.A., 2015)

2.3.4 Originating from the Relationship of the Communicators – Bias/Prejudice

It can occur that relationships are formed on the basis of bias, prejudice, attitudes or blockage of information. These disruptions are prominently visible if the two parties are differentiated by gender, culture, age or professional training. If there is a preceding bias towards one party, communication attempts might be blocked by the other party right from the start. (Blidaru, D.M.A., & Blidaru, G.R.A., 2015)

Cultural differences can also manifest themselves in terms of language barrier. If neither party makes an effort to overcome it, those complications can pose a great impediment to communication.

2.3.5 Originating from the Organization – or the Manager

The structure of a communication network itself can be an impediment to communication if it is too simple or too complex, too slow or inflexible. Very long hierarchical lines are a prime cause for communication disruption, not only due to the length, but also the rigidity of the structure. (Blidaru, D.M.A., & Blidaru, G.R.A., 2015)

Plurality of management is a major origin of communication deformities, sometimes double or triple networks are in place, only complicating the process (Blidaru, D.M.A., & Blidaru, G.R.A., 2015).

Anecdotal Example:

To illustrate this particular form of disruption, I would like to briefly elaborate on the subject through an anecdote from my working experience: In one of the hotels I worked, this plurality of management time and again complicated communication, because employees were confused about the structure. There were in fact 3 managers: the on-site manager, the upper manager (off-site) and myself as administrative manager, all supervising the team. Each of the managers wanted to be included in the information chain, but there was no communicational system established between the management. The employees did not stick to the theoretical hierarchical structure and would inconsistently report to either the on-site manager or myself or the upper management for complaints or operational pieces of information. This process led to an imbalance of information in the organization and resulted in misunderstandings and frustration at management level. The staff was involved in this communication problem, but management was the party who was responsible for it.

Eventually it was solved by management. They defined the on-site manager as sole first place-to-go for any sort of professional communication. The on-site manager would then transfer the information to the other parties, ensuring an evenly spread network for communication.

2.4 The Emotional Impact of Communication

Certain types of communication have a certain impact on the emotions of the receiver of this communication. This is especially true for managers and their communication behaviour: If a manager communicates in a negative way – willingly or unconsciously – this has a negative impact on the emotions of the employee (Sniderman, Fenton O’Creevy, Searle 2016). Sniderman et al. (2016) explain that this kind of mistreatment has negative consequences

not only for the employee, in terms of emotional distress, but also for the organization in terms of losses in effectiveness.

This negative communication can take various forms and shapes, even non-verbal, it can be insulting, belittling, excessive egoistic behaviour, ignoring or judging as will be shown in more detail below. Sniderman, 2016 describes it as "disconfirming managerial communication", in contrast to "confirming managerial communication".

Disconfirming (Sniderman et al. 2016) communication fails to appreciate the other party, not recognizing the other party as relevant or actively disparaging the party and their actions on a professional and/or personal level. Sniderman divides this disconfirming communication into 3 different categories:

- a. Indifferent: In this communication, the actor engages in one-sided conversations (monologues), actively ignoring.
- b. Impervious: This category disproves or disparages the other one's feelings, and proclaiming them as being unjustified.
- c. Disqualifying: Sniderman describes this category of communication as being "ambiguous" or "contradictory".

2.5 The Link between Employee Engagement and Management

In their article published 13th March 2014 in Harvard Business Review, Randall Beck and James Harter explain the results of their research on manager's impact on businesses. According to them, the answer is yes:

According to their research, managers account for over half of the variance of employee engagement. This means that under an incompetent, or unfitting manager, employees will be up to 70% less engaged.

Randall and Harter point out that one of the problems is the lack of consistency in management across departments. Those differences are quite unpredictable, as the same management model seems to work for some teams, but not for others. An important variable: The manager and his/her leadership style.

According to Beck and Harter, the key to a better overall performance is better managers. Great managers also bring a better communication. They are able to adapt their management style to the needs of each member of the team.

Osborne and Hammoud (2017) confirm the relation in their research stating that "(...) the ability for leadership to effectively communicate is a basis for employee engagement." There is indeed a link between employee engagement and management. It is the communication that is used by the manager to connect management and employees. The challenge is to hire managers capable of establishing these lines of communication.

Conclusive Remarks:

The Gallup report reveals that employee engagement is at a low rate of generally less than 20% world wide. While this is only one aspect of the global business landscape, it reveals a major deficiency in the system with a lot of potential to improve. This is found to be true in any sector and any industry.

According to Gallup surveys, an average of 3/4 of the employees worldwide is not really engaged in their work which leads to the question why this is the case. One of the factors that can improve this situation is the managers on which I will focus in this paper.

Beck and Harter (2014) explain that the managers are the single element throughout the businesses that have an influence on employee engagement. According to Beck and Harter (2014), Bresin (2015) and Osborne and Hammoud (2017) current managers are likely to be responsible for this low employee engagement.

3 THE MANAGER

In the previous chapter, it became obvious that managers can influence the communication in the workplace to a significant extent. Other research shows as well that the motivation and engagement of the staff are influenced a lot by the managers, it can be positive to the same degree as it can be negative (Macey, Schneider, Barbera, Young 2009)

The next chapter will analyse the manager him/herself in more detail. At first, the chapter will take a look at general grievances in communication that originate from the manager. The second part of the chapter will analyse different management/leadership styles.

3.1 How Bad Managers Come into Office – The Possible Result of a Flawed Manager Hiring-process

According to Beck and Harter, conventional processes are often at the root of the problem. Management positions are rarely distributed according to scientific analysis, but often used as reward for employees who have worked well in the past, often in a role that was unrelated to management. As a consequence, people who are talented in management skills such as communication, leadership or organization often fail to get into a management position, because their talents remain hidden.

The outcome of hiring a person into a management position depends on three major factors (Leela, Mehta, Jambhulkar 2013)

1. The environment (organizational structure, processes, ...)
2. Personal characteristics and traits of the manager
3. Nature of the followers

3.2 Inconsistencies in Communication

Inconsistencies in communication can originate from the organizational structure but also, more often, from the manager him/herself. Research has shown that some managers are prone to discourage upward feedback which can lead to organizational decline (Dennis Tourish; Paul Robson 2003). Tourish and Robson (2003) discovered that upwards feedback to managers most often only takes place over appraisal, and very rarely through informal context. Subordinates tend to praise their superior in order to achieve influence through the approval of their superior, even if this means leaving out negative aspects. This situation is explained in what Tourish calls the ingratiation theory.

3.2.1 The Ingratiation Theory

Ingratiation is a phenomenon in which employees in the lower echelons of the hierarchy are prone to exaggerate the degree to which they approve with their superiors. The reason why they do it is because they want to gain sympathy with them in order to advance their career, or simply to maintain a favourable position in the company. (Tourish and Robson 2003)

Tourish and Robson refer to studies that have been conducted that show that the less power the subordinates have, the more they tend to use tactics of ingratiation and politeness. Generally, employees with less power are prone to use ingratiation. (Rai 2009)

The behaviour appears logical: The subordinates do not have the means to conduct own initiatives or might have a risk of retaliation if they take a leading position. The safest way is thus to get influence and improve their position through a good relationship to their superior.

Characteristics of ingratiation are praising a superior on past achievements, frequently agreeing to their opinion, pampering their ego and being apologetic about own requests and inconveniences caused. (Rai Himanshu, 2009)

3.2.2 Ingratiation Theory and its Application to Gender

According to Himanshu, these tactics work for males and females alike, regardless of whether the superior is male or female. Both males and females tend to have positive bias in favour of their own gender. (Rai Himanshu, 2009) This means a female manager will generally favour other females among the employees and vice-versa. Wayne et al. (1994) explain this behaviour through the natural favouring of people that are similar to us: The first indicator of similarity of an unknown person is gender. This situation makes it particularly useful for the opposite gender to use ingratiation behaviour in order to improve the relationship towards a manager of the opposite sex. (Wayne, Lidenraymond, Sparrowe 1994). Through ingratiation it is possible to overcome the above-mentioned bias, in order to gain influence with a manager.

The impact this behaviour has on the practice of management is quite large, because it creates a discrepancy between objective facts and the information that is communicated to the manager: As the subordinates want to keep a positive image, they may embellish possible problems or omit them completely. The consequences might show in the company's bottom line without the manager even noticing why.

Having elaborated about the possible negative outcomes of ingratiation, this behaviour is not necessarily bad, if it is present in a moderate quantity. In fact, it can increase the quality of the LMX (leader-member-exchange) which has a positive influence on an organization. (Rai Himanshu, 2009)

3.3 Managers Hesitate to Evaluate Themselves Properly

As mentioned above, inconsistencies in communication arise from the fact that managers discourage upwards feedback and that they can be influenced by their employees by what Tourish (2003) calls "ingratiation theory". The following analyses a phenomenon that amplifies those inconsistencies:

Field studies show that many managers are hesitant in conducting investigative audits that evaluate their own performance regarding their communicational practices towards employees. Through the hierarchy, news of any kind are filtered.

Good news is likely to travel upwards faster than bad news as the actors in the lower hierarchy levels want to climb up the ladder through good results. The opposite is true for bad news. (Robson and Tourish 2005)

To a large extent, this dynamic is influenced by management's reaction to bad news. If retaliation is likely to occur, operational level employees will likely avoid reporting bad news upwards. If management sees critique as constructive, they are more likely to receive it. In this regard, a healthy amount of disrespect for the boss is a good basis for communication.

If employees fear the wrath of their superior, communication is blocked. (Tourish and Robson 2003)

In the interviews, Tourish observes that sometimes, senior managers complain about lacking employee initiative, however fail to link this behaviour to the punitive and restrictive climate of the organization. The paradox is that the employees were compliant to the system. However compliant employees are less likely to forward negative feedback. Less compliant employees will communicate more about negative aspects as well, which helps the organization evolve. However, these employees can fall in disgrace with their superior and are more likely to get fired than a compliant employee due to the ingratiation theory. (Dennis Tourish; Paul Robson 2003)

The cost of failing to encourage positive *and* negative feedback is that decision making by managers is impacted in a negative way at the expense of the whole company. Tourish (2005) found that in such contexts, managers would limit the search for alternative decisions and impose their own decisions through power rather than persuasion. Since employees were less likely to participate in the implementation of such decisions, over half of the analysed 356 decisions failed.

In environments where upwards communication is impeded, a phenomenon known as 'group think' can be observed. This means that groups that are isolated from outside feedback get an exaggerated sense of self-confidence and trust in the quality of their own decisions. At a certain point, the group (or individual) will disregard outside feedback since it conflicts with the self image. The absence of feedback can become a vicious cycle where consequences of bad decisions or even situations of crisis are denied. (P. Robson, D. Tourish 2005)

Anecdotal Example:

To further underline this problem in communication, I would like to cite a concrete anecdotal example from my working experience: The owner of this hotel had a choleric tendency and easily felt threatened in his position. Sometimes members of the staff would suggest changes in operating procedures or organization of processes. The owner felt threatened in his position as superior and tended to lash out at the employees for bringing forth critiques or for making mistakes. This punitive climate, as Tourish would describe it, had a negative impact not only on employee upwards feedback but also general moral of the team.

I observed how upwards feedback generally declined until staff adopted the attitude to omit it whenever possible, in order to avoid the backlash. It is a prime real-life example of negative consequences of failing to integrate upwards feedback into an organization. Fear of retaliation lead to the practice that employees would rather avoid communicating negative feedback upwards and try to solve or hide it. This led to a discrepancy of information, and the manager would not be informed about every negative element and could thus not react to it or correct it.

This particular anecdote is also an example of inefficient message 'encoding', a notion presented earlier (cf. 1.1) Emotions are a very common, but often misplaced encoding style. Some superiors, like the above-mentioned, display strong emotions that are rarely well accepted by the employees. In the above anecdote, the owner was wary about his position in the organization even though it was incontestable in the first place, since he himself was the owner.

The most likely or obvious explanation for this overreaction was high amounts of stress. This led to emotional behavior that complicated effective communication towards the employees. As Tourish (2003) describes it: The ones that are in power tend to cling to it while complaining about lacking initiative of others.

3.4 Communication Practice is not a Priority for Some Managers

In order to optimize communication, management would have to invest time into its analysis. However, next to the findings above about communication discrepancies and the fact that managers hesitate to conduct a self evaluation, there is another element that can hinder the development of great communication:

A common perception underlines the impression that a manager's agenda is overcharged. In order to organize the operational tasks and stay effective, managers are focussing on the core elements of the operation. Very often, communication is neglected. A communication audit can be viewed as too intangible and immeasurable to lose time on evaluating it, or make changes to it. (Tourish, 1998).

In addition, many managers are under the impression that their communication is appropriate and they are unaware that employees have a quite different perception (P. Robson, D. Tourish 2005) which leads us to the next problem.

3.5 Managers are Bad at Evaluating Themselves

The situation that sometimes managers are not even realizing that they are bad at communicating (P. Robson, D. Tourish 2005) makes it harder for the situation to be changed.

The reason why they do not realize the flaws in the organization is partly linked to the above described ingratiation theory (cf. 3.3) and partly because in general, people have a higher self-perception as objective evaluation would suggest: Intelligence, fairness, attractiveness, honesty and other positive qualities are often rated higher in oneself than in others. (P. Robson, D. Tourish 2005)

Supporting this research, a survey in the USA showed that over half of the top managers of the surveyed companies were under the impression they communicated often with their employees while only a little over ¼ of the latter stated the same. (P. Robson, D. Tourish 2005) The work published by Crampton, Hodge, and Mishra (1998) also found that managers tend to take little action in regards to informal communication at work. Communicational dynamics such as grapevine activities often have no related policy to deal with them. (Crampton et al. 1998)

As shown above, there are many different ways communication can be hindered or distorted. It seems to be the case that a number of the communication problems originate from the manager him/herself. We will now analyse different kinds of managers and how they structure their communication in the form of a leadership style. Depending on personality, and personal values, these styles of course are very different and have a large impact on the organization.

3.6 Evaluation of Different Leadership Styles

The previous chapters show that many of the communication problems can be traced back to the manager or can be solved by the manager. One key characteristic of how managers communicate, is their leadership style. Depending on who is hired for a management position, this person will develop a certain type of leadership that can be beneficial or detrimental for the organization and its people.

3.6.1 Destructive Leadership

If a toxic leader is paired with a favourable environment and vulnerable followers, a so called "destructive leadership" can come into place. If the three elements of a) conducive environment, b) destructive leader characteristics and c) vulnerable followers interact they can favour a destructive leadership d), as shown in the below graph, Figure 3: (Leela et al. 2013)

a. Conductive environment: (Leela et al. 2013)

The conducive environment is one of the factors that can favour the emergence of destructive leaders. These elements are not under the leader's direct control but can contribute to their leadership.

1. Violation of Psychological Contracts: A psychological contract is an unwritten contract referring to hidden values in the written contract and is based on expectations. E.g. The employee expects fair treatment and challenging work in exchange for loyalty. If this psychological contract is breached by the organization, a destructive leader can take advantage of the vulnerability of the employee. While charisma in itself is not a negative attribute, it can be observed in the majority of destructive leaders who use it to bring themselves across as the saviour of their subordinates.
2. The written Contract itself can give power to a leader while at the same time having an influence on the followers (cf. figure 3) A contract naturally binds an employee to performing a certain job in exchange for a wage. It can give a positive perspective of career opportunities and wage increases on one hand, but on the other hand might as well induce fear of termination or non-renewal. The latter is especially true for short term contracts.
3. Thrust of One's own Values on Others: Destructive leaders can hide their own mistakes and make use of self-proclaimed privileges. They can achieve that their own values become a tangible strength in the view of the employees who in turn are likely to adopt those values.

4. Organizational Politics: Internal politics that are based on subjective evaluation and are obedience orientated are fertile ground for destructive leaders. This structure contrasts with organizations that are orientated towards actual performance outcomes and evaluate with more objective standards.

b. Destructive Leader Characteristics (Leela et al. 2013)

1. A selfish agenda which normally disintegrates employee empowerment is defined by a leader's focus on own objectives, regardless of the needs of the rest of the organization.
2. While charisma in itself is not a negative attribute, it can be observed in the majority of destructive leaders who use it to bring themselves across as the saviour of their subordinates.
3. Contain and Delay of Crucial information: Destructive leaders use information distortion as a tool to increase their power and influence. This underlines the importance of communication in an organization as well as the consequences it can have to lose control over it as it is the case if a manager willingly manipulates communication towards his/her own ends. As a consequence, employees become less empowered and less productive.
4. Abusive Supervision (c.f. 3.6.2)
5. Narcissism: While narcissism in itself is not a destructive trait and together with empathy and can benefit an organization. However, it can be observed in many destructive leaders. Leela et al (2013) identify three core traits from which all qualities of destructive leaders can be derived: "self-centeredness, attention seeking and indifference to others."

c. The Followers:

They take an important role in actualizing the destructive leader's intents. The leader uses and fosters certain factors present in the subordinates, in order lead or rather manipulate them.

These factors are a) fear, b) the absence of questioning the leader's decision (belief that his/her decision will eventually bring the larger good), c) low maturity, d) low self-esteem and e) low self efficacy (Leela et al. 2013)

d. Organizational Outcomes: (Leela et al. 2013)

The outcomes of destructive leadership can be as far-reaching as they can be deeply negative.

1. Unethical leadership including corruption, coercion and illegal acts resulting from this leadership can undermine the whole organization. Through the destructive leadership the followers might engage in unethical behaviour without the leader even being involved.
2. Organizational decline can be the result of this negative environment and the leader losing credibility. This leads to investors that withdraw their funding, because the organization is no longer bearable.
3. Weak culture in terms of poor rules and regulations and low supervisory control lead to employee frustration, high turn-over and low productivity. Since no coherent line is given, this situation leads to subjective interpretation of Organizational values. The end result is hampering of the organization's reputation, meaning loss of credibility and eventual decline in the stock market.

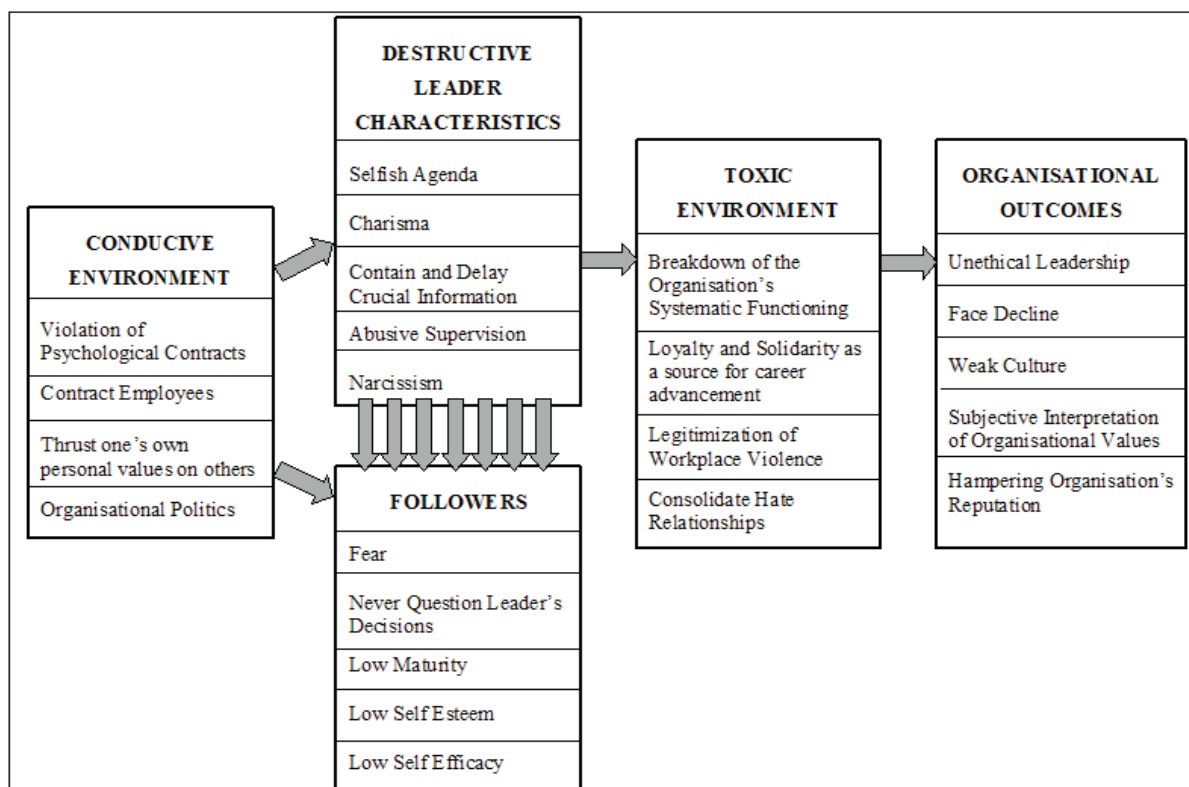


Figure 3: Destructive Leader Behaviour Model (Leela Vendatam et al. 2013)

Observations:

Interestingly, the graph shows that in every segment that can favour destructive leadership, there are elements that are directly linked to communication. In the conducive environment (a) it is the written and psychological contracts that convey a message to the employee. In the characteristics (b) the leader uses manipulation of information (cf. b.3.) to gain power over his/her followers. The followers are partly vulnerable through their emotions, like fear, which are used by the destructive leader in his/her communication methods as well. (cf.: 1.3. emotions in an organization) Communication plays a major role in the development of this leadership. The outcomes of such a leadership in the long run are disastrous for the firm with its credibility being lost and funds being withdrawn.

3.6.2 Types of Destructive Leadership

The findings above show what elements can favour a destructive leadership. Depending on the personality and ideologies of the leader that comes into office, this destructive leadership can take many different forms, some of which are described below (Thoroughgood, Sawyer, Padilla, Lunsford 2018):

- Abusive Supervision: which describes non physical verbal or non-verbal demeaning behavior from a supervisor towards the employees. (Tepper 2007)
- Petty Tyranny: the manager uses his/her power for selfish reasons in an unjust and or vengeful way where he/she tries to increase his/her own value by demeaning others. (Ashforth 1994)
- Supervisor Undermining: a manager failing to defend the subordinates, or even acting against them, hindering positive social interaction and professional success. Means to do this are withholding information and defamation. (Duffy 2006)

- Toxic Leadership: this leadership is based on behavior, but as well on the personal traits of the manager. In this process, the manager inflicts harm on the people they lead due to their personal qualities and characteristics. This type of destructive leaderships can sometimes be observed in dictatorships of nations. (Lipman-Blumen 2006)
- Strategic Bullying: Strategic choice of putting targeted employees in situations where they feel powerless in order to influence them to achieve personal goals or even organizational objectives. (Ferris et al. 2007)
- Pseudo transformational Leadership: This kind of managers tend to be selfish and calculating and will use their ability to manipulate and dominate people to achieve personal goals at the expense of others. (Barling, Christie, Turner 2008)
- Managerial tyranny: is characterized by the vision of a single leader who will pursue his/her goals with great decisiveness and rigidity. These goals may be organizational, but they tend to be means to achieve egocentric ambitions. (Ma, Karri, Chittipeddi 2004)
- Aversive leadership: these leaders rely mainly on coercive powers over which they establish dominance over their employees. (Bligh, Kohles, Pearce, Justin, Stovall 2007)

Limitations:

The impact of destructive leaders on the business depends a lot on the environment they come in touch with. Steve Jobs, the former CEO of apple, is known to have been a destructive leader, however he managed to steer his company to success. Noticeable here is, that Jobs' own objectives were directly linked or aligned with company goals. (Thoroughgood et al. 2018)

Active and Passive Leaders:

These types of destructive leadership describe an *active* behavior which undermines an effective managerial structure. However, even a *passive* manager can cause disruptions that can harm an organization:

Undecisive managers can have a great negative impact as well through their passive behaviours like failing to take decisions in time or lack of initiative.

The American company Blockbuster went out of business in 2011 for that reason as it failed to adapt to the changing movie industry regarding online movie sales. (Thoroughgood et al. 2018)

3.6.3 Authoritarian Leadership

This leadership style has a positive or negative connotation depending on culture. While in western society, this type of leadership is frowned upon, possibly for historical reasons, in other cultures like China or India, it is better accepted and has been the norm for a long time. This different perception can be linked to different cultural values and norms like high power distance and high collectivism in the mentioned countries (Hofstede 2001). The acceptance also

arises from a subcategory of authoritarian leadership which is the *benevolent* authoritarian leadership. In this case, the leader assumes a father-like position in the organization. (Erden and Otken 2019)

The creation of a family-like atmosphere at work fits well with expectations of collectivist communities who are likely to follow this kind of leader. In this situation, however, leaders are prone to unequal treatment, and tend towards preferential treatment of certain employees, discriminating others. (Erden and Otken 2019)

a) Authoritarian Leadership Characteristics

Authoritarian leadership is characterized by

1. The exertion of unquestionable power by a leader over his/her subordinates. (Cheng, Chou, WU, Huang 2004)
2. Compulsory obedience and control resulting in personal dominance over subordinates and one-sided decision making (Duan, Bao, Huang, Brinsfield 2018)
3. Control of emotional regulation of subordinates by external regulation, by the leader (Chu, 2014)

These characteristics often lead to a certain outcome that can be negative or positive, depending on the perception of the followers. The image of the authoritarian leader is often portrayed as benevolent and seems to have the interest of the followers in mind who are in turn expected to reply with loyalty to the leader (Erden and Otken 2019) (The negative outcomes do not exclude the positive ones and vice versa).

b) Negative Outcomes

1. Rule through fear, evoking negative emotions, hostility or anger in subordinates (Duan et al. 2018)
2. Bottom-up communication is discouraged and employee willingness to express themselves decreases. (Duan et al. 2018) Fear of retaliation is the cause of this behaviour.
3. Regulation of subordinate's emotions by the leader can even have detrimental effects on employee health (Chu 2014)
4. Negative associations with team member's commitment to team leaders (Duan et al. 2018)

The contrary of authoritarian leadership is democratic leadership styles where followers are encouraged to take part in the decision-making process. (c.f. 1.4.3 bottom-up communication).

c) Positive Outcomes (Cheng et al. 2004)

1. Reduced feeling of uncertainty
2. Increased feeling identification through rigorous discipline
3. Incitement of feelings of compliance and gratitude

It is to be noted that sometimes, the positive feelings are a result of instrumentalization from the leader towards vulnerable followers. (Leela et al 2013)

Conclusion: Considering the findings about authoritarian research, it is fair to say that authoritarian leadership is not entirely negative. Depending on culture and the needs of the employees, authoritarian leadership can have positive elements. Nevertheless, this leadership hampers free communication and impedes innovation through high control

and demanded obedience from the employees. Authoritarian leadership is often associated with fear and upwards hostility by employees.

The power of the leader goes unquestioned, which makes employee grievances likely. Subjective preferential treatment by the leader can even worsen those employee grievances, since they cannot be objectively addressed.

3.6.4 Authentic Leadership

This type of leadership is based on a leader who is leading by example. He/she has strongly built moral values and great self-awareness. An authentic leader processes information in an objective way. Transparency and high morality are other key elements of this style.

These traits are the main 4 components of an authentic leader (Walumbwa, Luthans, Avey, Oke 2009):

1. Balanced Processing

This refers to the processing of information that is evaluated objectively in its context.

2. Internalized Moral Perspective

A core element in an authentic leader is his/her sense of morality that defines the framework of his/her actions.

3. Rational Transparency

Being authentic is linked to openness concerning thoughts and true beliefs and is a vital part when it comes to building trust with employees.

4. Self-awareness

Authentic leaders are very self aware and know themselves well. This is a prime condition for authentic leaders as will be shown below.

a. Authentic Leadership Characteristics

In contrast to a destructive leader, authentic leaders are not usually described as charismatic. The process by which the followers internalize the leader's values is related to his/her leading by example. The goal of this leadership is the development of the follower. (Kinnunen, Feldt, Mauno 2015)

To achieve this, an authentic leader shows a set of qualities like positive psychological capital and positive moral perspective. Among these are hope, honesty, confidence and personal resilience. Paired with a positive contact, they set in motion the development of an authentic leader and lead to self-awareness (Avolio, Gardner 2005).

Always present is the moral component with heightened moral capacity and courage to follow through with morality in their actions. (Avolio, Gardner 2005)

Being self-aware, an authentic leader knows his/her own strengths and weaknesses and can objectively defend their values even against the organization itself or in the face of values that contradict his/her own. (Kinnunen et al. 2015). Being self aware is less of a goal, than it is a process of realizing one's own impact on the surroundings and understanding one's core values, beliefs and desires and their context and relation towards others. (Avolio, Gardner 2005).

b. The Process of Authentic Leadership

This behaviour incites an image of high integrity and trust in the followers on which a positive environment based on high ethical standards, task orientation and support for innovation is created. The leader openly shares his/her true thoughts and values and is aware of his/her impact on others. (Kinnunen et al. 2015). In order to keep their behaviours legit, authentic leaders engage in a self-regulation process:

They set internal standards for themselves, assess the discrepancies and outcomes of these standards and evaluate corrective actions for said discrepancies. (Avolio, Gardner 2005)

An authentic leader possesses some of the qualities like self-evaluation and self-criticism that managers are often lacking. (cf.: 3.5 Managers are bad at evaluating themselves)

Self-regulation - About Dealing with Emotions in Communication:

As shown in chapter 2.4 (the emotional impact on communication), emotions can play an important role in day to day communication and can have a significant impact on an individual and the organization. Authentic leadership seems to solve the handling of emotions in part through self-awareness and self-regulation.

Kramer and Hess (2002) analysed the rules that govern emotional management. They interviewed over 300 participants who formulated emotional rules. Interestingly, those rules created by the members relate closely to some of the characteristics shown in authentic leaders.

Kramer and Hess (2002) summarized in three general rules including the most common elements from all the participants of their research:

1. Keeping things Professional

Expression of excessive emotions largely comes across as unprofessional. Yelling at employees is seen as unprofessional. Keeping a calm temper, even if one does not like the contact person is seen as professional, as well as remaining kind even if one has a bad day. Positive emotions can be shown in an unprofessional way as well, if they are displayed at an inappropriate moment or too loudly. (Kramer and Hess 2002) Authentic leaders are good at self regulation, since they are aware of the impact they have on others through their behaviour. (Kinnunen et al. 2015)

2. Emotions should be shown in an appropriate way: this is true for positive and negative emotions.

The first rule focuses on the behavior itself, and how it should be for it to be "professional". This second rule focuses on the actual outcome of a situation. Emotional display can be used in order to create a particular outcome (usually a positive one). Positive emotions can be used to spread a good atmosphere at the workplace, showing joy openly about a successfully completed project can foster good working climate. Authentic leaders are good at creating a positive climate. In this way, they can

influence the group as a whole, which Gill and Caza (2018) would classify as 'generalized authentic leadership'. On the other hand, sometimes masking one's negative emotions can help to avoid additional problems coming from up. (Kramer and Hess 2002)

A typical example of this that I have witnessed myself time and again is managers who lose their temper in front of customers, engaging in heated discussions with staff members. This can lead to customer complaints and only worsen the problem. While it is a sincere expression, the manager showed unawareness of the consequences and lacked self-regulation.

3. In order to show negative emotions in an appropriate way, they typically have to be masked. Negative emotions tend to lead to negative outcomes. In order to avoid the latter, negative emotions can mask as neutral ones. In order to express any kind of emotion in an appropriate way, the *right person* to whom it is expressed should be chosen. Sometimes, emotions are expressed to the false party. For instance: praise is given to one member of the group whereas the whole group was involved or one member of a team is yelled at for a mistake that was not his/hers (Kramer and Hess 2002) Authentic leaders have a good sense of objective analysis and are likely to make a good judgement of when and to whom they express their feelings. (Avolio, Gardner 2005)

These findings can also be implemented into an organization with workshops or seminars, where the topic of emotions is discussed and professional behavior is defined within each organization, since not every company will have the same requirements. This type of guidance is already in place for many customer related businesses, but is less common for internal communication. (Kramer and Hess 2002)

c. The Followers

In contrast to the destructive leadership environment, the authentic leadership also fosters an authentic community. In this environment, created by the authentic leadership, followers are or become authentic as well and follow out of authentic reasons. (Avolio, Gardner 2005) Furthermore, Avolio and Gardner (2005) argues that the followers are "mirroring" the development of the authentic leader and become more self-aware of themselves.

d. Group Level / Individual Level

Gill and Caza (2018) provide another thesis, being that authentic leaders influence their followers on two levels:

a. Group level

Meaning they influence their followers as a group of people

b. Individual level

Influencing their followers one by one in an individual way.

Figure 4 illustrates this theory (Gill & Caza 2018):

Both levels of leadership lead to central follower responses (Gill & Caza 2018):

a) Identification with the leader

Because the leaders display their own values constantly, followers might choose to align themselves and identify with the leader. This influences the way the followers see themselves as a person.

b) Perceptions of leader trustworthiness

Trustworthiness meaning to render oneself vulnerable to the actions of another person. In this case, followers give trust to the leader because they believe he/she can give something valuable in return: competence, benevolence and integrity.

c) Positive follower states

Positive follower states are notably psychological. An authentic leader offers the possibility to ask for advice or voice concerns and even the ability to question the leader.

d) Positive social exchange

This is achieved by openness, and transparency in the discursive exchange between employees and the leader. Benevolence is achieved by considering the views of the employees. This results in an overall positive social exchange.

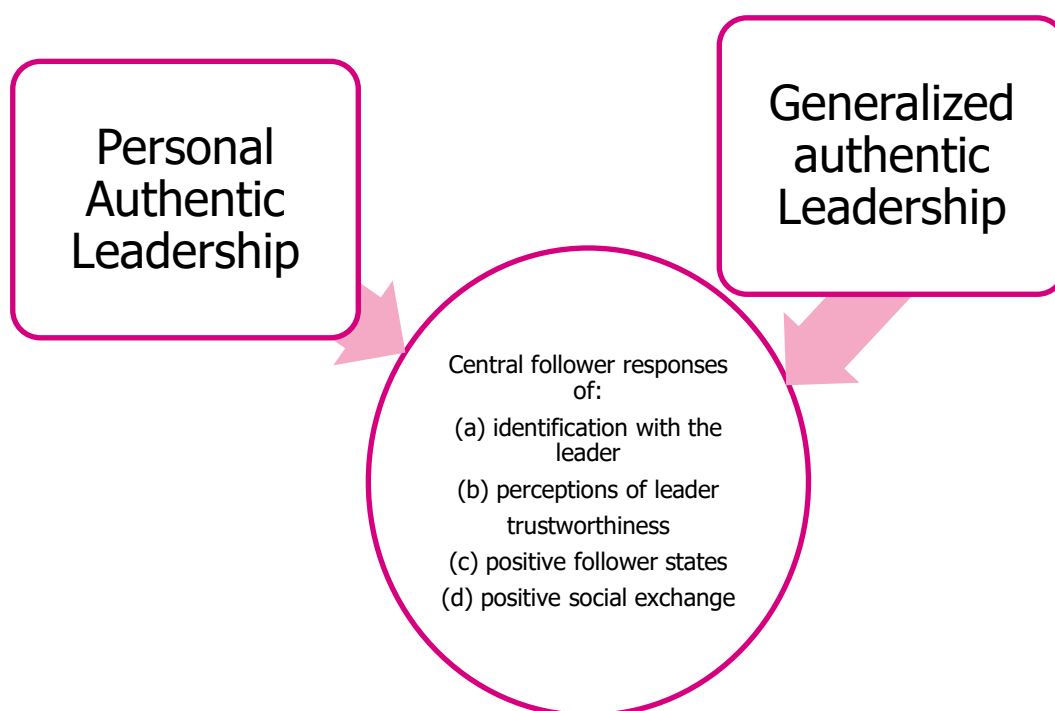


Figure 4: group/individual level leadership

Anecdotal example: During my working experience, I worked with an authentic leader as well. It is an example of sharing meaning, and identification to the leader's values and the counter part of an authoritarian leader where the subordinate is merely an "executionist" who does not have to know the meaning of the work.

I was working in housekeeping following a simple check-list. Perfection is of the essence, however the reason why this is necessary is not always shared with the employee. In my case it was. The manager openly communicated to me his values and beliefs and explained them to me:

Even though the details like a perfectly folded curtain or a well aligned serviette may go unnoticed, perfection in housekeeping provides a feeling that the room is arranged

with care and not merely “cleaned up”. This vision of his gave me a different perspective and provided me with the possibility to identify myself with the manager’s values and thus increasing my consciousness at work through authentic leadership on a personal level.

e. The Result of Authentic Leadership

Authentic leadership has been positively linked with positive organizational climate as they shape it with their own moral values. This climate is reinforced by the followers who adopt these ethical standards as their own. This behaviour can shape the climate in an organization. (Avolio, Gardner, 2005)

Liu, Fuller, Hester, Bennet, Dickerson (2018) show in their research that an authentic leader has a positive influence on employee’s feeling of psychological safety. In this context, trust plays an important role. Employees identify themselves with their manager and create personal attachment. (Gill & Caza 2018) This behaviour makes it more likely for them to be willing to maintain and take action in the process, holding up the mentioned ethical standards and good values in their relationship towards the manager, but also towards their peers resulting in a positive social exchange (Liu et al. 2018; Gill & Caza 2018)

Through the nature of authentic leadership, members can resort to positive means of influencing the leader. Since the leader is self-aware, ingratiation as described before, will no longer be the most effective mode of gaining influence with the manager: Exchange, rational persuasion or assertiveness (Rai Himanshu, 2009) can now be used without fear of retaliation.

This positive exchange with the leader has another important result: As a side effect of this positive relation with the leader, employee engagement will be improved as a consequence. (Osborne & Hammoud 2017)

3.6.5 Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership, as will be shown, has a different process and different notions as compared to authentic leadership. While authentic leadership relies on leading by example, and generally does not require charisma (Kinnunen et al. 2015), this is different for transformational leadership.

a. Characteristics of Transformational Leadership

The four notions of transformational leadership (Den Hartog, Van Muijen, Koopman 1997; Hinkin and Tracey 1999) Hinkin and Tracey (1999) refer to these 4 notions as Avolio’s four I’s.:

1. Influence and Charisma: Through charisma, the transformational leadership inspires his/her followers by giving them a mission and vision to follow. He/she fosters optimism and gains the trust and respect of his/her subordinates. A transformational leader is often admired.

The importance of charisma in a transformational leader is marginal if the other three notions are followed. However, in a time of crisis, charisma be a more essential element (Hikins and Tracey, 1999).

These findings by Hinkin and Tracey (1999) also confirm Leela et al.'s (2013) thesis in chapter 3.6.1 (destructive leadership) explaining that the followers themselves and the environment can favour a leader. A fragile environment and vulnerable followers call for a charismatic transformational leader, but they are also susceptible to destructive charismatic leadership

2. Inspiration and motivation: The leader motivates the followers and builds a sense of confidence towards his/her idea and vision.
3. Individual consideration: The leader reaches out and takes the role of a mentor for his/her followers, providing feedback and thereby links the member's needs to the company mission. Hinkin and Tracey (1999) describe it as individualized development of group members.
4. Intellectual stimulation: Out-of-the-box thinking under a transformational leader is encouraged. Current norms can be challenged or reassessed and members can work on interesting tasks solving them in their own manner. Hinkin and Tracey (1999) rename this notion in a clearer manner as 'non-traditional approaches to problems. Another concept behind this notion is "innovation", in terms of encouraging employees to take risks. The leader fosters an environment in which mistakes are seen as opportunities. (Pounder 2001)

James Pounder (2001) complements these four notions with the addition of Integrity and "impression management". Integrity means that the leader acts according to his words and thus is perceived as trustworthy and a person of integrity. Impression management implies that the leader is a "giving" person who sets his own need behind those of the organization or the followers. He/she genuinely cares for his/her followers beyond the work environment.

b. The Process of transformational leadership:

Transformational leaders encourage and motivate employees and will let them complete their work without interfering, except in moments of failure. This behaviour fosters creativity and innovation. (Birasnav, Rangnekar and Dalpati 2011)

Transformational leaders also motivate and encourage their employees to develop themselves. Mayfield and Mayfield (2006) divide communication into three levels which can be used in a motivational way by a leader:

1. Direction-giving: This level comprises communication and clarification about specifics of a task.
2. Empathic: The empathy component includes a personal emotional connection between the leader and the employee.
3. Meaning-Making: This communication is used when the leader helps an employee make meaning of company rules or organizational culture.

c. The Result of Transformational Leadership

Hinkin and Tracey (1999) describe openness of communication, high leader satisfaction, high clarity of mission and vision among employees, as resulting elements of transformational leadership. The trust relationship between the transformational leader and employees goes both ways. This has another positive effect: Leaders who are more

trusting of their employees involve more in risk-taking job activity and gain more influence and efficiency in regard to their employees. By giving their employees autonomy, they earn their trust and increase innovation. (Birasnav et al., 2011)

Haward (2011) was able to link leadership to bottom-line outcomes and explains that leadership development is now more important than ever. The best results were achieved when the leaders put their focus on the members themselves instead of focusing on the numbers and merely utilizing the followers to achieve a goal. According to Haward (2011) a broad view on values, culture and individual needs is required for a company to benefit financially from a type of leadership. Authentic and transformational leadership seem to offer this holistic view of the company.

3.7 Comparing Leadership Styles

Having analysed 4 leadership styles, it becomes clear, that authentic and transformational leadership are favourable styles to choose in many ways even if authoritarian Leadership can be effective under certain circumstances. In the following table, I will compare the analysed leadership styles as a summary, listing some of the key elements.

After analysis of these four leadership styles, authentic or transformational leadership have a far more positive impact on an organization than destructive or authoritarian leadership. One of the negative aspects of the latter are the hindering of communication flow inside the organization which cause major grievances among the employees as well as on management level in an organization.

Destructive and authoritarian leadership play on negative feelings such as fear of retaliation and exert power over the followers. We can observe a different situation for authentic and transformational leadership who are based on positive motivation and encouragement. The leader takes active part in the development of the followers and sincerely tries to help them, which in turn benefits the organization. Taking care of the employees and their needs instead of strictly focusing on the financial aspects has a positive impact on the bottom-line as well.

Table 2: Comparison table of leadership styles

	<i>Destructive</i>	<i>Authoritarian</i>	<i>Authentic</i>	<i>Transformational</i>
<i>Environment</i>	Benefits from an unstable environment	Uses family like structure	Benefits from a stable environment (can fix an unstable environment, if charismatic)	Focuses on the employees and encourages innovative problem solving
<i>Characteristics of the leader</i>	Egocentric, selfish, charismatic	Father-like figure, unquestioned power, can come across as benevolent	Self-aware, high morality and ethics, self-regulating	Charismatic, inspiring, optimistic
<i>Process</i>	Manipulation through fear, miscommunication, instrumentalizes followers	demands obedience, rule through fear, subjective evaluation	Leads by example, honesty, openness about values, thoughts and feelings	Encourages employees by inspiration, motivation, lets them find new ways
<i>Outcome</i>	Negative psychological impact on followers, distorted flow of information, negative impact on company as a whole	Hostile upwards behaviour, bottom-up communication is discouraged, negative effect on engagement	Positive LMX, followers influence themselves by imitating the leader's behaviour and adopting his/her values as their own, positive link to bottom-line	Innovative thinking, high creativity, high LMX, positively linked to bottom-line,

4 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH: QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

4.1 Methodology

In order to give empirical support to the thesis, it is appropriate to include empirical research in this paper. The question arises which sort of research would be beneficial to complement the theoretical elements. In order to find the best research method, let's consider the following factors:

- Every manager has a personal approach
- Every manager has a different background
- Different establishments give different baseline conditions for communication, management and employee engagement
- The topics analysed (communication problems, employee engagement, leadership) can take various forms and vary greatly dependent on the organizational structure of hotels.

To conduct a quantitative study would fail to capture the nuances of the subject and disregard important details that might have a significant impact on employee engagement in each establishment. In addition, as seen in chapter *3.2 Inconsistencies in Communication* and *3.6.3 Authentic leadership*, the awareness of managers of their own communication and impact on others has a great influence on their ability to lead effectively and create engagement of their followers/employees. This level of awareness is hard to measure through a generic questionnaire and can best be identified in a face to face conversation.

In conclusion, I will proceed by conducting qualitative interviews with hotel managers in order to best evaluate the matter.

4.2 Qualitative Research

The empirical research will be accomplished by conducting personal interviews with hotel managers in an open conversation. To this end, I drafted a template with three themes and ten open questions in order to give direction to the conversation.

The themes are:

- I. Communication
- II. Employee Engagement
- III. Leadership

The themes and questions within are directly linked to the theoretical research of this paper and mean to discern whether the findings can have practical application.

4.3 Research Procedure

I scheduled various interviews with hotel managers and interviewed them face to face. The full, translated transcript of each interview can be found in the appendix. As the interviews could reveal potentially delicate information, all interviews are anonymized and names as well as brand names are abstracted from the transcript and analysis.

Following the interviews, an in-depth analysis of each interview is conducted and a comparison between interviewees is made. The findings are compared to the theoretical findings after which a conclusion will be drawn.

4.4 Interview Analysis

4.4.1 Analysis of Interview - Interviewee 1

General Info:

The first interviewee is a GM at a 4* establishment at a smaller facility counting less than 50 rooms, age around 40. His team is composed of roughly a dozen (12) employees and trainees.

The hotel has a restaurant and has as main target market conferences and events.

Personal Info:

The Interviewee has worked his way up through the ranks in various hotels and eventually started his own hotel. Working one's way up is quite common in the hotel industry, however to start one's own venture a large capital or investment is needed.

The interviewee has a long year experience as a manager and is very customer focused.

The Interviewee's View on Communication:

When asked how he would use communication in the workplace he cites it as one of the most important elements in customer care. Every employee of his team needs to be informed about changes in the process.

He seems to put a lot of emphasis on communication and has realized that a good communication makes the difference to exceed in customer satisfaction. He also admits it is a challenge to constantly keep a good communication.

This interviewee is convinced that all of his employees have a good engagement. The fact he thinks that emphasizes his awareness of employee engagement. He mentions that carelessness is not tolerated in the establishment. Also does he seem aware of the influence he has on the employee engagement and claims to constantly motivate them to excel at their work.

When asked if he'd communicate mostly professionally with the employees, he confirms this and explains it is mostly professional. He does have regular casual contact during lunch for instance.

As main difficulty in communication he states simple the absence of communication or the fact employees are not transmitting an information at all. This would fall under the point *2.3.2 Disruptions originating from the Giver of Information – Blockage of communication*. Another disruption he cited falls under *2.3.3. Originating from the receiver*, he claims that many are not good at listening what the others have to say.

Conclusion Theme 1 Communication:

The Interviewee is very well aware of the complexity of communication and discerns quite specifically certain elements of communication disruption. It is to be observed that he hardly acknowledges himself as the source of these disruptions and only sees the mistake in the employees.

This is a trait that can be found in the point *3.2 Inconsistencies in Communication* of the thesis. Since he is admitting no mistakes to himself it can be considered as discouraging upward feedback, maybe also lack of empathy for other's behavior. *3.3 Managers hesitate to evaluate themselves.* In this case, the interviewee is very proficient in detecting mistakes in others, but seems very sure of himself and reluctant in finding mistakes in his own behavior. However, he also admits he sometimes does not have a solution to these problems and fails to understand the problem, which is a step into the right direction.

Information omittance, which he states one of the main problems can possibly be linked to the *3.2.1. Ingratiation Theory* where employees omit information to give a better picture for their manager out of fear of retaliation. This GM claims to have an open-door policy and be open for personal conversations about possible employee complaints.

Conclusion Theme 2 Engagement:

Interviewee 1 claims 100% of his staff is engaged. He also admits to have a large impact on that and that he does a lot to have an encouraging influence: "*I influence my staff every day*" "*I am actively involved in every part of the operation myself as well*".

Conclusion Theme 3 Engagement and leadership style:

The interviewee describes himself as a "leader by example". The leadership style that comes closest to his description may be *3.6.3 Authentic Leadership*. Indeed, he seems to have a good self-awareness and the examples he gave of helping in every aspect of the operation are traits of an authentic leader. However, he seems to somewhat lack the trait of self-evaluation as it arose in no shape or form during my interview.

Regarding his followers, his statements accord greatly with the theoretical part of this thesis. The thesis *3.6.3 III) The Followers* states that the followers of an authentic leader will be authentic as well, mirroring the leader's behavior. interviewee mentioned that especially in the beginning a high turnover might take place until a good team can be formed. "*especially at the beginning, say the first 1-2 years of an operation a high turnover is vital for the formation of a good team.*" This could mean that once a team is formed, they keep an authentic community that can be prosper for all.

Conclusion Manager 1:

The behavior and awareness of the interviewee's own impact on the employees might prove that he is a quite effective manager in the sense of the description in this thesis. On the other hand it seems that he sees himself in a very good light and seems to look for the problems within the other employees and rarely in himself. It is one of the flaws described in the thesis 3.3 Managers hesitate to evaluate themselves. All in all, this manager gives an effective image and has avoided or is at least aware of some of the main points treated in the thesis, notably the manager's impact on engagement and the importance of communication.

4.4.2 Analysis of Interview - Interviewee 2

General Info:

Interviewee Nr 2 works in a target 5* establishment, 200-500 rooms with a team around 15 people, as front office manager. It is an upscale hotel with high standards, partly imposed by its brand affiliation.

Personal Info:

Interviewee Nr 2 has worked his way up from shift leader to front office manager and is specialized in accounting and revenue management. He has a rather pragmatic approach to his work and tries to use the hotel rules to work effectively and has only worked in larger hotels. He worked in the present hotel for about 10 years in a row.

The Interviewee's View on Communication:

When asked about communication he immediately refers to the hotel's given rules, guidelines and in-house trainings, shifting a bit away from the question. *"We have a lot of standards and guidelines as we are a 5*, does that count as communication as well?"*

The interviewee 2 describes the communication as mostly professional and is somewhat against emotional connections at work: *"it can be a good idea to keep the job a job and personal life apart"*

When asked about difficulties in communication he showed a little avoidance, which could possibly be due to the ingratiation theory or simply the wish to keep a good image. The interviewee states that they (the management team) make everything as clear as possible. Possibly he tried to keep the reputation of his hotel, even though the interview is anonymous. *"If they have any issues, they can ask another employee or their supervisor for help. This system seems to work quite well."* The quote makes it sound that there are no significant communication problems. Either the hotel's communication is 100% flawless, or, possibly, he is avoiding negative elements of the subject, or is unaware of them.

As possible obstacles, he states misunderstandings and the lack of communication on employee's behalf. He clearly states that many mistakes are linked to new employees *"However, it is normal that newcomers make more mistakes than older employees or managers. It is part of the learning process."*

When it comes to complaints this manager shares this duty with the shift leaders. This can point towards a strong adherence to inflexible hierarchies that can sometimes obstruct effective communication. In the point *3.3 Managers Hesitate to Evaluate Themselves* I point out this negative effect of hierarchy on the communication process. Robson and Tourish 2005 explain that the hierarchy itself filters information before it goes upwards. Negative information travels upwards slower than positive one. Thus, a manager can have a very positive view of a situation that has negative sides as well.

Conclusion Theme 1 Communication:

Even though the interviewee 2 gives a throughout positive image about his department, his understanding of the concept of communication is somewhat dulled. He asked a few questions and didn't seem 100% sure of the accuracy of his answers. It seems that he is not particularly concerned with communication and merely sees it as a necessary but passive means to execute tasks.

His communication is rather professional, not personal and it seems he sticks quite strictly to standards and given rules and norms. He generously shares his responsibility for employee complaints to other managers or shift leaders.

Conclusion Theme 2 Engagement:

When asked about engagement he claims that 50/50 of his staff is engaged at work. As an explanation, he claims that not every task or job is fun, yet it has to be done. Some of the positions only seem to be transitory and employees don't stay there for long. Thus, they are not engaged in their work. *"Maybe work your way up or change hotels. Not many come here because reception is their dream job."*

All in all, he is not convinced he has a major impact on employee's engagement and explains his job as being mainly coordinating work efforts *"...and obviously I motivate them to do a good job. But true motivation is something that comes from within."* The job and the result are of higher importance than engagement, so he claims. In other words, he does not acknowledge very much his own influence on this process and he does not attribute a lot of importance to employee engagement. The fact that only 50% of his staff is engaged does not seem to pose him much concern, on the contrary, he sees it as natural.

Conclusion Theme 3 Engagement and leadership style:

He claims to be rather strict when he has to and that one of his duties is to protect his employees and to take responsibility for his department. *"I try to give a good baseline for everyone to be able to do a good job."* The latter statement sound more of a passive role, as he is not actively searching to improve himself or the department. He just wants everyone to do a "good work".

Conclusion Manager 2:

The statements heard during the interview can lead to the assumption that he is a rather passive manager who relies a lot on given rules. The importance of communication and his own impact on it does not seem to play a significant role in this manager's day to day business. His main concern is to deliver a good work, which per se is a solid goal to strive for. However, it seems that there is no ambition for improvement or self-critic. In a market that changes faster and faster, a rigid and somewhat conservative position might lack the necessary dynamic to stay effective in the long term.

Considering the interviewee works in a larger hotel, other managers might play a more important role in regards to innovation and improvement. Nevertheless, considering the findings of this thesis, it is probable that the functioning of the Front Office could be improved if the manager was more aware of his impact on and the importance of employee engagement.

4.4.3 Analysis of Interview - Interviewee 3

General Info:

Interviewee Nr 3 works in as a hotel manager overseeing three small sized 4* facilities including 100 about rooms and a team or around 80 people. The clientele is various.

Personal Info:

Interviewee Nr 3 did not go to a hotel school or similar but rather completed a general education after which he entered the hotel business as receptionist. Switching companies many times, he worked his way up to shift leader, night auditor, duty manager up to hotel manager. Being quite young (in his 30s) he is very motivated and eager for new challenges and insists on being in the business for the people rather than anything else, maybe wanting to start his own hotel someday. He is in the business for about 10 years.

The Interviewee's View on Communication:

Talking about communication, the interviewee states it as the key element to a hotel's success. *"If these actors (managers, staff, departments) don't communicate, it cannot work out."* He also mentions that many of the small problems that arise in daily procedures are linked to communication. *The interviewee understands that in order to ensure effective communication, it is important to conduct trainings and tell the employees why a new procedure is implemented.*

Concerning personal vs. professional communication, he states that the right balance is important. The human factor would also play a big role in customer experience, so that if an employee "feels in his right place" he can deliver a more sincere and better service. The customer feels it right away if someone is sincerely friendly.

As main factors to inhibit communication he states it is that people don't understand each other. Something that is obvious to one person might not be to the other. The same is the case for managers: "...so it is important to know WHY we communicate, WHAT should be communicated, there is things that are more and less important and what CHANNELS we have at our disposal."

Complaints are handled quite openly and the interviewee states that he is attentive to know the input of his staff members as they have good ideas as well.

Conclusion Theme 1 Communication:

The interviewee three lends great importance to communication and seems to be very open for inputs and constructive feedback. It seems he is well aware of his communication skills and puts quite a lot of effort and thought into it in order to make communication work. His view on communication is quite nuanced and it seems he understood the concept in a similar way than described in the research part of this thesis.

Conclusion Theme 2 Engagement:

Talking about engagement, he states that hospitality has a generally high turnover, and that he asks himself how to make employees more loyal. According to him, this can be achieved by improving employee engagement. Putting the right person in the right position, sometimes even to changing their positions would be quite helpful, he claims.

In order to foster engagement, he puts a lot of effort into positive communication. *"Every manager knows how to take repercussions or shout out mistakes, but to me it is as important to say something positive, if a work is well done."* This theme is one of the elements mentioned in this paper. Traits from the transformational leadership (3.6.4.) concerning direction giving, meaning making and empathy can already be detected in this manager. He claimed a few times that the wellbeing of his employees is one of the top priorities next to revenue and the company's best interest. This behavior of the manager probably counteracts damaging behaviors such as the ingratiation theory described in this paper.

When asked about how many of his employees would be engaged, he replied with the vast majority. Even though he understands that certain jobs like housekeeping or dish washing cannot be very motivating for everyone as they are physically challenging and repetitive.

To the question whether he thinks to have a significant influence on his employees he replies that a good manager can take a positive influence on the employees. He explains that the method will vary from employee to employee, but that it is possible through experience, observation and listening.

Conclusion Theme 3 Engagement and leadership style:

"But to me (leadership) it is not to order people around. It is more to explain. That's important." He claims not to be an authoritarian leader and to listen to his employees. Also if there is a need to, he will not hesitate to lend his hand to clean a room himself. He believes that if the employees understand you are able to do the job and think about their interests as well they will follow you and trust your judgement. *"It is a mutual exchange"*.

Conclusion Manager 3:

Manager 3 has a very nuanced view on communication and his statements are greatly aligned with what I found during my research. It seems that he has a thorough understanding of the concepts of communication and engagement, gained through experience of various jobs in the hotel business.

His leadership style resides somewhere between transformational and authentic. He is not only ordering people around, but encourages them to think for themselves. He also leads by example, doing jobs if need be that are not included in the manager job description. The way he described it, it seems he is giving his best to make the people follow him and that he is looking out for his people.

All in all, concerning the topics of communication and employee engagement treated in this research paper, he would be a manager fit for the position. He understands his impact and the complexity of communication and tries to act in a way to be most effective.

4.5 Comparative Analysis of the Interviews

The below table 3 shows a condensed view on the main questions of the interview and the differences between the three interviewees. Regarding the meaning of communication, two out of three agree that it is a very important element of the hotel business. Interviewee 2 did not seem to grasp the concept in quite the same way but rather saw communication as a means to an end.

Naturally, communication to employees for all three was mostly professional, although Interviewee three seemed a good balance also communicating personally. This points to a quite empathic person, which he confirmed throughout the interview.

Concerning problems, Interviewee 2 seemed rather avoiding. Interviewee one stated "many" problems while Interviewee 3 explained he was attentive to understand and detect the problems in order to fix them: Communicating meaning and the reason why and giving the communicators the right channels, according to him, was one of his main concerns to avoid communication problems.

Regarding complaints, only interviewee number two showed avoidance and claimed to share the responsibility with shift leaders. The other two claimed to be very open.

To the key question of this paper whether they had an influence at all on their employee's engagement, 2 out of 3 of the interviewees clearly stated they were aware of their influence. The other one was not.

When it comes to leadership style, the interviewees that claimed to be authentic and/or transformational also claimed higher scores in perceived employee engagement (100%, 80%) in contrast to the Interviewee 2 who did not have a clear leadership style for himself (50% employee) engagement).

Table 3: Comparative table of all interviews

Interview Question	Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3
What is communication?	Vital element of the hotel functioning. Difficult to achieve.	Interaction of different members, guidelines, trainings	The key to success
Personal or professional?	Mostly professional, but also personal	Mostly professional	Good balance
Communication problems?	There are many. The biggest one is information omittance	"Everything is made as clear as possible". Is unaware of deeper problems	Differences in understanding
Complaints procedure:	Open door	Shared responsibility with shift leader	Open and attentive
What is engagement?	It is important to achieve best results	Not always necessary to do a good job	Important for empl. and guests, it's desirable.
Engagement percentage:	100%	50/50	80%
Your influence?	Big influence, exerted daily	Small. Motivation majorly comes from within.	Considerable influence.
Leadership style?	Authentic leadership. Precise definition.	Coordination and ensuring a basis for all to perform a good job	Observing, listening, doing, leading. (authentic/transformational)

4.6 Qualitative Analysis: Conclusion

The interviews with the real-life hotel managers show that there can be large variances in perception of the communication concept. Communication is a simple concept familiar to everyone, that however proved to have considerable depth and complexity not grasped by everyone. Interviewee 2 who neglected the value of communication also reported lesser levels of employee engagement, confirming the link between communication and engagement found earlier in this paper.

Many of the elements stated during my research (ingratiating theory (3.2.1), confirming communication (2.4), positive leadership styles (3.6.4, 3.6.5)) were detected as well during the interviews with the hotel managers. Although some of the hindrances can seem obvious, only one of the interviewees was aware of most of them.

A discrepancy between scientific knowledge about communication and empirical application of it revealed itself during the interviews. Communicational problems that have been treated in various scientific papers are still not solved in some hotels. It shows that there is a great potential for businesses to improve their communication by improving managers' impact on their employees through communication.

5 CONCLUSION

Having considered the nature of communication and analysed the impact a healthy or hindered communication structure can have on business and people, the influence of the manager on this whole process could be analysed.

Communication was found to be the foundation of an organization, used to link the different players and coordinate them. Beyond a simple means to convey a message, communication is also related to emotions and personal matters of employees. Formal and informal communication are both present in the workplace although the informal part is rarely regulated.

Results of good communication have numerous positive outcomes for an organization including improved productivity, and positive effects on the bottom-line.

On the flip-side, problems in communication can seriously deteriorate the organizational situation of a company. A number of different hinderances for communication originating from the working environment, the giver and the receiver of information, but as well arising from organizational factors can increase deterioration of communication.

Surveys showed that employee engagement is at very low level of less than 20% on the global scale which shows high potential of improvement in this regard. This led to the key topic of this work, the influence of manager on communication and employee engagement. While disturbances can be caused by other factors, the manager plays an important role when it comes to giving the framework for communication.

The empirical research confirms many points of the findings, for instance that managers who have a better awareness of their own impact and the importance communication report better employee engagement.

The research shows as well that not only can the manager influence communication, but is sometimes the cause of its disturbance. This behaviour is caused by particular characteristics of certain managers, for instance the lack of the ability to evaluate themselves.

Great managers can thus arguably increase employee engagement to a great extent. Compared to the theoretical research, the conducted interviews show many accordances with the theoretical part and confirm the importance of the managers in the equation of top-down communication and its influence on employee engagement. Comparing the statements of the interviewees, a direct link between the manager's understanding of communication and their employees' engagement can be made. The managers that valued and understood communication better reported higher employee engagement levels.

Unfortunately, many companies fail to hire the right people into the management position and use promotion as a way to reward performant employees. It is to be considered that a productive employee will not necessarily make a great manager. Developing a more effective manager hiring-process could be the subject of further research.

In order to find out how different managers structure the communication in their position, I analysed four different leadership styles, destructive leadership, authoritarian leadership, authentic leadership and transformational leadership.

In a comparison it became clear that employees react negatively to destructive and authoritarian leaders. In these two models, followers become instrumentalized and do not get attributed with high personal importance.

Fear of retaliation and psychological stress can have many detrimental effects on the individuals and on the organization itself. This kind of negative leaderships are marked by upwards hostility, passivity and low employee engagement. This kind of leader clings to his/her power and discourages upwards communication.

Counter models to these leaderships are authentic and transformational leaderships. Authentic leaders lead by example and show deeply moral and objective behaviour that is beneficial for the company as well as values that get incorporated by each individual employee.

As the employees get personally involved, they can identify themselves to the leader and the organization as well. Two of the interviewees correspond approximately to this description and reported a positive impact on employees. Transformational leaders empower their employees through motivation and inspiration and encourage them to think out of the box. They foster an environment of innovation that enhances productivity and can have a positive effect on the company's bottom line.

The relationship of managers to their employees is one of the key elements that can be used to enhance organizational outcomes. LMX (leader member exchange) is a key word that describes the relationship between a manager and the employees. If LMX is positive, employee engagement and productivity are enhanced and vice versa. One of the interviewees seemed to be unaware of his impact and the importance of communication. The LMX of this manager can be considered low and he reported a rather low employee engagement himself.

In conclusion, this analysis proves that managers have a significant influence on employee engagement through their communication. If a company plans to enhance the organizational communication, the manager is an important variable to consider. The communication strategy of managers towards employees should be reviewed and control measures applied in order to increase employee engagement and eventually company success.

Limitations and Suggestion for further research

This thesis exclusively covers one angle of the communication and employee engagement situation: It analyses the impact of managers. Note: The interviews with the managers are quite subjective and the daily reality of their leadership might be different from what they stated in the interviews.

What is more is that the employees themselves likely have an impact on it as well, but could not be considered due to the limited framework of this thesis.

The amplitude of this empirical study through the qualitative research method chosen is very reduced and can only provide a small glimpse into the situation of a global sector without being representative for it.

The impact of *employees* on the communication process and their own engagement can be analysed and compared to this paper in order to complete the analysis of this topic looking at a bottom-up communication.

An extended online survey could be one of the tools to accomplish this.

Interviews with managers from other sectors could prove useful as well in order to analyse if there is a difference in manager behaviour from sector to sector.

6 REFLECTION

The base of this topic was a general research about the efficiency of internal communication in a company. Very quickly, I realized that the topic is very broad and that I had to be more specific about my research question. I found that the two main actors were the employees themselves and the managers, or superiors. I decided to evaluate it from the point of view of the managers, since they have the hierarchical power to influence the communication. Of particular interest was their impact on the behavior or 'engagement' of the employees, which became one of the key topics of the thesis.

During the theoretical research, my tutor Jorma indicated that an empirical part, meaning research in the field, in real hotels, would make a lot of sense to support the findings. Indeed, this opened a new door to a more relevant research and a slightly different perspective.

If I started now, with the knowledge I gained during my research, I would include a quantitative empirical study with the employees in order to hear both sides of this discussion and increase representativeness.

Writing this thesis, I learned a lot about research, objectivity and the scientific meaning of statements. Hence my attempt to analyse my personal anecdotes in a scientific way, finding a link between personal events and scientific facts. The writing also made the difference clearer for me between a "claim", that can sometimes seem logical and objective and a "fact" that was indeed proven. I learned not to make mere statements, but also about the importance of backing them up with scientific evidence for them to become relevant.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all my professional superiors who have guided me during my 3 internships and my first job and who had an impact on my personal and professional development. My thanks go to the University of applied sciences, Savonia, who enabled me to complete this thesis, even after a considerable delay. My thanks go as well to Jorma who made this paper possible, encouraged me with valuable input to develop it and helped me keep up my motivation and to Merja who revised the paper and provided additional guidance together with Jorma.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ASHFORTH, B. (1994). (1994): Petty tyranny in organizations. In *Human Relations; Thousand Oaks* (47), pp. 755–778. Available online at <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.savonia.fi/docview/231461665?accountid=27296>, checked on 7/17/2019.
- AVOLIO, Bruce J.; GARDNER, William L. (2005): Authentic leadership development: Getting to the root of positive forms of leadership. In *The leadership quarterly* 16 (3), pp. 315–338. DOI: 10.1016/j.leaqua.2005.03.001.
- BARTELS, Jos; PETERS, Oscar; JONG, Menno de; PRUYN, Ad; VAN DER MOLEN, Marjolijn (2010): Horizontal and vertical communication as determinants of professional and organisational identification. In *Personnel Review* 39 (2), pp. 210–226. DOI: 10.1108/00483481011017426.
- BIRASNAV, M.; RANGNEKAR, S.; DALPATI, A. (2011): Transformational leadership and human capital benefits: the role of knowledge management. In *Leadership & Org Development J* 32 (2), pp. 106–126. DOI: 10.1108/01437731111112962.
- BLIDARU, D. M. A., & BLIDARU, G. R. A. (2015): Organizational communication forms and causes for disruption of organizational communication and their improvement. In *Valahian Journal of Economic Studies* (6(1)), pp. 37–44.
- BLIGH, Michelle C.; KOHLES, Jeffrey C.; PEARCE, Craig L.; JUSTIN, Joseph E.; STOVALL, John F. (2007): When the Romance is Over: Follower Perspectives of Aversive Leadership. In *Applied Psychology* 56 (4), pp. 528–557. DOI: 10.1111/j.1464-0597.2007.00303.x.
- BRANDON Rigoni and BAILEY Nelson (2016): For Millennials, Is Job-Hopping Inevitable? Gallup, checked on 7/10/2019.
- CARROLL, Brigid; LEVY, Lester (2010): Leadership Development as Identity Construction. In *Management Communication Quarterly* 24 (2), pp. 211–231. DOI: 10.1177/0893318909358725.
- CHENG, Bor-Shiuan; CHOU, Li-Fang; WU, Tsung-Yu; HUANG, Min-Ping; FARH, Jiing-Lih (2004): Paternalistic leadership and subordinate responses: Establishing a leadership model in Chinese organizations. In *Asian Journal of Social Psychology* 7 (1), pp. 89–117. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-839X.2004.00137.x.
- CHU, Li-Chuan (2014): The moderating role of authoritarian leadership on the relationship between the internalization of emotional regulation and the well-being of employees. In *Leadership* 10 (3), pp. 326–343. DOI: 10.1177/1742715013498403.
- CLAMPITT, P. G.; DOWNS, C. W. (1993): Employee Perceptions of the Relationship Between Communication and Productivity: A Field Study. In *Journal of Business Communication* 30 (1), pp. 5–28. DOI: 10.1177/002194369303000101.
- CRAMPTON, Suzanne M.; HODGE, John W.; MISHRA, Jitendra M. (1998): The Informal Communication Network: Factors Influencing Grapevine Activity. In *Public Personnel Management* 27 (4), pp. 569–584. DOI: 10.1177/009102609802700410.
- DEN HARTOG Deanne N.; VAN MUIJEN Jaap J.; KOOPMAN Paul L. (1997): Transactional versus transformational leadership: An analysis of the MLQ. In *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* 70 (1), pp. 19–34.
- DENNIS TOURISH (1998): The god that failed. replacing false messiahs with open communication. In *Australian Journal of Communications* 25 (2), pp. 99–114.
- DENNIS TOURISH, PAUL ROBSON (2003): Critical upward feedback in organisations: Processes, problems and implications for communication management. In *Journal of Communication Management* 8 (2), pp. 150–167.
- DUAN, Jinyun; BAO, Chanzi; HUANG, Caiyun; BRINSFIELD, Chad Thomas (2018): Authoritarian leadership and employee silence in China. In *Journal of Management & Organization* 24 (1), pp. 62–80. DOI: 10.1017/jmo.2016.61.
- DUFFY M. K. (2006): The social context of undermining behavior at work. In *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 101 (1), pp. 105–126.
- ERDEN, Pinar; OTKEN, Ayse Begum (2019): The Dark Side of Paternalistic Leadership: Employee Discrimination and Nepotism. In *European Research Studies; Anixis* 22 (2), pp. 154–180.
- FAY, Martha J. (2011): Informal communication of co-workers: a thematic analysis of messages. In *Qual Research in Orgs & Mgmt* 6 (3), pp. 212–229. DOI: 10.1108/17465641111188394.
- FERNANDEZ, Denise Rotondo; CARLSON, Dawn S.; STEPINA, Lee P.; NICHOLSON, Joel D. (1997): Hofstede's Country Classification 25 Years Later. In *The Journal of Social Psychology* 137 (1), pp. 43–54. DOI: 10.1080/00224549709595412.
- FIEBIG, G. V., & KRAMER, M. W. (1998): A framework for the study of emotions in organizational contexts. In *Management Communication Quarterly* 11 (4), pp. 536–572.
- GALLUP (2013): The state of the american work force.
- GARY S HANSEN and BIRGER WERNERFELD (1989): DETERMINANTS OF FIRM PERFORMANCE: THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF ECONOMIC AND ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS. In *Strategic Management Journal Chichester* 10 (5).
- GEERT HOFSTEDE (2001): Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations Across Nations: SAGE Publications.

- GERALD R. (2007): Strategic bullying as a supplementary, balanced perspective on destructive leadership. In *The leadership quarterly* 18 (3), pp. 195–206.
- GILL, Carol; CAZA, Arran (2018): An Investigation of Authentic Leadership's Individual and Group Influences on Follower Responses. In *Journal of Management* 44 (2), pp. 530–554. DOI: 10.1177/0149206314566461.
- HAYWARD, Simon (2011): Connecting leadership development to bottom line benefits. In *Strategic HR Review* 10 (1), pp. 28–34. DOI: 10.1108/14754391111091788.
- HDRI.com: Definition and Top 8 Features of Professional Communication. HDRI.com. Available online at (<https://hrdevelopmentinfo.com/top-professional-communication/>), checked on 7/10/2019.
- HINKIN, Timothy R.; TRACEY, J. Bruce (1999): The relevance of charisma for transformational leadership in stable organizations. In *Journal of OrgChange Mgmt* 12 (2), pp. 105–119. DOI: 10.1108/09534819910263659.
- JEAN LIPMAN-BLUMEN (2006): *The allure of toxic leaders. Why we follow destructive bosses and corrupt politicians*: New York Oxford university press.
- JOSH BERSIN (2015): *Why Companies Fail To Engage Today's Workforce: The Overwhelmed Employee*. Edited by Forbes. Available online at <https://www.forbes.com/sites/joshbersin/2014/03/15/why-companies-fail-to-engage-todays-workforce-the-overwhelmed-employee/#9fe76bf4726a>, checked on 7/29/2019.
- JULIAN BARLING; AMY CHRISTIE; NICK TURNER (2008): Pseudo-Transformational Leadership: Towards the Development and Test of a Model. In *Journal of Business Ethics* 81 (4), pp. 851–861.
- KANTER, Rosabeth Moss (1988): Three Tiers for Innovation Research. In *Communication Research* 15 (5), pp. 509–523. DOI: 10.1177/009365088015005001.
- KHAN, Anas; KHAN, Riad (2011): Informal communication styles benefit McDonald's and Ford. In *Hum Res Mgt Intl Digest* 19 (7), pp. 27–29. DOI: 10.1108/09670731111175560.
- KRAMER, M. W., & HESS, J. A. (2002): Communication rules for the display of emotions in organizational settings. In *Management Communication Quarterly* 16 (1), pp. 66–80.
- LEELA, Vedantam; METHA, Pranjali & JAMBHULKAR, Sonam (2013): Emergence of destructive leader: Proposed definition and formulation of model. In *International Journal on Leadership* 1 (2), pp. 45–59.
- LEXICO BY OXFORD: Basic Definition Communication. Lexico.com. Available online at <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/communication>, checked on 7/15/2019.
- LIU, Yan; FULLER, Bryan; HESTER, Kim; BENNETT, Rebecca J.; DICKERSON, Marcia Simmering (2018): Linking authentic leadership to subordinate behaviors. In *Leadership & Org Development J* 39 (2), pp. 218–233. DOI: 10.1108/LODJ-12-2016-0327.
- MA, H., KARRI, R., & CHITTIPEDDI, K. (2004): The paradox of managerial tyranny. In *Business Horizons* 47 (4), pp. 33–40.
- MACEY, W., SCHNEIDER, B., BARBERA, K.M., and YOUNG, S.A. (2009): *Employee Engagement: Tools for Analysis, Practice, and Competitive Advantage*: Wiley Blackwell.
- MARIOTTI, John (1997): Confessions of a former boss. In *Industry Week/IW* 246 (17), p. 51. Available online at <http://proxy.bnl.lu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=buh&AN=9710063242&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.
- MAYFIELD, Jacqueline; MAYFIELD, Milton (2006): THE BENEFITS OF LEADER COMMUNICATION ON PART-TIME WORKER OUTCOMES: A COMPARISON BETWEEN PART-TIME AND FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES USING MOTIVATING LANGUAGE. In *Journal of Business Strategies, Huntsville* 23 (2), pp. 131–153.
- OSBORNE, Schrita; HAMMOUD, Mohamad S. (2017): Effective Employee Engagement in the Workplace. In *International Journal of Applied Management and Technology* 16 (1), pp. 50–67.
- Paul J. A. ROBSON; Dennis TOURISH (2005): Managing internal communication: an organizational case study. In *Corporate Communications Bradford* 10 (3), pp. 213–222.
- PEGG, Terry (2009): Creating engagement through employee benefits. In *Strategic HR Review* 8 (2), pp. 5–12. DOI: 10.1108/14754390910937521.
- POUNDER, James S. (2003): Employing transformational leadership to enhance the quality of management development instruction. In *Journal of Mgmt Development* 22 (1), pp. 6–13. DOI: 10.1108/02621710310454824.
- RAI Himanshu (2009): Gender Differences: Ingratiation and Leader Member Exchange Quality. In *Singapore Management Review* 31 (1), pp. 63–72.
- Randall BECK and James HARTER (2014): *Why good Managers are so rare. Managing people*. Harvard Business Review. Available online at <https://hbr.org/2014/03/why-good-managers-are-so-rare>, checked on 7/10/2019.

- REISSNER, Stefanie; PAGAN, Victoria (2013): Generating employee engagement in a public–private partnership: management communication activities and employee experiences. In *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 24 (14), pp. 2741–2759. DOI: 10.1080/09585192.2013.765497.
- SNIDERMAN, Pat; FENTON-O'CREEVY, Mark; SEARLE, Rosalind (2016): Effects of managerial communication as moderated by LMX and trait NA. In *Journal of Managerial Psych* 31 (6), pp. 1074–1090. DOI: 10.1108/JMP-04-2015-0120.
- TEPPER B. J. (2007): Abusive supervision in work organizations. In *Journal of Management* (33), pp. 261–289.
- THOROUGHGOOD, Christian N.; SAWYER, Katina B.; PADILLA, Art; LUNSFORD, Laura (2018): Destructive Leadership: A Critique of Leader-Centric Perspectives and Toward a More Holistic Definition. In *J Bus Ethics* 151 (3), pp. 627–649. DOI: 10.1007/s10551-016-3257-9.
- Ulla KINNUNEN, Taru FELDT, Saija MAUNO (2016): Authentic leadership and team climate: testing cross-lagged relationships. In *Journal of Managerial Psych* 31 (2), pp. 331–345.
- WALUMBWA, Fred O.; LUTHANS, Fred; AVEY, James B.; OKE, Adegoke (2011): Authentically leading groups: The mediating role of collective psychological capital and trust. In *J. Organiz. Behav.* 32 (1), pp. 4–24. DOI: 10.1002/job.653.
- Z, Sandy J.; LIDEN, Robert C.; SPARROWE, Raymond T. (1994): Developing Leader-Member Exchanges The Influence of Gender and Ingratiation: GENDER AND LMX SIMILARITY ATTRACTION APPROACH SITUATIONAL APPROACH STATUS CHARACTERISTICS THEORY INGRATIATION AND LMX DEVELOPMENT NEW SUBORDINATES, INGRATIATION, AND LMX DEVELOPMENT NEW SUPERVISORS, INGRATIATION, AND LMX DEVELOPMENT GENDER, INGRATIATION, AND LMX DEVELOPMENT SIMILARITY-ATTRACTION APPROACH SITUATIONAL APPROACH STATUS CHARACTERISTICS THEORY SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION REFERENCES. In *The American Behavioural Scientist* 37 (5), pp. 697–714.
- WEBFINANCE INC. (2019): Definition Communication. Available online at <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/communication.html>, checked on 7/10/2019.
- ZONDI, Silindile; CASSIM, Nadeem; KARODIA, Anis Mahomed, PhD. (2015): INTERNAL COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AND ISSUES: A CASE STUDY OF TRANSNET FREIGHT RAIL BUSINESS UNIT COAL, VRYHEID. In *Kuwait Chapter of the Arabian Journal of Busines and Management Review* 4 (6), pp. 105–145.

8 APPENDIX

TRANSCRIPT INTERVIEW 1

General background Hotel Info:

Interviewer: Nico Thielen

Interviewee:	Interviewee 1, General Manager, 43
Rooms (range):	<i>10-30</i>
Hotel rating :	4*
Employees:	9-12 (incl. trainees)
Main Business:	Conferences and Events
Restaurant :	Yes

Note: All names and brand names gathered during the interview are handled in a confidential way and have been anonymized for this report.

This transcript is not a word by word transcript as, for better understanding for the reader of this paper, I translated the wording from French to English

Background Info Questions:

- Why did you choose the hotel business?

I like good service in perfection and I strive towards it every day. I like that kind of work and the routine that is yet differently every day. It is a really passionating business, every customer has slightly different needs.

- How long have you been a manager here?

I have been managing this hotel for a bit less than 10 years now.

- Where did you work before? What position?

I started at front office many years ago and developed myself until I ended up as shift leader, events manager until we did the renovations here and I could eventually manage my own property.

- What is your position? Duties and responsibilities?

I am the general manager, but since this hotel is only xx rooms I am present in all the departments.

- How and why did you get into your management position (promotion, switched companies)

As I mentioned, I worked in 3 different hotels before and eventually renovated this hotel into what it is today.

Questions

Theme I: Let's talk about COMMUNICATION

Question 1.1 What is Communication to you and how is it used in your workplace? (how do you use it/how do you perceive it)

Communication is very important in this hotel. Everybody has to know about every guest that stays at the hotel, from the chef to the cleaning lady. Only by good communication is this possible, and I find it the best way to ensure that the guest has the best experience. If a guest arrives late, has a special wish or changes the room, every member of the staff has to be informed. I want that every

staff member is able to help the guest if they have a problem and offer solutions right away. This works pretty well, but it is a hard job to do.

Can you give an example of how it is a hard job?

Some clients are very demanding, but it is still possible to even exceed their expectations. Attentiveness and complaisance are maybe the most important factors. In order to make everything work, communication is indispensable of course.

Question 1.2:

Would you describe the communication with your employees as mostly professional, mostly personal? (%tage)

It is mostly professional of course, but we are all human beings. Often, we have lunch together and talk about other topics than work as well, obviously.

Question 1.3: Let's talk about difficulties in communication.

*Don't get me started! *laughs* There are so many. The most frequent one is omittance though. If one staff member changes one of the gears in the whole clockwork this is one thing. Changing something without telling the others is a grave mistake. Even if a process is not efficient and can be improved, it is better to stick to the procedure and not change it on your own. Everything can be discussed and I am eager to improve, but changes have to be discussed first.*

Imagine the servers dress the tables for the restaurant. One finds a more suitable or better-looking position for the glass next to the plate. He changes it though without telling the other servers. The result is that the glasses have a different position on some of the places and a different one for the other. Everyone did their best, but it looks like the servers have been careless. Not every customer might even notice, but it is the detail that makes the difference to everyone, even if they don't 'see' it per se, they can feel it however. If the communication isn't there, it can never be perfect.

Question 1.4:

What factors for you that can inhibit a good communication. Which ones of them apply to your workplace?

Like I said, omittance is an emblematic example or factor. It is even the absence of information completely. It is hard to react to something if you do not know it even happened. I'd rather have they (the staff) tell me a mistake right away than I get to know it from a client.

Language still occurs as an inconvenience sometimes. Not everyone is fluent in French which can lead to misunderstandings. Usually we manage well though.

Can you think of any other obstacles to good communication?

The will of an individual to listen. It is a quality that many people are missing these days. Either they don't care or don't want to listen. Working with unwilling people can be very tiring. I haven't found a real solution to this problem yet. The fact is if they do not listen, they even at some point leave on their own. I know turnover can be considered a negative point in university analysis, but it is a good thing because it leaves space for innovation. Of course it is a lot of work if a new employee comes, but it can prove valuable in the long turn. The good ones have to stay of course. I mean, especially at the beginning, say the first 1-2 years of an operation a high turnover is vital for the formation of a good team.

But then it is good if the team stays together right? *Yes, most of the time. It is always more efficient to work with people you know. And it can be more agreeable.*

Question 1.5 How do employees approach complaints about their job? (Open door policy, formal complaint, personal conversation)

I am open to every kind of constructive criticism at any time. Nobody needs to file a formal complaint if they are not happy with something at work. We can find a solution to every problem. That's our business.

Theme II: Let's talk about employee engagement.

Question 2.1: What do you understand by employee engagement? What is its meaning for you in your workplace?

(Explanation: engagement is not a necessity to perform a job: work without engagement is execution without being personally invested or passionate about it)

All of my employees are fully invested. I tolerate nothing else. At work this is what has to be done. If someone does a job halfway, it will show to the customer. So I would say all are very engaged, and I am proud to say so. My ratings confirm that. Every employee is trained and knows what is at stake: exceeding customer expectations!

Question 2.2:

This is an estimative question, how many of your employees would you describe as engaged in their job their job (%tage) ?

100 percent, at least that's my humble opinion.

Question 2.3:

To what extend do you believe you can influence employee engagement from your position.

I influence my staff every day. I show them the way and we can take that journey together. I am actively involved in every part of the operation myself as well. If someone has a question, it suffices to ask. This is how we work here.

Theme III Let's talk about Leadership:

Question 3: Describe your leadership.

(Question 3.1 Do you take action to improve your leadership?)

I am giving the staff an example of where to go. Lead by example might be the definition. Every task of the operation I can do myself as well, from cleaning rooms to cooking a meal. In fact, I also do these things in the routine if we get into stressful situations. Every hand is needed, and I am here to help. If someone has a problem, they can always come and tell me. I am ready to improve, but I cannot entirely change who I am. And how I am has worked well for the last 20 years.

Question 4 Do you want to add anything else?

Thank you for the interview. It is good to see that young people are interested in this kind of topic and it sure is interesting to look a bit behind the deeper essence of a hotel business.

Transcript interview 2

General background Hotel Info:

Interviewer: Nico Thielen

Interviewee:	Interviewee 2, Front Office Manager 49
---------------------	---

Rooms range:	<i>200-300</i>
Hotel rating :	5*
Employees:	110, 15 at the reception (+ 5 trainees)
Main Business:	Business, Leisure, MICE
Restaurants:	2

Note: All names and brand names gathered during the interview are handled in a confidential way and have been anonymized for this report.

This transcript is not a word by word transcript as, for better understanding for the reader of this paper, I translated the wording from French to English

Background Info Questions:

- Why did you choose the hotel business?

I think it is a good opportunity to make a career. I was interested managing people, but also in numbers, accounting, it's kind of my thing. And in hospitality even if you can start small you can work your way up.

Is that what you did, I imagine?

Yes, in fact that is right. I started as a receptionist shift leader here, after which I left the hotel for another hotel with a management position and succeeded to come back here again as a manager.

So you like this place in particular?

You could say that. I was attracted to this place and it is after all among the best hotels here. If not the best.

You mentioned working with numbers, do you have any degree in the subject?

Yes, I have a few diplomas in accounting and revenue management. They proved quite helpful in the management position. At the Front Office, I am not strictly in accounting, but numbers do matter, as in every business obviously.

- How long have you been a manager here?

I've been a manager here now for 8 years.

- Where did you work before? What position?

/ answered above

- What is your position? Duties and responsibilities?

So I am the front office manager. I am coordinating the efforts of the front office. I take care that we are up to standard of the hotel's requirements and manage the first cash inflow. The reception is the one of the main spots where cash and invoices are handled. Also restaurant bills of hotel clients are often paid here. Everything has to be in order. In addition to that comes EDP, staff meetings, meetings with the other managers and often welcoming high profile guests.

- How and why did you get into your management position (promotion, switched companies)

/Answered above

Questions

Theme I: Let's talk about COMMUNICATION

Question 1.1 What is Communication to you and how is it used in your workplace? (how do you use it/how do you perceive it)

Well it is the interaction of the different members isn't it? Everyone has to communicate to get things done. How do I perceive it... I guess it is a tool to work efficiently. Of course it is a very broad subject. We have a lot of standards and guidelines as we are a 5, does that count as communication as well?*

Written guidelines are in fact an important part of communication as well, as it makes things clearer, given that everyone understands the message. It is not reciprocal, as a guideline cannot reply to questions.

That's right. But that is what trainings are for. In a big hotel we cannot take that chance and let the people (managers) do as they please. When you work with over 100 people, things have to be clearly defined. You will get to know these mechanics once you work at a hotel as well.

I did work at a hotel, and it's true that in smaller hotels communication can be different. Have you worked in a smaller hotel or always bigger ones?

No, the hotels I worked for always had 100+ rooms

Question 1.2: (altered)

Would you describe the communication with your employees as mostly professional, mostly personal? (%tage)

I would say it is mostly professional. Of course, I know who I'm working with, but when you work with a larger team, it is not possible to know everything about everyone or talk about many things other than work.

Do you think it is different in smaller hotels?

Maybe, I couldn't say, since I never worked in one. Maybe it is more personal, but it doesn't mean it's better for the employees, here people work together, they do a good job and that's it.

Do you mean it could be negative to be too emotionally or friendly involved with the coworkers?

Well, maybe not necessarily negative, but it can be a good idea to keep the job a job and personal life apart. It is a big advantage if you get along well with the colleagues, but the reason we are here is to work, not to make friends. Anyway, there is not a lot of time during the shifts to chat. There is always something to do.

Question 1.3: Let's talk about difficulties in communication.

What factors for you that can inhibit a good communication. Which ones of them apply to your workplace?

We try to make everything as clear as possible. For the newcomers it's a learning by doing situation. If they have any issues, they can ask another employee or their supervisor for help. This system seems to work quite well.

Can you think of any obstacles to good communication?

It can happen that someone misunderstands an information. In that case he/she should have asked for clarification. We are not in someone else's head. If something is unclear you can ask.

What would you say is the main source, rather the employees or..?

Of course, we cannot blame everything on the employees. However, it is normal that newcomers make more mistakes than older employees or managers. It is part of the learning process. More experienced employees are further down the road and can avoid such mistakes better.

Question 1.4 How do employees approach complaints about their job? (Open door policy, formal complaint, personal conversation)

For small things they can sometimes figure it out with the shift leader right away. For more significant matters, they can talk to me and we can find a solution.

Theme II: Let's talk about employee engagement.

Question 2.1: What do you understand by employee engagement? What is its meaning for you in your workplace?

(Explanation: engagement is not a necessity to perform a job: work without engagement is execution without being personally invested or passionate about it)

If I understand your question correctly, it is like "commitment"? - yes, you could call it that I think it is important to do the job in a good way. But sometimes it is hard to do. Not every task is fun, but it has still to be done.

Question 2.2:

This is an estimative question, how many of your employees would you describe as engaged in their job their job (%tage) ?

Maybe 50/50.

Why that number?

Many of the front office employees don't work here forever. Even though it is an entry level job and you need quite some skills to do it, you have a lot of options. Maybe work your way up or change hotels. Not many come here because reception is their dream job.

I hope you don't mind me for asking, is it your dream job?

**smiles* Let's say, I can say that I'm very happy here.*

Question 2.3:

To what extend do you believe you can influence employee engagement from your position?

As a manager, my mission is to coordinate every aspect of the work. I can help make the work better by giving the clerks shifts that are convenient for instance. And obviously I motivate them to do a good job. But true motivation is something that comes from within. Some people are tougher to be motivated than others. But as long as they do a good job it's okay.

Theme III Let's talk about Leadership:

Question 3: Describe your leadership.

Through the years you learn how to deal with the people and how to be a good leader. I am sort of their guide and also protector, because at the end of the day, everything at the reception lies under my responsibility.

Would you say you're more encouraging or more strict?

I am strict when I have to. I try to give a good baseline for everyone to be able to do a good job.

Question 4 Do you want to add anything else?

If you have all you need, I will be glad as well.

Thank you

My pleasure

Interview Transcript 3

Background Hotel Info:

Interviewer: Nico Thielen

Interviewee:	Hotel Manager 3
Rooms:	+ - 100
Hotel rating :	4*
Employees:	+ -80
Main Business:	Various, mainly leisure
Restaurant :	Yes 3
Age	30-40

Note: All names and brand names gathered during the interview will be handled in a confidential way and anonymized for the report.

Do note that this transcript is not a word by word transcript as, for better understanding for the reader of this paper, I translated the wording from French to English

Background Info Questions:

- Why did you choose the hotel business?
 - *I was always fascinated by the variety of the sector. From young age in contact to tourism through vacations. Made a general study and then specialized in hospitality.*
- How long have you been a manager here? Was it always your goal to become a manager?
 - *I started very recently 6 months ago. It's a new challenge. It was my goal from the start to become a manager and some day maybe have my own hotel. I wanted to gather experience and at some point put them all together to become a manager. I had some more steps in mind, but this opportunity arose to become a manager here and I took it. I've been working in hospitality for +- 12 years now.*
- Where did you work before? What position?
 - *I started as receptionist and worked my way up. I did many jobs from night audit to concierge and gained experience of every facet of the business.*
- What is your position? Duties and responsibilities?
 - *I am not a GM, but rather share the duties with my colleague. My duties englobe sales and marketing, rooms, housekeeping, technical and spa and the reception. My colleague is taking care of F&B.*
- How and why did you get into your management position (promotion, switched companies)
 - *I switched companies a couple of times, I was a receptionist, shift leader night auditor, assistant front office manager, front office manager, duty manager, revenue management, I was a clef d'or concierge and worked in LXB city and became a hotel manager as a next step in my career. The hospitality business is a very traditional sector, even if you made a bit hotel school, you will not likely become a GM right away. You need some experience in order to climb the ranks. Night audit is also very important to understand the "behind the scenes".*

Questions

Theme I: Let's talk about COMMUNICATION

Question 1 What is Communication to you and how is it used in your workplace? (how do you use it/how do you perceive it)

It is very important, I would even go as far and say it is the key factor of success here. Everyone does a different job in a hotel, but they all have to intercommunicate among themselves and among services and among the managers. If these actors don't communicate, it cannot work out. It is important that the teams can communicate what could be improved in the service and us managers will communicate our vision to the staff. There are many small problems that turn up and many are linked to bad communication. It is also important for the client. For instance he arrives at the reception and makes a complaint. The next day, there is another receptionist who knows nothing about his problem, the client will not understand and his experience will be tainted.

Question 1.1:

Would you describe the communication with your employees as mostly professional, mostly personal? (%tage)

As I mentioned, I started in hospitality for the people, maybe this is not the case for everyone. In many jobs, you communicate of course, but mainly over telephone, or internet. We in the hospitality sector, we have a role towards the guests who want a real person to talk to. Personal contact is an important factor for me. Now that I work in management, I have less contact to the clients, but therefore more with my teams.

There are many different nationalities and ages, from students to people who work here since 20 years. I think there has to be a balance between professional and personal communication in order to maintain a healthy relation. The human factor, is very important. The client can feel the difference and this feeling we need with the staff as well. Not sure I answered your question now!

Question 1.2: Let's talk about difficulties in communication.

What factors for you that can inhibit a good communication.

Which ones of them apply to your workplace?

It is important to conduct trainings. To me, what I am saying sounds logical, but if the teams don't understand this thinking, they will maybe not understand the utility of communicating certain pieces of information. So it is important to know WHY we communicate, WHAT should be communicated, there are things that are more and less important and what CHANNELS we have at our disposal. Only verbal communication is not enough. I have some employees at the reception who will never meet during a week due to their shift times, but who need to communicate to each other in order to be informed about what has happened at the hotel in their absence, or when they start their shift. This communication will then be written, with daily reports or even what's app which is used more and more in hotels. But we have to make sure everyone knows over what channels to communicate. As a manager, it is also important to explain what and why you want to do something to make them understand because it is not a given that the teams will follow you. It is a team work. I only started here very recently so I observed how people are working, and after that see what can be improved or changed to make the life of everyone easier and of course also to increase revenue, the daily rate in order to be able to make new investments, that's important, and also to increase the service quality.

Question 1.3

How do employees approach complaints about their job? (Open door policy, formal complaint, personal conversation)

I am very open towards this, I cannot know the details of the work of everyone, but I am very attentive towards this kind of topic and I encourage them to tell me what can be improved and I am open to their proposals and initiative. It is no use to think that the manager knows everything or have the best ideas and they just do their jobs and that's it. It is important to listen to the employees. They have good ideas we can build on and also, it is their work place, if they are happy with what they do, the client will feel it right away. You can see it, even if one tries to smile, but is uncomfortable, the client will notice. This is important to put the right person to the right job. Sometimes that's not the case and the employees have a role that is not fulfilling their whole potential. And one notice, okay, according to your competences, you might be better off in a different position to truly thrive. One has to see it and I don't hesitate to suggest such a change. It also helps them evolve and find their career path in a hotel. Sometimes someone starts from nothing and ends up a formidable manager. It's in daily life to determine those things as you go along.

Theme II: Let's talk about employee engagement.

Question 2.1: What do you understand by employee engagement? What is its meaning for you in your workplace? Nico: You anticipated my question already a bit, but I hear engagement is very important to you?

(Explanation: engagement is not a necessity to perform a job: work without engagement is execution without being personally invested or passionate about it)

Yes indeed. Also the hotel sector is a sector with high turnover and one asks oneself how to keep employees loyal. The teams are very mobile, and we like to keep the employees with us. It is nice to give a good job and a good salary, but to talk to the people is also important. Unfortunately this sometimes gets lost in big hotel companies. Simply gratefulness, (reconnaissance) towards the employees means a lot, even if it doesn't seem like it. Every manager knows how to take repercussions or shout out mistakes, but to me it is as important to say something positive, if a work is well done.

Do you think it is possible to do a good job even without engagement?

Yes I think It is. Some jobs are harder or repetitive like the dish washing or housekeeping, physically and might not be valorizing for many people. It can work, but the day where someone suggest them a different better work, they will leave easily. Loyalty is important and it for me engagement is an important factor here.

Question 2.2:

This is an estimative question, how many of your employees would you describe as engaged in their job their job (%tage) ?

**without hesitation* the majority. So 80%? Yes. When I started here it was a group of foreigners, but now I know the teams they want to do a good job. I think it is important and which is not done everywhere that hospitality is an evolving business. You need trainings, review procedures, which was not necessarily done here recently. If you don't do it, the employees are a bit stuck in routine, but here it is really a good team spirit. I still think there is a lot that I can improve during my next years.*

What about trainings you mentioned?

It can vary a lot. Sometimes it can be an experienced employee who leads a workshop, sometimes an exterior company. Some trainings are obligatory by law, for instance HACCP. Also safety rules, fire alarms etc. I conducted trainings myself when I was a chef d'or concierge where people called me and to do trainings.

Question 2.3:

To what extent do you believe you can influence employee engagement from your position.

I think a good manager can take care that his team listens to him and follows him. To me that's a good manager. Even if revenue is important, to me it is en "ensemble", guest satisfaction, revenue and employee satisfaction, they are inseparable to me. Of course there is some people who are harder to motivate than others, but if you have good communication skills, it is possible. In 90% of the cases. If you have three people, and you want to do the same work with them, but they have different ages, careers, you need three different ways of communicating to them, but you can achieve the same thing I think. It's a work of listening, adapting and observation that are skills developed over the years. Learning by doing. During travels, different hotels, it changes a lot depending on the surroundings. After you manage to federate the teams.

Theme III Let's talk about Leadership:

Question 3: Describe your leadership.

**thinks* it's a pity, my studies are quite some time ago and I know there are special terms. I cannot remember which one I am closest too. But to me it is not to order people around. It is more to explain. That's important. Not like: okay starting tomorrow we will do this procedure. No, I will explain why I implement something and it is important to avoid mistakes, have a consistency in service, and to simplify the work of employees. I am listening and they have to understand if I do something it is in their interest, in the interest of the company, and in the interest of the guest. I'm not an authoritarian leader. Also, we already had it, if there a situation where we need an extra hand, to clean up a room, I will do it. It is important to show them I understand what you do, I can do it and I appreciate it. If they understand that you can do it as well, they will understand that you can ask of them to make it differently. If you stay in your office and tell the people to do this and that, they might think you do not know what you are talking about. It is a mutual exchange.*

(Question 3.1 Do you take action to improve your leadership?)

Question 4 Do you want to add anything else?

Ehrm, no...But I think your questions are very pertinent and I ask myself similar questions. During my career and different hotels, everything exists to make things easier. What makes the system bug? It is the communication most of the time. To me success really does come through good communication.