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Communication and Work Development as a Change Management Tool in the In-Flight Customer Service Department

Case Finnair

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ABSTRACT

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The challenges and changes in the air transport sector have increased the need for radical changes also in the airlines organizations. Finnair has chosen to be a quality airline to focus on operations into customer-orientation and delivering improved customer experience to its customers. The objective of this thesis is to find development suggestions to the In-flight customer service department how to develop communication and work development to be used as a change management tool. The study aims to answer to the following development questions: 1) What is the role of communication in a change in an organization? 2) What are the obstacles in developing internal communication in the department? and 3) How to achieve successful change in delivering improved customer experience?

The methodology in this thesis is mainly based on empirical research, consisting of interviews, participant observation and document analysis. The theoretical framework provides the theoretical foundation for the study which consists of organizational communication, change management and work development. The case company's employees were interviewed for their experiences of and views on the department's communication and changes taken place in the company.

The results show that communication in the In-flight customer service department is not effective as it could be. The systematic, goal-oriented and regular communication and discussions expected by the employees is missing in the department and for this reason the change communication will not succeed in achieving its objectives. In addition, in view of the development of communication, the department is missing training and work development instruments in order to provide tools for spontaneous development. On the basis of the findings of this research development suggestions were presented for the department regarding how they could improve communication and work development in order to motivate and commit the front-line service employees.

Keywords: communication, change management, change communication, work development, employee development

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and motivation

Service employees are a key input for delivering service excellence and productivity. These so-called front-line jobs are among the most demanding jobs in service organizations where employees are expected to be fast and efficient at executing operational tasks, as well as friendly and helpful in dealing with their customers. It is probably harder for competitors to duplicate high-performance human assets than any other corporate resource. From a service organization's perspective, the service level and the way service is delivered by the front line can be an important source of differentiation as well as competitive advantage. (Wirtz, Heracleous & Pangarkar 2008, 4-5.)

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) indicated in 2008 that the financial losses in the air transport sector might exceed the $6 billion dollars in the near future if oil prices stay high. The president of IATA described the global situation desperate and indicated that in early 2008 around 24 airlines have gone out business. (Assaf & Josiassen 2011, 5.) Consequently, many airlines are currently adopting cost-reduction strategies and the need for high performance takes an additional importance within the current market challenges (Assaf & Josianssen 2011, 6).

As a company Finnair is facing new challenges while the air transport sector and its operating environment have completely changed. Finnair has chosen to be a quality airline by focusing on operations into customer-orientation and delivering improved customer experience to its customers. From this perspective the service employees such as flight attendants are in a key position delivering improved customer experience because they are in constant contact with the customers. The challenge of the management in ongoing change is how to commit and motivate these front-line employees to join efforts and development towards the future in light of all the recent industry challenges.

According to Ströh & Jaatinen (2001, 162), the change efforts often fail because the changes are not communicated well and because they do not facilitate learning or advanced training. Bamber, Gittell, Kochan & Nordenflycht (2009, 14) state that if the stakeholders learn from their experiences and from each other there is a path that deals with the pressures building up in the airline industry, offering hope for a better balance between investor, employee, customer and social interests.

My personal involvement in the company is a strong motivation factor in writing of this thesis. To be the exact, I work at the In-flight customer service department as a flight attendant. Hence, a lot of data is originating from my own personal working experience and observation while working at this department. I want to find the problem areas in communication and suggest improvement ideas for it. Due to this, I am able to give my own contribution into the development of the department.

The starting point and the background for the thesis were to

- explore the current state of internal communication in the In-flight customer service department, and
- study the perceived challenges and obstacles in developing internal communication in the department under the changes taken place in the company.

1.2 Research objective and development questions

The challenges and structural changes taken place in the air transport sector and its operating environment have increased the need for radical changes also in the airlines organizations. The key to successful introduction of change lies in effective communication, and employee development could be the answer to gaining employee commitment where traditional internal communications programmes have failed (Proctor & Doukakis 2003, 268, 272-273). The objective of the thesis is to find development suggestions to the In-flight customer service department concerning how to develop communication and work development to be used as a change management tool.

The purpose of the thesis is to

- be part of the renewal process of Finnair to change the organizational culture into more customer- oriented management system and way of operating , and

- deliver improved customer experience in order to become international winning team.

The aim of the In-flight customer service department is to find new thoughts and courses of action in service development together with the employees and management. Langer & Thorup (2006, 387) suggest that it is important to communicate with the employees about organizational changes and developments, but more important is for the management to listen to employee stories and regard them as a creative and important resource. Hence, the change cannot begin before the employees' motivation and commitment towards the change have been reached (Ströh & Jaatinen 2001, 150) and change will only succeed if the employees gain a sense of ownership of change (Langer & Thorup 2006, 387). Consequently, the objective of the thesis is to find ideas to communication and work development in order to find solutions to the change management challenges in the department.

Therefore, this study focuses on one main development question with two sub-questions, all of which are shown below.

What is the role of communication in a change in an organization?

- What are the obstacles in developing internal communication in the In-flight customer service department?
- How to achieve successful change in delivering improved customer experience?

The research is examined from the employees' perspective in order to acquire the understanding of the development needs in the department. Therefore, the interest perspective of the research will be on the employee group as flight attendants and stewards, as well as the employer. The operational environment of the airline business and Finnair is presented in chapter 2 in order to provide the background description of the operations and objectives of the research, as well as the relevant theory of organizational communication, change management and work development.

1.3 Research method and situation

The methodology in this thesis is mainly based on empirical research, consisting of interviews, participant observation and document analysis. The research-driven practical development work (Toikko & Rantanen 2009) is chosen in this research as the company, its operational environment and the employee group as flight attendants have all special features which makes the research object extremely complex. The main objective of the research is to provide practical benefit for the In-flight customer service department and the development work is the most suitable method to serve the purpose.

The development orientation perspective is that the organization's management, employees and customers might all live in different development realities. In addition, the reality of the work community is constantly changing: different objectives, interpretations and discussions change it all the time, as well as official and unofficial discussions. (Toikka & Rantanen 2009, 37.)

In development activity, the practical problems and questions guide the knowledge production. The knowledge is produced in genuine practical operational environment and the research situation and the chosen methods are supporting the knowledge production. In this thesis the primary focus is on the work development activity but the target is also to utilize the research principles. The objective of the research activity is not solely to resolve the questions and problems but also to describe and bring them into the more extensive discussion. (Toikko & Rantanen 2009, 22.) Toikko & Rantanen (2009, 48, 40) propose that the development activity can be progressed top down to bottom up or vice versa bottom up. In this research the progress and the standpoint takes the direction of bottom to up with the purpose of finding ways to utilize the employees' tacit knowledge in knowledge- and development production of benefit to them.

The research situation presented below in Figure 1 illustrates the background to how the operational environment of the air transport sector impacts on Finnair and further influences the operations in the In-flight customer service department. The development questions describe the focus and purpose to be answered in the study. The theoretical framework provides the theoretical background and presents the related concepts which are relevant from the point of view of this thesis work. Research methods describe how the data was collected and analyzed, and the research process and findings further detail the findings. Discussion and development suggestions provide the answers to the research questions and development suggestions for the In-flight customer service department.

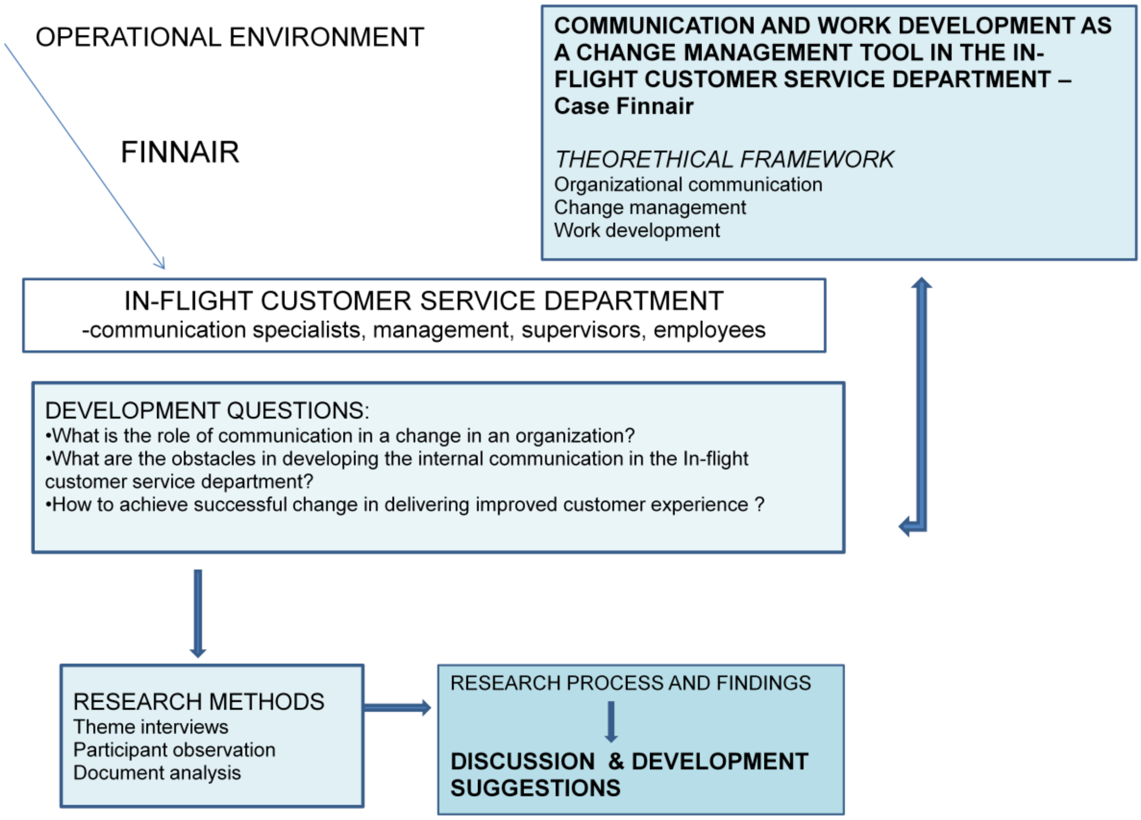

Figure 1. Research situation

1.4 Structure of the thesis

Chapter 2 presents the case company Finnair and the operational environment of the company. Chapter 3 presents the literature review which investigates the relevant theory of organizational communication, change management and work development. At the end of the literature review, the theoretical framework for the study is introduced. Chapter 4 explains the methodology and chapter 5 the research process and findings of the study. The findings chapter is followed by chapter 6 with discussion and development suggestions, which further details the findings and the development suggestions. The report ends to chapter 7, conclusion which brings together the ideas of the report.

2 RESEARCH OBJECT AND THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

The case company is Finnair the oldest operating airline in the world. Nowadays Finnair is focusing its strategy to transport passengers between Europe and Asia via Helsinki. This section presents the company's characteristic features, operational environment and the current situation which provides the background for the research objectives.

2.1 General information

The company was founded on 1st of November 1923 by the name of Aero O/Y. One of the founders Consul Bruno Otto Lucander became the first managing director of the company. During the first operating years the company was partly German owned as the first airplanes Junkers F13 and the aeronauts were provided by the German company called Junkers Flugzeugwerke A.G. In the 1930 Aero became entirely Finnish company when Finnish investors bought the Junkers airplanes out from the German company. In the 1946, the Finnish state acquired the majority holding in the company and in 1968 the company was renamed as Finnair. (Finnair Oyj 2010b.) Still today Finnair's major shareholder is the Finnish government with a 55.8 percent holding. Other shareholders are e.g. insurance and other companies, and private individuals. Approximately 20 percent of the shares are owned by the foreign shareholders. (Finnair Oyj 2010a.)

Finnair Group operations cover scheduled passenger traffic and leisure traffic, technical and ground handling operations, catering, travel agencies as well as travel information and reservation services. The number of personnel of Finnair Group is approximately 8,500 in 2010 (Finnair Oyj, 2010a).

Finnair's strategy aims to become the airline of choice for quality and environmentally conscious air travelers in intercontinental travel in the Northern Hemisphere. Finnair will pursue its growth strategy based on increasing demand in the traffic between Europe and Asia and in the future also in the traffic between North America and Asia. (Finnair Oyj 2010d.)

Finnair offers destinations in scheduled passenger traffic over 60 destinations consisting 50 destinations international and ten domestic destinations. Leisure destinations Finnair covers over 60 destinations depending on the tour operators programs and season. Finnair is a part of Oneworld-alliance which expands the route network significantly along with bilateral agreements. (Finnair Oyj 2009, 7.) Flybe Nordic is Finland's newest carrier which started its operations in August 2011. Owned in part by Finnair, Flybe operates all routes previously flown by Finnish Commuter Airlines. (Finnair Oyj 2011a). In traffic between Europe and Asia, Finnair offers more than 800 route combinations (Finnair Oyj 2009, 7).

Finnair Group fleet consisted in June 2010 from 63aircrafts. The fleet consists of 29 Airbus A320 aircraft family, 4 Boeing B757 aircrafts, 16 Embraer 170/190 aircrafts and 14 Airbus A330/340 aircraft family (Finnair Oyj 2010i, 3).

In 2010 the number of personnel of Finnair Group was 7 578 and the turnover was 2,023 million euro. During the calendar year 2010 Finnair carried a total of 7 139 000 passengers. Cargo and mail carried by Finnair in the year 2010 totalled 123 154 tonnes. (Finnair Oyj 2010i, 2-3.)

The employees of Finnair are consisting of seven different trade unions which members are extremely heterogenic. The operations are physically divided in different buildings around the airport in Helsinki-Vantaa and also to other sites and countries. Majority of the company's personnel does shift work and nearly third travels constantly for work. (Strömsten 2009, 6.)

2.2 Challenges of the airline industry

The last decade has globally been extremely difficult for the air transport business. Air transport sector has faced challenges such as the world wide economical downturn, rising fuel prices, rapid expansion of Low Cost Carriers (LCC), which have direct effect on continued risk of over capacity of airlines, and increasing government travel and emission taxes (Doganis 2010). The industry has suffered not only the 2001 terrorist attacks, war in Iraq, epidemic diseases but also natural disasters like tsunami and eruption of volcano in Iceland at the beginning of 2010. Bamber et al. (2009, 2) explain the airlines distress as a part of normal economical cycle which highlights the volatile nature of the industry. The upheaval of airline losses, layoffs, wage cuts and bankruptcies echoes previously periods in the early 1980s and 1990s. (Bamber et al. 2009, 2.)

The airline industry has become increasingly competitive as markets are deregulated and new entrants with low cost offer low fares (Bamber et al. 2009, 3). The increasing competition has produced numerous bankruptcies and mergers due to that many long-established companies still had inflexible structures to resist the adjustment (Finnair Oyj 2009, 12).

Changes in the market and in consumer behavior have challenged the traditional divisions within airlines. Customer segments are not so clearly distinguished as before while the customers wish to increase their option in terms of product package and are willing to pay for that. At the same time the ticket prices are falling while the new service components create extra costs for the airline. (Finnair Oyj 2009, 12.) The industry is increasingly driven by cost-cutting pressures. With the result of industry's workforce and customers reporting high and rising frustration with the way they are being treated. (Bamber et al. 2009, 1.)

According to Bamber et al. (2009, 2), the airline business has different stakeholders and in each downturn three of them suffers; investors, employees and customers. Only the customers have been the winners in the search of low prices. Bamber et al. (2009, 4) argue that in the competition between low cost carriers and so-called legacy airlines, the latter mentioned have pursued alternative employment practices by trying to achieve more positive results for all of their stakeholders; low prices, high-quality service, relatively good jobs and less volatility.

Based on the research of Bamber et al. (2009, 5) in the study of different airlines around the world, the market approach governing their economies and balancing the interest of different stakeholders differs, but what was common with all the airlines was that too many of the airlines, unions and policymakers have been slow and reluctant learners. Bamber et al. (2009, 10-13) suggest that the key of finding a balance between different stakeholders with the pressures building up in the airline industry is in the choosing of right cost reduction strategy and employment-relations strategy. According to Kochan (2008, 29) just about every new entrant into the airline business wants to open up by having a more committed work force, by engaging employees, by making sure that they are really ambassadors of the airline to the customer.

According to Doganis (2010), the airlines response to the challenges in the air transport industry has been capital market fund raising, consolidation by mergers, focus on cost reduction, learning from the LCC, and network restructuring. The cost reduction has been focused on: cutting labor costs, reducing distribution costs, cutting flights and capacity, and alliances and mergers. The learning from the LCC aims at reducing and simplifying fares and conditions. (Doganis 2010.) According to Pereira & Proença (2011, 93), although the regular airlines are adjusting their functional model and processes towards a low cost strategy, they cannot reduce their services to pure low cost standard because customers expect a minimum level of quality and service from them.

2.2.1 Finnair background to the situation

Finnair have answered to the challenges in the airlines' operational condition and environment by improving the financial state of the company, updating the strategy and together with the personnel finding new operating practices inside the entire organization. In 2008 the improvements in the financial state of the company were done by 200 million euro result improvement programme, which include savings and operational efficiencies as well as measures to boost the turnover. Stabilization agreements have been also done with personnel. (Finnair Oyj 2009, 14.) According to Bamber et al. (2009, 10), there are at least two options in cost reduction; one is to focus on achieving low labor cost by minimizing wages and benefits and another option is to focus on achieving low total costs by increasing employee productivity as well as the productivity of other costly assets.

In autumn 2009 efficiencies were also found through organizational change, in which the scheduled traffic and leisure flight operations were centralized into a unified Airline Business organization. Based on the new structure Finnair's business activities were divided into five operational entities: Sales and Marketing, Operations, Customer Service, Travel services and Aviation Services. (Finnair Oyj 2009, 14.)

Coincide with the organizational change; the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mr. Jukka Hienonen announced his resignation of the duty. The reasons of the resignation according to Hienonen were the crises in the air transport sector, inability to reach the objectives wanted, resistance in the company's structures and corporate culture, which were born and shaped in the old times. Another opposite force was the inflexibility of the employees in the company, mainly because of the strong trade unions and difficult collective bargaining. (Kaarennoja 2009.)

The radical saving measurements have effected strongly to the employees and the resistance has been evident, different strikes around the company, increasing dissatisfaction and the lack of confidence to the management. In November of 2009 the pilots went to a strike for a week, in December 2009 the ground personnel in baggage handling and in October 2010 the Finnish Aviation Union of technical service staff (Harald 2010). In the end of 2010 the Finnish Cabin Crew Union SLSY started a strike while there was a disagreement in the collective bargaining. Proctor & Doukakis (2003, 270) found that the biggest problem after the saving measurements taken in the large public organization is to study the feelings of employees in order to be able to find means to combat the organizational malaise.

Bamber et al. (2009, 11-13) presents two different employment-relations strategies. The airlines can focus either on controlling employee behavior or on engaging their commitment to the goals of the airline. Under the control approach, managers specify what needs to be done and instruct employees to comply with those directions. The workplace is characterized by a fairly rigid hierarchy and narrowly defined jobs. By contrast, managers following the commitment approach see to generate a deeper, more organic relationship between employees and the organization. Their focus is on engaging employees to understand the interests of the enterprise and its customers and to act accordingly. (Bamber et al. 2009, 11-13.) Today, Finnair has chosen the latter strategy as presented in the next section.

According to Bamber et al. (2009, 13), in the relationship with unions, airlines can seek to avoid, accommodate or partner with them. The first option is either suppression or substitution, by voicing strong opposition of the establishment of a union, or paying high wages and benefits in order to reduce the need to organize. The second option is to accommodate and negotiate with the unions at arm’s length and have a contractually based relationship. The third and preferred option is to partner with unions, seeking to establish a broader or deeper relationship than is contractually required. With this form the companies and unions are engaged in more continuous communication. According to Kochan (2009, 26) the employee relations and culture are important in the airline industry because a high level of engagement and a good labor relations system are the keys to increasing productivity and service quality.

2.2.2 Renewing Finnair 2010

In order to be able to answer to the future challenges in the airline industry, Finnair implemented in the beginning of the year 2010 renewed company vision, success factors, identity and common working practices in the entire company. The campaign was implemented together with Trainers' House and was named Forward Together –A World class place to work (Finnair Oyj 2010f). In the 1st of February 2010 the company got new President and CEO Mr. Mika Vehviläinen, to whom many of the internal changes personalized.

Finnair's vision is to be number one in the Nordic countries and to be the most desired option in Asian traffic. In transit traffic between Asia and Europe Finnair wants to be among the three largest operators: Lufthansa, KLM and Air France. The success factors are quality, freshness and creativity. The success factors guide the behavior and help the company to achieve the company's vision. The Finnair identity arises from the vision and success factors. The company's prerequisite of the growth strategy is cost-competitiveness. The updated vision, specified success factors and the given customer promise, presented in section 2.3 are aimed at delivering profitability. Profitability and cost-competitiveness are the guarantee for the future, when a company is profitable and makes profit it has an opportunity to develop and go forward. (Finnair Oyj 2010f.)

A world class place to work means in practice to find common way to work and lead. The management creates the preconditions for success which are to be goal-oriented, fair, incentivizing, developing and caring. The preconditions clarify what kind of leadership every employee has a right to expect. The purpose behind the management precondition is that every employee will built own behavior towards the same objective irrespective of where they work in Finnair's customer service chain. (Finnair Oyj 2010f.) By this Finnair is changing its organizational culture towards customer- oriented management system and way of operating. The human resource (HR) expertise inside the company has an important role and development responsibility towards the change. (Finnair Oyj 2009, 14.) The aim of the new personnel strategy is to update the objectives and responsibilities to the same line with the company's strategic objectives.

In the beginning of the Finnair CEO's career Vehviläinen stated publicly in Fakta magazine that the HR management- and development systems are not properly built in the company and wanted to have special concentration on internal and supervisory communication. As according to Vehviläinen (Haukkasalo 2010, 40) comprehensive management means making the decisions together, by goal-oriented actions, with fairness, continuous development, encouraging and caring of people, in other words with the same principles as in the management preconditions. “The new ideas need to be learned especially in the units where the actions have been based on operative, hierarchical management model. The superiors must do the decisions with the employees not on behalf of the employees. The ultimate objective is to increase trust”. (Haukkasalo 2010, 40.)

In addition, to the positive developments of 2010 as launch of new vision, management preconditions, new service product, –procedures and identity, the company has encountered setbacks as well. For example the eruption of Iceland volcano, strikes of different labor unions and slow universal economical recovery. After the year 2007 Finnair did its first positive result in the third quarter of 2010. The period of the year 2010 is presented in the Figure 2 in order to clarify the speed of changes and the pressure of renewal actions in the company.

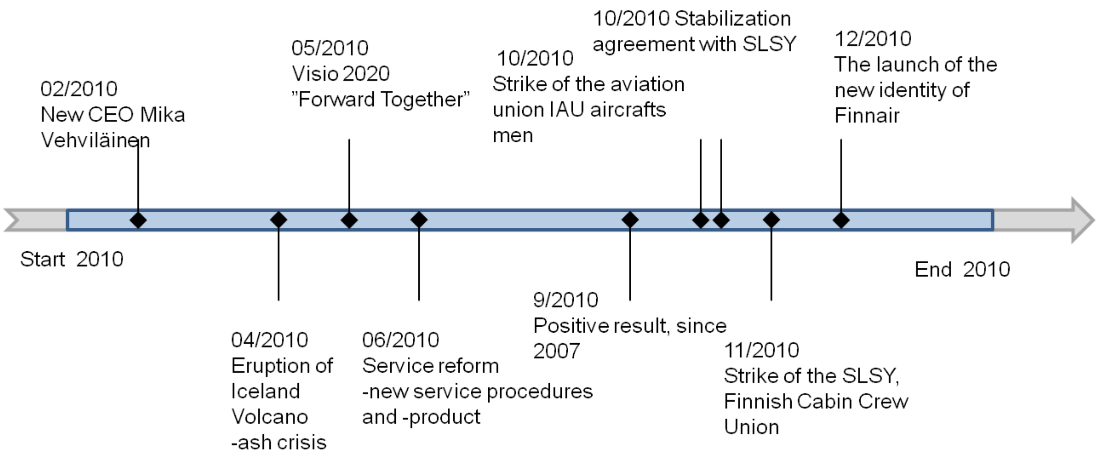

Figure 2. Finnair 2010

In addition, to the renewal efforts in 2010, Finnair has continued in 2011 the development of service culture and – identity with the purpose of finding distinguished customer experience, the Finnair way to serve a customer, in order to differentiate from the competitors. Finnair’s key competitive advantages are geographically short distances and fast flight times, extensive network, operational excellence, value for money, modern fleet, high quality, eco-smart operations, and being part of oneworld alliance. The must win battles launched in 2011 are profitable growth, cost-competitiveness, improved customer experience and growth into international winning team. (Finnair Oyj 2010.)

According to Pereira & Proença (2011, 96-97), in the study of marketing strategy analysis of national airline TAP Portugal, the results show that the most customers appreciate convenience, speed and effectiveness which are critical success factors in a society that values time to a great extend. In addition, customers prefer central airports and directs flights or with speedy connections to reduce as much as possible the travelling time. When comparing the low cost and regular airlines preferences, the price sensitiveness is preponderant in a low cost service choice, but for the regular service option, service quality is more valued and all differentiating aspects that can psychologically justify the payment of a higher price. Based on the preferences TAP Portugal has decided to invest to the higher segments such as Business or Executive class customers. (Pereira & Proença 2011, 96-97.) Finnair has also chosen the business travelers in their customer strategy in its domestic market of Northern Europe and in growing economies in Asia (Finnair Oyj 2010d). Pereira & Proença (2011, 97) found that the critical success factors are the most relevant variables in differentiation from the competition because they are the most valuable elements for airline customers.

According to Bamber et al. (2009, 13), the airlines and investors important outcomes include productivity, cost competitiveness and profitability, which Finnair has also acknowledged in their growth strategy. For customer, an important outcome in addition to price is service quality. Bamber et al. (2009, 13) presents three distinct dimensions of service quality; level of amenities, reliability and friendliness. Amenities can be imitated via additional investment and higher costs, whereas reliability and friendliness do not necessarily require higher costs, but instead stem from superior operational coordination and workforce motivation. For employees, important outcomes include income levels, employment, security, morale, and job satisfaction. This is linked to the idea of resource advantage such as the reliability or friendliness of customer service which cannot be easily replicated. (Bamber et al. 2006, 13.) In the section 3.3 presents suggestions to find ways to increase workforce motivation and job satisfaction.

2.3 Airline business and the organization

The Finnair group consists of airline business, aviation services, travel services and other functions. This research will concentrate on In-flight customer service department which is operating under airline business and is a part of Customer Service business unit. (Finnair Oyj 2010d.)

2.3.1 Customer Service division

The Customer Service division started its operations in the beginning of October 2009 as a result of the organizational change as mentioned in the section 2.2. Customer Service division consists of four different departments

- Ground customer service and product development,
- In-flight customer service and product development,
- Business control and customer service performance and
- Customer service HR.

The amount of employees working in the Customer Service division is altogether 1949, from which the amount of flight attendants is 1743. Approximately 178 employees of the division are working in the ground customer service and 28 employees in the support activities, such as business control and HR (Finnair 2010a.) The organizational chart is presented in Figure 3.

The function of the new business unit Customer Service division, is to combine the Finnair's airline passengers' service chain starting from booking a flight trough all the way into the completion of the journey and giving a feedback to the company from the entire experience. The Finnair's airline passenger's service chain follows the Finnair's customer promise to be the airline "designed for you". The customer promise means listen the customers and develop comprehensively unique and distinctive products and services to the customers' needs, as mentioned in the section 2.2.2 (Finnair Oyj 2010f.)

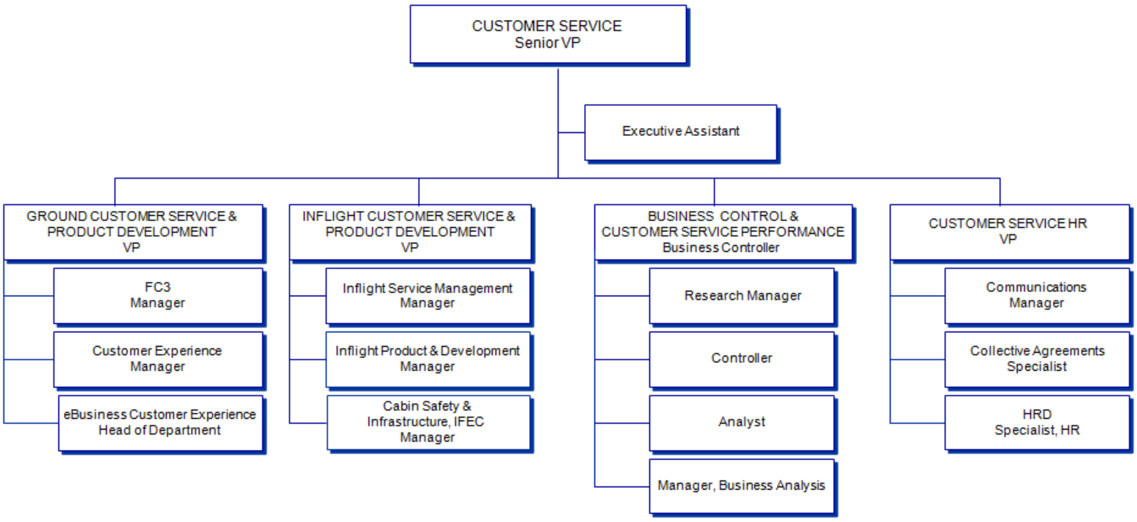

Figure 3. Organizational chart of the Customer Service division (Finnair Oyj 2011)

2.3.2 In-flight customer service department

In-flight customer service department consist of three different units: In-flight service management, In-flight product development and Cabin safety and infrastructure. As presented in the organizational chart in Figure 4. the department can be further divided into operative customer service and product development. This research is concentrating on the in-flight service management from the operative customer service since the employee group of flight attendants is operating directly under the in-flight service management. The number of employees in the In-flight customer service department is total 1761, which consist of 1293 flight attendants and stewards, 450 pursers and 18 office workers which are mainly specialists and supervisors. All the employees working in the department have been working at some phase in their Finnair career as a flight attendant or steward, because it is seen as a great advantage in understanding the departments operations and the characteristics of the flight work.

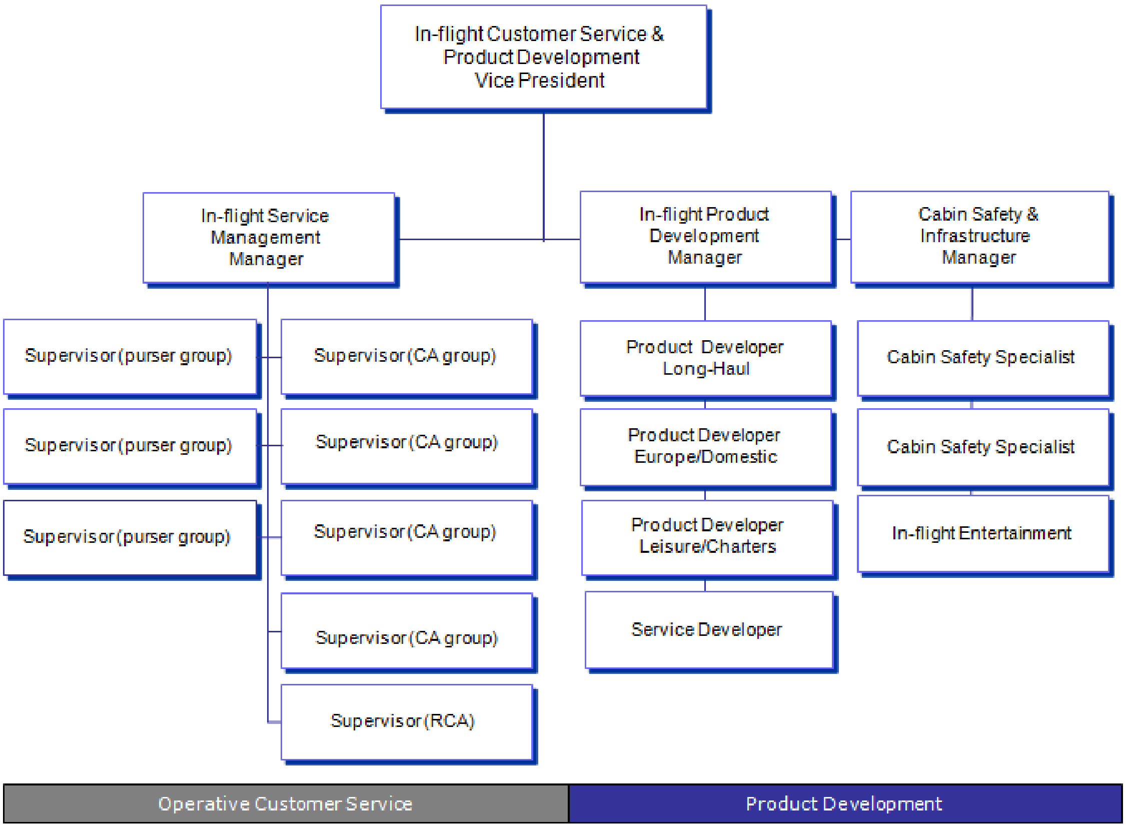

Figure 4. Organization chart of the In-flight customer service department (Finnair Oyj 2011)

In-flight service management consists of superior work manager and eight supervisors, which each are having approximately 300 flight attendants or pursers as subordinates. The immediate superior during the flight is purser or Chief of Cabin (CC): during the one-class flight or Embraer aircraft flights when purser is not required. In this way the operational superior responsibility is delegated more to the purser or CC during the flights, and the administrative superior responsibility and support remains at supervisors in the ground organization.

2.3.2.1 Flight attendants and the flight work

Aero organized the first entrance examination for flight attendants already in 1947. The profession has a long history and the employees have been involved in developing their own work in the early years because neither readymade procedures nor instructions were available. (Hytönen 1997, 15.) According to a flight attendant with the 36 years flying experience, the difference to the 70’s when she started her career is that “today there are more instructions and guidelines to observe in the work, before there was more trust into the individual skills and own memory. Nowadays the planes and the crews are bigger, and there is always rush involved, but the aim of the flight is still the same, to satisfy passengers and to make them want to fly with Finnair again”.

According to the Employment and Development Office of Finland (2010), flight attendant’s work description is described as demanding customer service in the airplane. Working among demanding customer service in changing conditions requires service spirit, flexibility and high level of physical fitness. The most important and primary duty is to take care of the passengers and the cabin safety. The training to become a flight attendant takes two months but some basic education is required such as high school and other vocational degree.

Nevertheless, that the work is physical and demanding customer service, the work itself is routine and is based on performance. As a consequence, many of the flight attendants are well educated. Some have gained education already before their flight career and some have started to study during their career. The typical natural features of flight attendants are conscientiousness, interest to meet new people, cultures and languages. Flight attendants are also emotionally intelligent and able to react fast to situations. They are people with high standards and a strong willingness to learn. (Finnair 2010d.) According to superior manager many of the flight attendants have the need to develop themselves also professionally (Finnair 2010c).

The group of the flight attendants is heterogeneous because the group is large and the age difference varies between 22 to 68 years. Within the group there are smaller groups which can be formed on the basis of age, life situation, work experience, education, cultural and language background etc. In addition, to the Finnish flight attendants and stewards there are Asian flight attendants from seven different nationalities and these Asian flight attendants are operating on the intercontinental flights. (Finnair 2010b.)

There is ample amount of past research and journals found describing the challenges and stress of the flight attendants work. The work is considered demanding and stressful service job which is hard to combine with regular family life and the ability to recover from the work varies (Ashforth & Humphrey 1993; Sonnentag & Natter 2004). According to the findings of Chen (2006), Hall (2002) and Murphy (1998), the flight attendant profession encounters different change pressures and challenges due to the changes in the air transport sector, as mentioned in the section 2.2.

Besides the stressful and demanding character of the work, the cabin work is also strictly controlled by different authorities, such as International Air Transport Association (IATA), Finnish Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and Finnair Oyj by the operation procedures conducting the safety- and service related duties. In addition, the company has uniform regulations related to appearance while wearing the uniform.

The Finnish airline’s flight attendants have their own trade union, the Finnish Cabin Crew Union also referred as SLSY. It started its operation in 1953 and the amount of members today is approximately 2100. The union was established based on the need to protect the working conditions. The evidence shown at least in Finnish Doctor Magazine in 1962 that flying has affect to the human health and the fact has to be acknowledged. The objective of the union today is to protect the flight attendants legal position in the working life, employment and the economical and social status. The SLSY aims actively to develop the working conditions, profession and the professional skills of the flight attendants. (SLSY 2010.)

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review consists of an investigation of three concepts, i.e. organizational communication, change management and work development. This study focuses on communication and work development and how to use them as change management tool. The overall aim of this chapter is to link the way communication, change and work development interacts and is interconnected within organization and thus provides a basis for this study.

3.1 Organizational communication - basic views

O’Rourke (2010, 26) defines organizational communication as the different communication practices that take place between people within an organizational setting. However, the field of organizational communication is highly diverse and fragmented (Baker 2002, 1). Due to the objectives in this thesis, this research only concentrates on internal communication, excluding external communication which is communication between organization and its external environment.

There are various definitions of internal communication in relation to organizations. According to Clutterbuck & James (1996, 249), internal communication is defined as “an exchange of information, responses, ideas and feelings by which the collective talent and commitment of the organization are directed to achieving corporate and individual objectives.” According to Juholin (2006, 140), the meaning of internal communication has been highlighted while the change has become a permanent phenomenon in organizations. Smith (2008, 53) proposes that internal communication can also be said to be staff communication or employee relations; from this perspective the internal communication is employee communication.

The internal communication has different impacts on and roles in an organization according to Juholin (2006, 140-147), such as 1) creating culture and community spirit, 2) transmitting work related basic information, 3) managerial communication, and 4) increasing satisfaction and well-being at work. Maula (2004) states that bad communication and minor interaction increases confusion and misunderstandings, change resistance, lack of motivation and willingness to remain unchanged (Juholin 2006, 144).

In the 21th century the organizational research shows oversupply of information but at the same time the communication paradox is the shortage of information. People experience they do not get the information they need. (Juholin 1999, 123.) The development of communication technology shows the change direction into members' own responsibility acquiring information. The members' role is changing from passive objects into active communication subjects. (Juholin 2006, 92.) Internal discussion is a resource as well as the information itself. The tacit knowledge of employees is one example of the organization's resources but depends on face-to-face communication, requiring people talk to each other by sharing information, experiences and views. (Juholin 2006, 97.) Juholin (2009, 284) specifies tacit knowledge as intellectual capital, know-how, values and attitudes which are committed into the organization, and are not documented.

The new organizational communication agenda according to Juholin (2009, 143), is based on dialogue which is taking place in different work forums for example the premises and settings, electric communication tools such as intranet, e-mail, blogs, wikis, different networks and social media. According to Kochan (2008, 29), if the company wants to engage employees, and not just individuals but in groups and collectively – there has to be forums to process employees' ideas. Further, it is important to make sure the employees are heard, and to have an opportunity to challenge management, if something is not working.

The strategic objectives of the organization guide the internal communication planning. However, more important than the objectives themselves is the practical action. Kamensky (2000, 184) explains that people easily learn to set objectives but the goal-oriented behavior is missing, as the objectives equals will. Barrett (2002, 221) suggests that in order to become a high-performing company, the company has to put effort into effective employee communication. Barrett studied over 40 companies and created a Strategic Employee Communication Model in order to help management to understand the strategic role communication plays in the day-to-day success of any company as well as during major change. The model functions as an analytical tool to diagnose a company's strengths and weaknesses in employee communication so that the company can structure the change communication and position communication to facilitate the overall change. The model is presented in Appendix 1. (Barrett 2002, 221.)

The model presented in Appendix 1 captures all of the major components of employee communications linking them to each other and to the company's strategy and operations. Thus, the model works analytically to break employee communication down into manageable, recognizable parts and showing how intertwined and interdependent each part is when employee communication is positioned strategically. (Barrett 2002, 221.)

The process of communication is a complicated process but the traditional model of communication includes a sender, receiver and channel. All the elements which disturb communication are called noise. The information flow in organizations can be described as top down, bottom up or lateral communication. Typical disturbance in communication is the filtering of information, which means that the information presented is selected. In information censor, some information is left out intentionally, and in exaggeration the communication is disturb by magnifying or disparage part of the message. (Vartiainen 1994, 141.)

Åberg (2000, 174) divides internal communication into close- and remote channels and further into direct or indirect communication. Close channels serve the smaller part of the work community such as department or individual members, and remote channels communicate with the whole organization. Direct close channels can be called as face-to-face communication because interaction is present and personal. Direct remote channels include news briefings, meetings, management info situations, co-workers in other units, and the occasions include face-to-face communication but not personal interaction. In addition, indirect close channels include notice boards, newsletters, magazines, network communication and e-mail. Further, the indirect remote channels include work community notice boards, letters, webcasts, internal radio, TV, annual reports, intranets, text messages and partly mass communication. (Åberg 2000, 174). Another classification of the communication channels is the division into oral, written or electronic channels (Juholin 2006, 163).

The leadership and management roles differ in communication policy although both are involved in power relationship but their roles in building trust and institutional viability differ (Stuart, Sarow & Stuart 2007, 251). Åberg (2000, 22) defines communications management as a specialist function which is lead by the communication manager. Juholin (2006, 96) emphasizes in the communications management the communication know-how of managers, superiors and project leaders, while according to the contemporary view it is not enough that the communication know-how is only in the possession of communication manager and specialists. Åberg (2000, 22) defines managerial communication means of managing because without communication it is impossible to lead. It is a supervisory communication which is not specialist function but a part of superior work and a way of influencing. Åberg (2000, 22) continues that the communication is a resource and a possibility to be used. On the one hand, the organization has certain resources which can be used, but on the other hand it is not clear if the resources are utilized in the right way or effectively.

The role of managerial communication is important from the point of view creating organizational culture and transmitting a link between different organizational levels. The more open, reliable and respectful the individuals experience the communication; the more satisfied they are to the job, supervisors and the whole organization. In the central position are the superiors and managers, and their attitude towards the employees. (Juholin 2006, 145.) However, according to Stuart & al. (2007, 229) some managers are afraid of sharing information, while thinking that possessing knowledge makes the employees more powerful. Clearly, enlightened managers understand that informed employees are motivated and loyal workers.

3.2 Managing change as a continuous process

The change in the following section is explained from the change management perspective without detailed explanation of change phases or change processes because the change in the organization of Finnair is a continuous process.

According to Ströh & Jaatinen (2001, 149), change in organizational terms is the shift in behavior of the whole organization, to one degree or another. The change can concern the organization internally, interest group, operational environment or all of previously mentioned (Juholin 2006, 217). According to Beck (1989, 22), the concept of transformation is used to suggest a distinction between changes which are imposed on organizations from outside, or because of external pressures, and those changes which are adopted positively as part of organizational strategy.

Kotter (1996, 25) explains that the management has a crucial role in successful change. Management is a set of processes that can keep a complicated system of people and technology running. Leadership is a set of processes that creates organizations and adapts them to changing circumstances. (Kotter 1996, 25.) The term change management is a structured approach to shifting individuals, teams and organizations from a current state to a desired future state. It is an organizational process aimed at empowering employees to accept and embrace changes in their current business environment. (Hiatt 2003, 10-11.)

Employees in large, older firms often have difficulty getting a transformation process started because of the lack of leadership coupled with arrogance, insularity and bureaucracy (Kotter 1996, 29). Mattila (2007, 47-50) states that often in those organizations the past steers the future. The past experiences and events dominate the interpretation of present and future actions. The trust is in central position in the starting of the renewal actions and how it is accepted in the first place. The concept of trust is explained more detailed in section 3.2.2.

Kochan (2008, 29) predicted already in 2008 a potential disaster to become in the airlines because most of the collective agreement contracts start to come due in 2010. Many of the contracts for the first time in the history of the industry come due at the same time because concessions were made at the same time, by pilots, baggage handlers, flight attendants, etc. What will happen is that all the pent-up pressures of this highly demoralized work force just explode. Kochan (2008) presents a scenario which could have prevented the storm, the companies have to learn work with their labor force and they have to train their managers to do that. They have to make sure they hold their employees accountable for providing the productivity that warrants a higher wage**.** (Kochan 2008, 29.) In the case of Finnair, after the negative strike period which took place in 2010, the company is trying to fix a broken relationship with its employees in order to increase trust.

According to Åberg (2000, 82), organization is a unity of cultures which are formed from different parts along the years. The familiarity of the culture is important while the cultural elements might slow down the development of change. Hughes (2006, 40) identifies forces for stability or status quo in an organization such as historical inertia, trade union/staff association, organizational culture and bureaucratic culture. According to Kotter (1996), in many transformation efforts the core of the old culture is not incompatible with the new vision, although some specific norms will be. In that case, the challenge is to graft the new practices onto the old roots while killing off the inconsistent pieces. Hence, most of the executives' failures tell less about them than about the extraordinary difficulty of changing corporate culture. (Kotter 1996, 151.)

Mattila (2007) states that typically management reproach personnel of failure of the change because of the employees' resistance, and the personnel reproach bad leadership. The statement is partly right, while the change efforts in organization improve if the management and superior work uses the possibility to interpret the personnel attitudes and the reasons behind the attitudes. The personnel change resistance has positive possibilities if used in the right way. (Mattila 2007, 10-11.) If the channels of expressing dissatisfaction and defects are blocked, the improvement and development would not happen fast enough and the hardest hit would be the organization and the management (Mattila 2007, 25-26). Proctor & Doukakis (2003, 271) suggest three lines of action as a means of combating the organizational malaise in the change efforts, such as use of IT to short-cut the passage of information through the various levels of management, provide middle management with sound training in management skills, and introduce a system of employee development. The system of employee development is explained more detailed in section 3.3.2.

3.2.1 Vision, communication, empowerment and training

There are different approaches to change and management. According to Ströh & Jaatinen (2001, 151), the traditional approaches to change management are action research model, the three step model and the phases of planned change approach. Finnair has followed the planned change approach which places emphasis on processes: it deals with change over a significant period of time, follows a holistic approach, encourages participation, ensures full support from top management, and involves a facilitator who takes on the role of change agent. In the case of Finnair the facilitator is the training company Trainers' House.

There is criticism against the three models because they are seen too rigid; that phases cannot be so distinct and chronologically ordered because of the extreme turbulence in the environment; that the emphasis in on incremental and isolated change rather than radical transformation; that reliance on management is too heavy; and the fact that one kind of change could work for all organizations (Ströh & Jaatinen 2001, 151). Ströh & Jaatinen (2001, 159) further suggest an approach dealing with change free flow of information; emphasis on relationship management and symmetrical communication for resolving conflicts; empowerment of people; preference for diversity; scenario planning; and participatory approach to guarantee internal interaction, commitment and direction.

According to Barrett (2002, 225), the success of any change communication will depend on a company having a clearly stated, believed in, understood and meaningful vision statement, which management should be involved in developing and communicating. Langer & Thorup (2006, 386) state that there are challenges in its practical realization, because strategic organizational changes are unlikely to be successful unless the communication manages to create collective planning which is based on dialogue between the employees and the management. The change communication implanted by external consultants and determined by the formal top-down decision making paths rarely succeeds. (Langer & Thorup 2006, 386).

Major internal transformation rarely happens unless many people assist. Yet employees generally will not help, or cannot help if they feel relatively powerless, hence the relevance of empowerment (Kotter 1996, 102). Kotter (1996, 83) gives example as the case of the airlines where the attitude training is as important as skills training. Over the past century, millions of nonmanagerial employees have been taught by their companies and their unions not to accept much responsibility. “For many of these people, you cannot just say, OK, now you’re empowered, go to do it. Some simply won’t believe you, some think it’s an exploitative trick, and other will worry that they aren’t capable. New experiences are needed to erase corrosive beliefs, and some of that can be done efficiently with training.” (Kotter 1996, 83.) Furthermore, while implementing changes the tempting visions are not adequate by themselves, there is also need for discussion, encouragement, support, training, pressure and follow-up (Järvinen 2011, 13).

Proctor & Doukakis (2003, 273) define empowerment to act as a motivating factor for getting people to be committed to what they do. Empowerment is about training, communication, recognition and motivation, and simply gives individuals bigger pieces and removes close supervision by superiors and unnecessary rules. Proctor & Doukakis (2003, 273) present that in service sector organizations empowered employees willingly take responsibility for the service encounter, they respond more quickly to customer needs, complaints and changes in customer tastes. In addition, the empowerment does not define only into employees but also front line managers. According to the study of

Proctor & Doukakis (2003, 274), the front line managers feel that they are not proper managers because they had to keep referring things back to middle managers for permission to do. It is a sign of insufficient delegation of authority and formal top-down decision making which hinders to effecting change. The following section discusses in more details the issues impacting on the resistance to change.

3.2.2 Resistance to change

When a change starts in organization there are two change models: doing together or forcing to change (Juholin 2008, 127). According to Proctor & Doukakis (2003, 268), people like to feel that they are in control of what is happening to them, the more that change is imposed from the outside the more they feel threatened about and more they will resist it. People resort to using their last remaining power base -their will to co-operate. (Proctor & Doukakis 2003, 268.) If the employees do not accept the new practices, they are not committed to the changes and do not eventually follow the new practices (Murphy 1998, 530). Proctor & Doukakis (2003, 275) found that commitment to change can be investigated by helping people develop a shared diagnosis of what is wrong in an organization arid, what can and must be improved. Hence, doing together model is more effective in order to commit the employees into the change.

In addition to the importance of ensuring the flow of information and seizing on defects, Juholin (2008, 136) suggests that the organization should ask questions from itself if the changes and plans have weaknesses; how the criticism is received in an organization and does it have its own place and situation. Does the organization have shared forum where to process issues and tell own views and observations, and does the superior have nerve to receive criticism which might indicate management mistakes. (Juholin 2008, 136.) Proctor & Doukakis (2003, 268) presents blocks to effecting change reflects such as lack of adequate resources to implement ideas, procedural obstacles, political undercurrents and lack of cooperation in the organization.

Employees resist change for many reasons, according to Holtz (2004, 166), such are self-interest, fear of the unknown, conflicting beliefs and lack of trust. Fear of the unknown is related to knowing how things are done under the status quo, but are they able to learn the new systems, skills required to work within a new environment, and ability to fulfill a new role. Conflicting beliefs relates to that people may believe the change is wrong, or view the situation from different angle. (Holtz 2204, 166.) Lack of trust weakens the organizations ability to encounter new and concentrate into the mutual objectives (Mattila 2007, 51).

The trust is capital to the organization according to Mattila (2007, 50), and successful change requires trust (Stenvall & Virtanen 2007, 77) because the distrust hinders the success of the development projects and is an important source of resistance to change (Mattila 2007, 57). According to Proctor & Doukakis (2003, 273), trust can take a number of different forms. Trust means a belief that those on whom we depend will meet our expectations of them. Alternatively, it may be reflected a willingness to engage in reciprocal sharing and openness, to share relevant information when it is needed. Proctor & Doukakis (2003, 273) present that there is considerable scope for misunderstanding based on not knowing or trusting the intentions of the other person. While organizations may demand commitment and trust from their employees this is not necessarily a reciprocal arrangement. Trust is easily embodied in organization when it is missing or damaged. According to Stenvall & Virtanen (2007, 81), lack of trust will lead to lack of discussion and minor dialogue will produce negative feelings and way of thinking.

Mattila (2007, 58) states that organizations which unify result pressure and bad spirit, might drift into situation where people are their own. A part does not want to increase the problems and get the reputation of difficult or negative person in the front of management or superiors, and a part experience that in difficult situation there is no time to advise people in any case. The reconstruct of trust is long, for years taking constant proof demanding process. (Mattila 2007, 58-59.) On the contrary to the leap from trust to distrust happens quickly and requires only little incentives (Stenvall & Virtanen (2007, 81).

There are many elements to overcome resistance to change. According to Holtz (2004, 167), there are at least three: the desire to change, the ability to change and the permission to change. The desire to change relates to motivation. Employee must believe that the outcome of the change will result in benefits and in their best interest (Kotter 1996, 110). The ability to change signifies help to develop the requisite skills. One that holds people back is the ingrained beliefs and behaviors that cause them to doubt their ability to change. The permission to change means those people in power and authority must grant permission for people to change, the corporate culture must be conductive to the change. Underlying any strategies to overcome resistance must be an openness to share information, to communicate about the change thoroughly, frequently and honestly. (Holtz 2004, 167.)

3.2.3 Communicating change

Change and communication are closely connected while the task of communicating change is to describe and implement the change (Juholin 2006, 317). In change situations the need of information increases significantly (Stenvall & Virtanen 2007, 72). Katzenbach (1995) has presented five primary goals for effective employee communication during major change; thus change communication must 1) ensure clear and consistent messages to educate employees in the company vision, strategic goals, and what the change means to them; 2) motivate employee support for the company's new direction; 3) encourage higher performance and discretionary effort; 4) limit misunderstandings and rumors that may damage productivity; and 5) align employees behind the company's strategic and overall performance goals. (Barrett 2002, 220.)

Barrett (2002, 222) suggests that the design of any change communication program needs to grow out of the size the company's current communication practices. The company must devote the necessary time and resources required to assess and improve employee communication before they launch the change program. Barrett further suggests that without the careful analysis of the current employee communication situation, the company is shooting in the dark in developing the change communication. Without the analysis it is not clear where the communication breakdowns are and how best to reach the organization with the key change messages. (Barrett 2002, 222.) Barrett suggests a Scorecard of Current Employee Communications to be used to facilitate the assessment. The scorecard is presented in Appendix 2.

Communicating change is a part of managerial communication. According to Juholin (2006, 320), the management is in central position in a change situation, because they are expected to forecast situations and create operating practices to survive forward. The communication content and style influence how the employees and interest groups understand the change and are they able to accept and commit to the change. Without understanding there is no commitment, unclear and inconsistency in messages causes confusion and distrust. (Juholin 2006, 320.) Järvinen (1998) states that in spite of the efforts in change communication it is still experienced insufficient and the employees experience themselves just a pawn, which are moved and guided from above. (Juholin 2006, 321.)

Langer & Thorup (2006, 376) suggest that successful change communication is the creation of opportunities for each employee to express itself and contribute in a new organizational framework. This demands creative production and arrangement, giving the employees a sense of trust and common ownership and the opportunity for individual self-expression and development. (Langer & Thorup 2006, 376.) Change communication involves initiating and facilitating decision-making processes, accepting diversity and various attitudes, and discussing different approaches on the basis of scenarios rather than simply presenting pre-defined perspectives and decisions (Ströh & Jaatinen 2001, 159).

According to Ströh & Jaatinen (2001, 162), in change communication the decision to restrict communication only to certainty is a decision not to communicate at all. Communication must be brought into alignment with the sorts of changes trying to communicate: uncertain, changing and full of probabilities.

Communication is not the sole solution in the change challenges or resistance but it can lower the resistance towards the change and motivate to take the change as a possibility of something new. Juholin (2006, 323) suggests in order to be able to commit into the change concrete evidence has to be shown from the progress and success. The commitment into the change requires a continuous flow of information which are the results and how the new operation practices are done differently. In sum, simultaneously when there is a talk of change, the change has to be seen in concrete action.

3.3 Work development and change

The professional skill includes knowledge which is related to work process and it may be limited or comprehensive. The knowledge may be theoretical or based on experience, adaptive or innovative. Limited, experience based and adaptive qualification leads easily to value permanence, fear of change, and to become strained from the change. Conversely, comprehensive, analytical and innovative qualifications enable not merely to adjust but enable to develop and change the work constantly. (Lindström 1994, 70.) Lindström (1994, 71) proposes that in order to be able to develop and change the environment one has to control the means of the development. The work itself or the organization can either encourage or prevent the professional skills forming and using the competence.

In addition to the professional skills learning is closely connected to the work. Karasek & Theorell (1990) has found that work, learning and well-being are all related. A work which is demanding and offers possibilities to influence supports learning and the feeling of control. A work which does not offer challenges but is busy and stresses one-sided, prevents learning. However, the development of actual well-being and motivation at work requires first of all challenging work and good professional skills and secondly realistic, positive understanding and development orientation. (Lindström 1994, 77-78.) Kochan (2008, 31) explains that because the airline business is in service economy and in a service cannot have high-quality services unless the employees are engaged, well-trained, well-educated, and motivated work force.

According to Herzberg (1968), the most important motivators affecting to the job satisfaction are: achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, growth in competence and the work itself. The events which lead to dissatisfaction are called hygiene factors and are salary, company policy, supervision, status, security and working conditions. Based on this two factor theory of motivation, the enrichment of jobs to increase motivation and performance must focus on the motivators as presented in the figure below. In addition, Herzberg (1966) argued with Maslow that humans need psychological growth through job enrichment, the two types of growth needs suggested are to develop understanding and motivation. (Buchanan & McCalman 1989, 22.)

Figure 7 illustrates Herzberg's approach to job enrichment, job satisfaction and motivation, psychological growth and improved job performance.

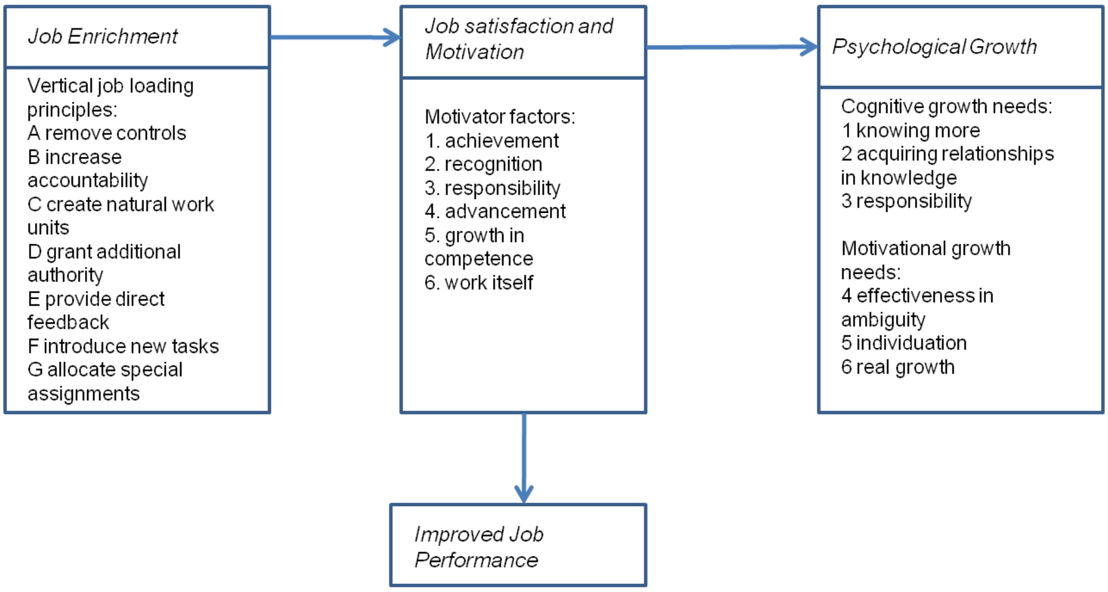

Figure 7. Frederick Herzberg's approach to job enrichment (Buchanan & McCalman 1989)

Job enrichment, which began with the pioneering work of Herzberg (1966), originally was intended to as a means to increase the motivation and satisfaction of people at work and to improve productivity (Hackman, Oldham, Janson & Purdy 1975, 59). In addition, job enrichment represents a potentially powerful strategy for change that can help organizations achieve their goals for higher quality work, and further the equally legitimate needs of contemporary employees for a more meaningful work experience (Hackman & al 1975, 75). The job enrichment requires always increasing knowledge with training (Vartiainen 1994, 228). Another aspect presented by Vartiainen (1994, 228) is the employee participation in planning and implementing work redesign. The effectiveness of job enrichment is likely to be enhanced when the tasks of diagnosing and changing jobs are undertaken collaboratively with management and the employees whose work it will be affected. (Hackman & al 1975, 75.)

Central factors affecting to job satisfaction according to Juholin (2006, 147), are participative problem solving, job enrichment, innovative reward systems and development of the working environment. In addition, to the material measurement of job satisfaction, the work characteristics are another, such as ability to use the entire know-how and skills, clarity of the duty, independence of the work, possibility to receive and give feedback, and the possibility to develop the work (Juholin 2006, 148).

In the 21th century situation has changed that the members of the work communities participate more closely into all planning and development. It sets the management, superiors and communication professionals towards new challenges; how to communicate issues and how to organize situations, where to search for solutions with united forces. (Juholin 2006, 149.) According to Lindström (1994, 64), the corporate cultures of the Scandinavian and Finnish companies have established the necessity of participation, with the objective of continuous development action plan instead of one-time amendment activities. Lindström (1994, 65) states that people have different knowledge, skills and interest to work development. Different characteristic features such as educational background, age and work history, has to be acknowledged when the work is re-planned or developed.

3.3.1 Work development instruments

Vartiainen (1994, 86-87) presents theoretical and practical work development instruments in order to be able to control the changes confronting the work and the organization. Theoretical work development instruments are for example participation with different forms. Practical work development instruments vary depending the needed changes and changes in the organization. According to Järvinen (2011, 2), the working life’s increasing demands toward the personnel and work are constant and increasing change, demands in know-how, ability to cooperate and interact, result- and quality demand, efficiency and rush. Vartiainen (1994, 140) suggest that while the job descriptions are expanding and become more demanding, the requirement of collaboration, interaction and communication are increasing between the personnel, management and the customer.

According to Stuart & al. (2007, 229), employees need and often expect to be considered in the decision-making of an organization and especially their own work. Employee exclusion leads to alienation and dissatisfaction, negative attitudes and loss of faith in the hierarchy of the company. If employees do not have a stake in the problem, they will not feel part of the solution and will be unwilling to accept any new rules and regulations. This means managers must use two-way mode of communication to foster open communication. (Stuart & al. 2007, 229.) Typical bottom up communication development means according to Vartiainen (1994, 218), are initiative arrangements, such as surveys, arranging complaining meetings and different forms of participative development. Participative development is the most efficient form of arranging continuous communication.

In the research of Langer & Thorup (2006, 373), Scandinavian Airline System (SAS) used employee participation in order to improve and strengthen internal communication within the organization. The objective was to capture and understand organizational belief systems in order to develop a mission, a vision and a set of values created by the employees themselves which were born out in a process in which everyone was heard, seen and taken seriously. The aim was to create sense of understanding and ownership of the ideas. (Langer & Thorup 2006, 373.) Furthermore, Barrett (2002, 222) states that change programmes should be planned with an internal base within the organization concerned. Although, external consultants may be used as advisers, some of the organization's own employees should function as change agents, who lead the change project by defining, planning and organizing its' phases (Langer & Thorup 2006, 379).

Involving employees in organizational change has consistently been advocated in research on organizational change (Kotter 1996; Ströh & Jaatinen 2001; Langer & Thorup 2006) but advocates of employee participation in change communication are often vague about specific mechanisms and methods. Langer & Thorup (2006, 387) suggest co-productive methods which the organization should develop for its own need and context but what the methodical tools should have in common is that they create a positive basic mood and room for involvement, humor and self-irony. Proctor & Doukakis (2003, 275) state that the key to effecting change is to involve people in the process early, to consult with them and to get them to take ownership of the new ideas that are to be introduced for themselves. Grassroots change is the only way to ensure that process becomes firmly embedded. (Proctor & Doukakis 2003, 275.) According to Ströh & Jaatinen (2001, 161), employees participation in decision making is important in order to commit the employees into the decisions as they will see a decision real if they have interacted with it and feel that they have an emotional investment in their work (Ströh & Jaatinen 2001, 161). On the other hand apparent participative processes increase frustration especially if the employees are in involved in the decision making although the decisions are already made. Participative decision making might turn against itself if they are used only for showing and not for concrete realization. (Juholin 2008, 149.)

The different forms of organizational influencing are a part of participative development. According to Juholin (2008, 148), there are official, half official and informal influencing possibilities. Official influencing is to take part into the planning and decision making processes for example being a part of different groups and forums, half official influencing is being a part of different development projects, and informal influencing is innovative and spontaneous activity, which is not connected into formalities. Juholin further explains that influencing is in its ideal form when it is originating from personnel, where the personnel know-how is utilized and the employees experience to work in favor of the organization. (Juholin 2008, 148.)

Kotter (2008, 69) suggests that in terms of shrinking the disconnect between the inside and the outside of an organization is to listen very carefully the lower level personnel who interface with customers. By this way an organization can become more externally oriented, and at the same time involve the employees into the development of the customer service processes for example.

3.3.2 Employee development

Proctor & Doukakis (2003, 272) suggest that employee development could be answer to gaining employee commitment, succeeding where traditional internal communication programmes have failed. Lack of commitment from employees can be harmful to an organization, resulting in poorer performance arising from inferior service offerings and higher costs. Rush et al. (1996) defines the term employee development to refer to activities an organization must implement in order to woo and win over the hearts and minds of its employees to achieve service excellence. (Proctor & Doukakis 2003, 272.) According to Ströh & Jaatinen (2001, 162), it is not necessary for managers to find ways to drive people but to provide a suitable environment for them to develop themselves.

The successful application of the concept is translated into positive employee attitudes towards their work including organizational commitment, job involvement, work motivation and job satisfaction. Some empirical support for a significant relationship between employee development and consumer satisfaction exists. (Proctor & Doukakis 2003, 272.) According to the study of Proctor & Doukakis (2003, 271-272), the following employee development suggestions can be used in order to achieve a people orientation that is conductive to the achievement of service quality and customer satisfaction.

1. Informing the internal employees about the organization’s mission and its role within it.

2. Ensuring that the internal information and communications channels work effectively in order to promote and sell ideas and services internally.
3. Implementing special motivation programmes directed at front line service providers that recognize that front line personnel form a critical means of meeting competition.
4. Applying mechanisms that measure the gap between internal customer expectations and performance.
5. Recognizing a greater desire on the part of employees to play an active role in all aspects of work life that affects to them.
6. Auditing employer-employee interactions.
7. Developing internal audits to critically assess organizational performance with respect to the internal service and determining where performance gaps occur.
8. Using marketing tools and concepts internally with employees.
9. Getting managers to accept the need for understanding employee capabilities, their attitude, know-how and skills, and to participate in an employee development strategy.
10. Continually striving to create an internal environment, which enhances employee-customer interaction.
11. Establishing an open information climate in order to improve interpersonal interactive communication channels and to apply an employee development programme.
12. Using mass communication techniques to provide employees with helpful information.
13. Initiating a programme to educate employees on important organizational issues.
14. Viewing the development of knowledge and skills as an investment rather than as a cost.
15. Teaching employees why they should do things and not simply how they should do things.

16. Motivating employees through reward incentives to provide excellent service.
17. Demonstrating how the work of every employee fits the broader scheme of business operations and how their work contributes to the firm.
18. Continually practicing internal market research.
19. Continually keeping employees informed of new developments within the organization.
20. Continually trying to define to employees, management's perceptions of them.
21. Encouraging employees to innovate without fear.
22. Encouraging the participation of employees in the use of quality management techniques across the organization.
23. Establishing a network service which answers employees' questions, fields their complaints, remedies situation and alerts top-level management to potential trouble spots in employee concern.
24. Using staff manuals, bulletin boards and meetings to disseminate knowledge about firm policies, plans and actions.
25. Seeking employees' suggestions as to changes and improvements that would be beneficial in improving the level of customer service.
26. Taking actions based upon what is learned from the internal survey.
27. Ensuring that there are sufficient objective indicators of employee development results to be able to judge its overall usefulness.

According to Wirtz & al. (2008, 15), Singapore Airline SIA is a good example of an airline which has acknowledged how training and development should be employed in order to achieve a holistically developed workforce that can effectively support the company's strategy (Wirtz et al. 2008, 15). SIA has been a service and productivity leader in the airline industry for many decades. Its competitive success is in delivering service excellence in a cost-effective way, with the emphasis on people and especially front-line staff which are a core part of the offering and the most visible element of the service from a customer experience point of view. (Wirtz et al. 2008, 7.)

Wirtz et al. (2008, 7) presents that SIA has five elements that form the cornerstones of the human resource management and reinforce its service excellence strategy. Those five elements are: stringent selection and recruitment processes, extensive training and retraining of employees, formation of successful service delivery teams, empowerment of front-line staff, and motivation of employees.

From the practical perspective effective teams are often a pre-requisite to service excellence, especially when working in the airplane. SIA has 6,600 crew members and in order to allowing them to build camaraderie and better understand each other’s personalities and capabilities the crew members are formed into teams of 13 individuals where team members are rostered to fly together as much as possible. The teams and individuals are evaluated and monitored in order to monitor development, performance and give feedback. According to the SIA Crew Performance Manager, good about the team concept is that despite the huge number of crew members, people can relate to a team and have a sense of belonging. Another positive aspect is that the individual is not just a digit or a staff number in a big group of people. (Wirtz et al. 2008, 11-12.)

The empowerment of front-line staff at SIA is a part of their culture. The culture of most successful service firms contains stories and myths of employees effectively recovering failed transactions, walking the extra mile to make a customer’s day, or helping clients avert disaster. According to Mr. Choo, the crew member of the company: “The employees at SIA do that, they believe what they are doing, they are very proud to be part of the SIA team, very proud of the tradition and very proud that SIA is held up as a company that gives excellent care to customers”. Employees need to feel empowered in order to expend discretionary effort. (Wirtz et al. 2008, 12.)

In addition, Babbar & Koufteros (2008, 804) made a research on the affect of personal touch displayed by contact employees on the satisfaction of customers of US passenger airlines. The empirical evidence of the study shows that individual attention, helpfulness, courtesy, and promptness embedded in the element of personal touch shape the experience of airline customers and determine their level of satisfaction with the airline. Customer experience can be the most valuable asset of a service company, because the behaviors and attitudes of contact employees can significantly shape the customer’s experience with the service provided and their assessment of its quality.

(Babbar & Koufteros 2008, 804, 806, 825.) However, Babbar & Koufteros (2008, 822) suggests that the airline's management have to pay attention to human resource management and organizational issues in order to be able to motivate contact employees and have them voluntarily incorporate elements of personal touch in their service to customers (Babbar & Koufteros 2008, 822).

3.4 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for this study defines the reasons for researching communication and work development as a change management tools in the In-flight customer service department. The framework, shown in Figure 8 was developed on the basis of the literature studied, investigating the relationship between communication, change management and work development within the In-flight customer service department.

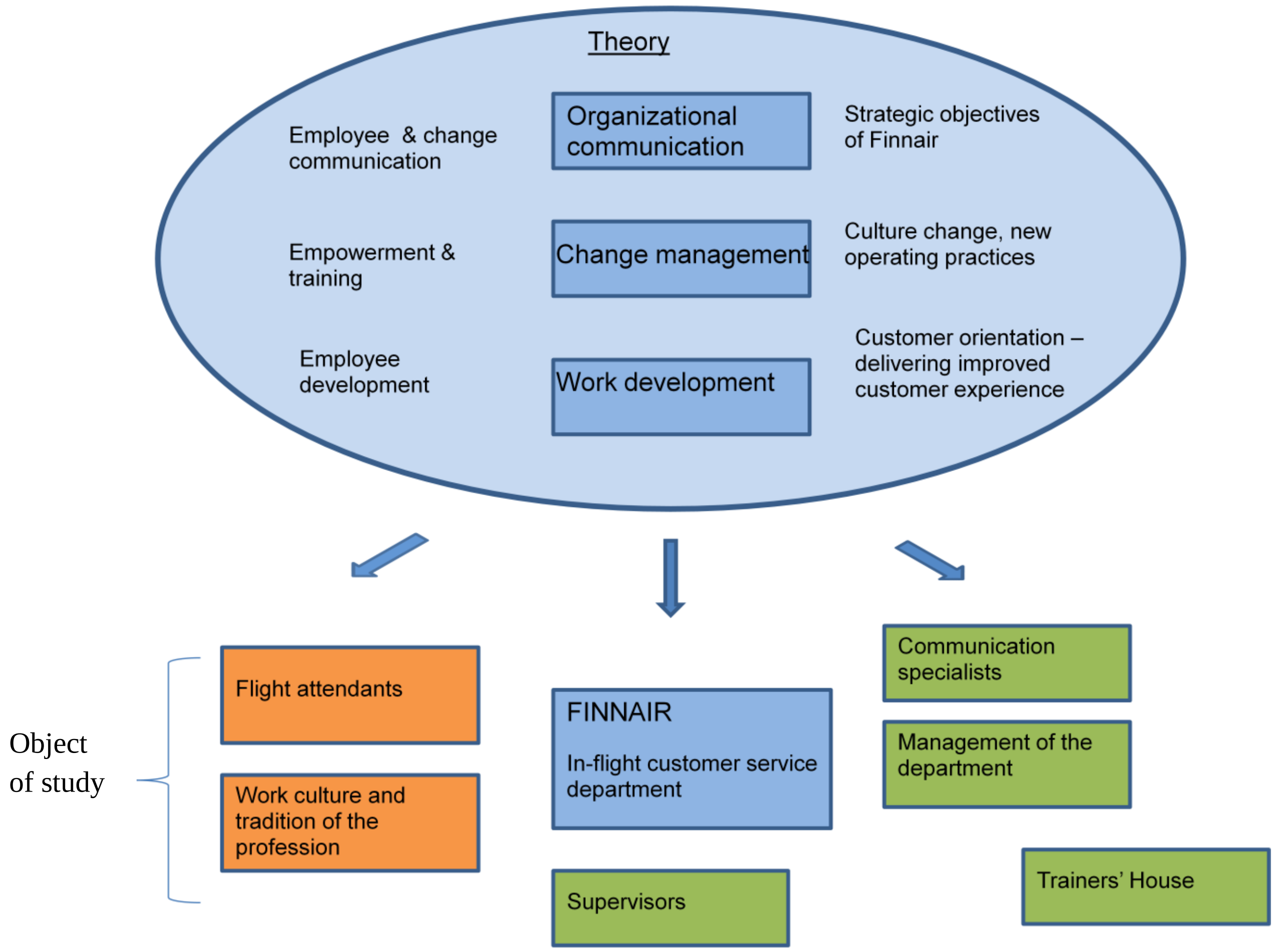

Figure 8. Communication and work development as a change management tool in the In-flight customer service department

4 METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the research methods chosen for this study and the reasons behind choosing them. Section 4.1 explains the research method, section 4.2 presents the methods of data collection, section 4.3 discusses how the data was analyzed and the last section 4.4 evaluates the quality of the research.

4.1 Development work

The research conducted in this thesis is research-driven practical development work where the outcome is to have practical benefit for the organization. According to Toikko & Rantanen (2009, 16), development activity aims towards change, it aims at achieving something better or more efficient than earlier practices or structures. The starting point can be the present problems or a vision of something new and the development may be aiming at single employees and their professional know-how or as more traditionally different work organizations, companies and work communities. (Toikko & Rantanen 2009, 16.) Therefore, the practical development work is relevant to be used in this thesis as it will help to identify the current situation in internal communication in the In-flight customer service department, find the current challenges and problems in the department and to develop suggestions for improvement.

Toikko & Rantanen (2009, 18) state that development activity can be justified by the external or internal factors of the organization, but often it is justified by the changed operational environment. It can be justified also by contradictions, tension, challenges or visions. The later mentioned justifications proceed with the orientation of the research-developer. The research-developer justifies the venture by the academic merits or the most general social arguments.

The weakness of the development work is that it is less respected in academic sense, but then again its social significance has in the recent years increased. Due to the previous, according to Toikko & Rantanen (2009, 21), the relationship between research and development work needs reassessment, while in many professions there is a need of knowledge from the practice which does not follow the grounds of the scientific research principles. Especially, the specialist tasks and humane work are difficult to guide only with the theoretical approach or with the results derived from theory. Hence, the characteristics of the flight attendant work, the organization and the operational environment have all special features and complex operations, which are difficult to base merely on theory.

In development work, the practical problems and questions guide the knowledge production. The knowledge is produced in genuine practical operational environment and the research situation and methods support the knowledge production. In this thesis, the primary stress is in the work development activity but the aim is also to utilize the research principles. The objective of development activity is solely not to resolve the questions and problems but also to describe and bring them into the wider discussion. (Toikko & Rantanen 2009, 22.)

4.2 Data collection

In every research the starting point is that every researcher wants to know clearly what is going on and how things are proceeding and usually wants as well to understand and explain why things occur as they do (Miles &Huberman 1994, 90). Usually it is hard to explain something satisfactory until you understand what the something is.

In order to get understanding about how certain group of people are thinking or feeling about a subject, is to ask them. The data is collected using qualitative methods in this research and is appropriate because of the social character of the research. Qualitative research methods include interviews, observations, documents and texts. (Myers 2009; Ghauri & Grønhaug 2005, 109.)

4.2.1 Semi-structured theme interviews

According to Daniels & Cannice (2004, 185), the definition of an interview study is where the data and findings are based on direct researcher-to-respondent conversations, and the interview study may be combined with other types of data collection. Daniels & Cannice (2004, 185, 186) states that interview-based studies are well suited for exploratory and theory building studies. Interviews allow the researcher to discover new relationships or situations not previously conceived.

In this research the empirical data was collected mainly by using the semi-structured theme interviews. The semi-structured theme interviews were chosen as it is face-to-face interview where the researcher has themes made for the interviewees but the researcher can fill in with extra questions, and make the interview more in depth. In that way the researcher is able to collect extra valuable knowledge and thoughts, besides the beforehand made themes. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2004, 47, 48.) Hence, the interviews were applicable in this study as the respondents of the study were small, 15 persons, and it was necessary to get honest thoughts and opinions of the respondents which might not be possible with other methods of data collection. During interview collection, it was clear that saturation was achieved with the 15 interviews while the last interviews did not bring anything new into the material unity.

The themes chosen for the interviews are presented in the table below. The themes were presented to the interviewees for discussion and the questions below the themes were for the interviewer in order to lead the discussion into the right direction. The theme subjects are displayed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Theme subjects

Internal communication at present - how do you see the present situation from your own perspective/ work role -how the present tools, channels, processes work -what kind of challenges or problems -how it could be developed
New operating practices and management preconditions (Forward Together-campaign) -do you see it is important in the department level -do you think it should be communicated more in the department level -are there other subjects which are more important to communicate with the employees
Internal communication in the future -how do you see it -do you think that it is under development, prepared for the future changes -which are the development objects which needs development

The participants chosen for the interview was based on the researcher' intuition and experience among the colleagues in the In-flight customer service department. Daniels

& Cannice (2004, 194) state that when choosing the informants for the interview it is important to find the right persons who possess the information, this is important so that there are no information gaps, the responses reflect actual occurrences rather than myths that have developed around them, and so that there is external acceptance of results. Hence, the informants for this research were chosen from the management of the department as vice president and superior work manager, supervisors, pursers, FAs as flight attendants and the company’s specialist responsible of the department’s communication in order to get the overall picture from the situation of the department.

The interviews were conducted in the office building in Helsinki-Vantaa airport in Finnish language. The language choice was a wish from the interviewees as they felt more comfortable to speak in their own language in order to prevent misunderstandings while discussing from difficult issues and by this way it was enable to create more relaxed atmosphere. Fifteen interviews were conducted in October-November 2010 and the information of the background of the interviewees is provided in table 2. The functional background is divided into if the person is working in the office side or is part of the flying personnel. Two of the respondents are working in the office and in the air simultaneously: one purser is working in the office at the help desk half of her time and one FA is a shop steward beside the flying work. The only person without the flying experience is the communication manager; all the rest respondents have been flight attendants at some stage in their Finnair career.

Table 2. Interviewee background information

Number of interviewees	15
Functional background	ground organization (7), flying personnel (6), 50/50 (2)
Distribution	management (2), communications (2), supervisors (3), pursers (2), FA’s (6) (help desk worker (1)and shop steward (1))
Years of experience in Finnair	1-5 (2), 6-10 (3), 11-15 (6), 20-(4)
Gender	Male (2), Female (13)

4.2.2 Participant observation

Besides the interviews as data collection method, participant observation was another. In this research participant observation is used as the role of the researcher, participation as observer where the researcher is also an employee. According to Vinten (1994, 30-

31), the researcher as employee is a role of total immersion and to all intents and purposes the researcher is one with the employees alongside whom he or she will work. Further, Jorgensen (1989, 20) explains that the participant role provides access to the world of everyday life from the standpoint of a member or insider. Hence, the researcher will participate in everyday life activities together the employee group and is able to receive knowledge and observe the way they operate and work. Brannick & Coghlan (2007, 59) found that insider research is a research by complete members of organizational systems and communities in and on their own organization and it offers a unique perspective on systems precisely because it is from the inside.

The benefit of using participant observation is to have the possibility to analyze the case company and its functions from the insiders' point of view without using time and effort to get inside to understand the company's organizational culture, operating principles, the special features of the employees or the jargon. As stated by Jorgensen (1989, 9), direct involvement in the here and now of people's daily lives provides both a point of reference for the logic and process of participant observational inquiry and a strategy for gaining access to phenomena that commonly are obscured from the standpoint of a nonparticipant.

According to Brannick & Coghlan (2007, 71), the established tradition is that academic-theory-driven research in organizations is conducted best by outsiders. Consequently, the insider research is typically disqualified because it is perceived not to conform to standards of intellectual rigor, because insider researchers have a personal stake and substantive emotional investment in the setting. Brannick & Coghlan (2007, 72) have challenged the previous viewpoint and shown in their own research how insider research is not only valid and useful but also provides important knowledge about what organizations are really like.

According to Coghlan (2007, 341), insider researchers need to confront issues pertaining to preunderstanding, role duality and organizational politics. Brannick & Coghlan (2007, 72) define that the researchers need to be aware of the strengths and limits of their preunderstanding in order to use their experiential and theoretical knowledge to reframe their understanding of situations to which they are close. The researcher need to attend to the demands of both roles: organizational- and researcher roles, as well the impact of organizational politics on the research process and the outcome.

Coghlan (2007, 341) bring forward that although insider research has its difficulties in gaining acceptance within the academic community, there is a focus on integrating academic and practical knowledge. There are successful insider researchers whose work has made significant contributions to their own organizations. It is through the production of research that meets the rigorous standards of quality that such research can continue to build its creditability and confront its critics. (Coghlan 2007, 335, 341.)

4.2.3 Document analysis

While the interviews and participant observation did not provide all the necessary information needed for this research and therefore, it was necessary to include literature review explaining the theory of organizational communication, managing change, and work development assisting to answer to the research questions in the study. Most of the literature used in the literature review is from academic journals and previous researches concerning the subject. Additionally, internal company documents, newsletters and other related documentation about the research topic were reviewed, in order to be able to describe the research object, operational environment and internal communication characteristics in the In-flight customer service department. The company documentation will be mainly accessed via company intranet but is public information.

4.3 Data analysis

In development work the purpose is to collect the data in many stages, simultaneously with different methods and the analysis in not done only at the end but along the research process. As according to Toikko & Rantanen (2009, 69), in practice it might be difficult to separate exact stages in the research process as planning, organize, action and assessment, while they are all intertwined.

The theme interviews were the primary source of data used in this research. Theme interviews produce a large amount of material and there are two ways to process the material. First practice is to transcribe the material word-for-word or by selecting for example the theme subjects. Second practice is to draw conclusions from the tape; in that case the material is not written as a text. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2004, 138.) The interviews used and analyzed in this research have been recorded, saved and printed.

The interviews were written out word-for-word in order to receive the right meanings from the interviews and diminishing the interpretative problems. The recorded time used for the interviews were 16 hours and the transcript material from the interviews were 138 pages.

In this thesis the empirical data is analyzed as described by Miles & Huberman (1994, 10) where the qualitative analysis consists of three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming the data that appear in written up field notes or transcription. The data reduction process continues after the fieldwork until the final report is completed. (Miles & Huberman 1994, 10.) In this research data reduction means forming the interview transcript in that way that the final conclusions can be drawn and verified. By reading the interview transcript several times, selecting and classifying the information into different categories, and then examining each category separately by aiming to analyze the material into more focused (Toikko & Rantanen 2009, 140).

Data display is the second flow of the analysis process. A display is an organized, compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action. Looking at displays helps to understand what is happening and to do something, either analyze further or take action, based on that understanding. (Miles & Huberman 1994, 11.) According to Rein & Schon (1977), the natural progression from describing to explaining is from telling a first story about a specific situation: what happened, to constructing a map: formalizing the elements of the story, to building a theory or model: how the variables are connected and how they influence each other. (Miles & Huberman 1994, 91.)

The progression is a sort of ladder of abstraction according to Carney (1990). Where the process starts with the text, trying out coding categories on it, then moving to identify themes and trends, and then testing hunches and findings, aiming first to delineate the deep structure and then to integrate the data into an explanatory framework. (Miles & Huberman 1994, 91.) The third stream of the analysis activity is conclusion drawing and verification. In this research the conclusion drawing and verification is done by connecting the empirical data with the literature and drawing the conclusions with the research questions.

4.4 Quality of the research

The quality of research is determined by its reliability and validity. The concept of validity refers to the question whether the study is measuring what it is intended to measure. The concept of reliability refers to the question whether the same data can be obtained if the research were conducted by a different researcher at different time. (Bryman & Bell 2003; Yin 2003.) In development activity reliability has complex problems while its difficulty is to have exactly same result with different group as the social processes are difficult to repeat. Group processes are affected by various factors such as individual factors, cultural factors and communality factors. (Toikko & Rantanen 2009, 122-123.)

According to Lincoln & Cuban (1985), the conformability is central criteria of reliability. It is based on creditability and dependability. The researcher has to show the credibility of the reconstruction to the research object. The research dependability means thorough and transparent data collection and analysis. (Toikko & Rantanen 2009, 124.) In this thesis, the research object is carefully explained, by using different sources and explaining the research process in detail.

"It is not important, what is the relationship of knowledge to the reality or the internal dependability, but the practical value of the knowledge produced: the knowledge is true if it is usable" (Toikko & Rantanen 2009, 125). The knowledge produced has to be practical but also transferable. The transferability might have some limitations while most of the work communities are unique and the operational environments vary. Toikko & Rantanen (2009, 126) state that the development outcomes might be context related when the elsewhere produced outcomes might be difficult to transfer into different operational environment.

5 RESEARCH PROCESS AND FINDINGS

The findings of the thesis are based on the theme interviews, participant observations and document analysis. The results obtained disclose the perspectives of employees working in the In-flight customer service department of the current challenges of the department and in internal communication. This section is divided into five themes: the research process, internal communication at present, the assessment of the employees on the basis of the theme subjects discussed in the section 4.2.1, the obstacles identified in the development of the internal communication and development suggestion for the future.

In compliance with the case company's instructions, the main findings are regarded as confidential information. Deriving from this requirement, the research process and findings are not published through the Library databases of Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences.

6 DISCUSSION AND DEVELOPMENT SUGGESTIONS

This section connects the findings to the development questions and theoretical framework presented in this thesis. The general aim of this thesis was to examine the current situation of internal communication in the In-flight customer service department in order to give development suggestions to the change management challenges in the department. In chapter 3, the literature review presents the key concepts of organizational communication, change management and work development. In chapter 5, the findings of the theme interviews were presented. In this section the research objective and research questions will be analyzed and answers will be provided.

The main objective of this thesis was to find development suggestions for the In-flight customer service department in view of how to use communication and work development as a change management tool. This was further defined by the main development questions and sub-questions, which are the following:

What is the role of communication in a change in an organization?

- What are the obstacles in developing internal communication in the In-flight customer service department?
- How to achieve successful change in delivering improved customer experience?

6.1 Communication and work development as a change management tool

Finnair has chosen to be a quality airline to focus on its operations into customer-orientation and delivering improved customer experience to its customers. The organization is living in a turbulent operational environment where the normal status quo is not possible. Tempting visions and leaders are needed in order to inspire the employees to the future but also to align its people with the vision. This is mainly done by change management and communication. In order to commit and motivate the employees to the strategic objectives of the company, the change management has to find solutions to overcome the change resistance of the employees. According to the findings, the old organizational culture, operational practices and self-interest as the employees are comfortable with the way things are for many reasons steers the future and are the strongest reasons for change resistance. The self-interest is no surprise among the employee group as flight attendants since according to Lindström (1994, 70-

71), limited, experience based and adaptive qualification leads easily to value permanence, fear of change, and to become exhaustion caused by change, unless the work itself or the organization encourages the professional skills forming and using the full competence.

In change situations the need of information increases significantly, and the design of any change communication program needs to grow out of the size the company's current communication practices. In addition to the effective communication, work development and training have an important role in successful change since the airline business cannot have high-quality services unless the employees are engaged, well-trained, well-educated, and motivated work force. Through work development and employee development the organization is able to motivate, educate and train the employees into the changes and simultaneously combat against the organizational malaise which often arises during the change efforts. In practice this means that the labor-management relations policy and the internal environment have to support the efforts in work- and employee development.

6.1.1 What is the role of communication in a change in an organization?

The main research question can be answered by the findings presented in section 5.3. In every change situation the need of information increases significantly, as well as the need to discuss of the reasons of the change, the objectives of the change and the outcomes of the change. According to the interviews conducted for this research, the employees felt that there is a contradiction in saying and taking action in the change efforts. The employees perceive renewal actions taken place in the company but no change in the course of action. In the In-flight customer service department at Finnair, the speed of change may be so fast that all the change efforts have to be launched in a haste that there is no time for absorbing all. Such speed and haste in implementation may make the regular follow-up and informing processes concerning the outcomes suffer. According to one of the interviewed employees, the information of the changes made in the In-flight customer service department has been far too positive and forceful without the possibility to influence. The communication content and style influences how the employees and interest groups understand the change and are they able to accept and commit to the change. Without understanding there is no commitment, unclear and inconsistency in messages causes confusion and distrust.

Langer & Thorup (2006, 376) suggested that successful change communication demands creative production and arrangement, giving the employees a sense of trust and common ownership and the opportunity for individual self-expression and development. Change communication involves initiating and facilitating decision-making processes, accepting diversity and various attitudes, and discussing different approaches on the basis of scenarios rather than simply presenting pre-defined perspectives and decisions. In change communication the flow of information must be constant because the decision to restrict communication only to certainty is a decision not to communicate at all. Communication must be brought into alignment with the sorts of changes trying to communicate: uncertain, changing and full of probabilities. The possibility of commitment requires a continuous flow of information and discussion between the management and employees, however this have not been the case in the In-flight customer service department change communication.

Finnair has a long history and for a long time the actions have been based on operative, hierarchical management model which may be one explanation why the company does not have discussion culture. Especially in the time of change the need to discuss and share ideas increases. The employees hoped in the interviews to have more open colleague discussion situations from the company's behalf in order to share feelings and ideas. If the company wants to engage its employees, and not just individuals but in groups and collectively – there has to be forums to process employees ideas, make sure they are heard, and to have an opportunity to challenge management, if something is not working. The discussion forums should include also the right to show negative feelings and attitudes but if there is no trust or mutual will; there is no possibility to have open discussion or open atmosphere.

Proctor & Doukakis (2003, 273) state that there is considerable scope for misunderstanding based on not knowing or trusting the intentions of the other person. While organizations may demand commitment and trust from their employees this is not necessarily a reciprocal arrangement. Trust is easily embodied in organization when it is missing or damaged. Lack of trust will lead to lack of discussion, and minor dialogue will produce negative feelings and way of thinking. The negative circle will continue until it is ended by giving it time and place. There are tools to be used in order to investigate the employees' commitment into the change. It is done by helping people develop a shared diagnosis of what is wrong in an organization, what can and must be improved**,** in other words, involving people into the change. It is also a means to combat the organizational malaise which often arises during the change efforts.

Based on my own observation I have noticed that always when there has been a sudden event in the operational environment of the company which has direct effect on the company's operations, the emergency communication works very effectively and regularly. The communication regularity might be the one which helps the employees to follow and be informed from the sudden events, and daily communication could learn from this. In the employees interviews was mentioned that "the communication in the department is like shooting into the air the messages with different means and channels". Without growing out of the size the company's current communication practices, analysis where the communication breakdowns are, systematic, goal-oriented and regular communication and discussion, the change efforts will not succeed or make the employees committed to the company's objectives. The role of communication in a change is to create the preconditions for the change and motivate the employees into take the change of a possibility of something new.

6.1.2 What are the obstacles in developing internal communication in the In-flight customer service department?

This sub-question was asked, as often employees in large, old-established firms have difficulty getting a transformation process started because the past experiences and events dominate the interpretation of present and future actions. The sub-question can be answered by the findings presented in section 5.3.1. The old organizational culture and old operational practices guide the behavior of employees, and are seen as change resistance, because learning from the old takes time and training. In order to be able to change the old ways of doing there is a need for discussion, encouragement, support, training, pressure and follow-up. Employees resist change for different reasons, such are for example self-interest, fear of the unknown, conflicting beliefs and lack of trust.

Self-interest is often a problem in old organizations where the employments are long and people have used to way things are which is also the case in Finnair. Fear of unknown relates to the operational environment of the air transport sector and how the changes and threats directly influence into Finnair's operations and its financial success. In addition, the uncertainty of the company's ability to survive in the challenges in its competitive environment increases fear of an individual employee of retaining a job. Conflicting beliefs might be the case if the change communication is not truthful and regular in order to keep the employees up-to-date of the real situation of the company. Lack of trust is easily embodied in organization and reflects in many different ways in the organizations operations and individuals' behavior, such as lack of co-operation and sharing information.

In change situation people like to feel that they are in control of what is happening to them and the more that change is imposed from the outside the more they feel threatened about and more they will resist it. People resort to using their last remaining power base -their will to co-operate**.** In organizations which unify result pressure and bad spirit, drifts into situation where people are their own. A part does not want to increase the problems and get the reputation of a difficult or negative person in the front of management or superiors, and a part experience that in difficult situation there is no time to advise people in any case. From my personal observation the previously mentioned have happened in the In-flight customer service department, the employees are their own, because the supervisor groups are large, the resources are narrow and co-operation has suffered.

The speed of change and pressure of renewal actions of the company will lead into inconsistency in development because the urgent matters take the priority in communication- and other departmental development work. The blocks to effecting change reflects such as lack of adequate resources to implement ideas, procedural obstacles, political undercurrents and lack of cooperation in the organization. Based on my own personal observation and according to the interviews, the previous obstacles are well seen in the In-flight customer service department's operations but most importantly the lack of cooperation and sharing information. Even the resources are narrow there is always a possibility to cooperate and share individuals knowledge for the benefit of the organization and for this there should be more efforts.

Barrett (2002, 221) suggests that in order to become a high-performing company the company has to put effort into the effective employee communication. Strategic Employee Communication Model (Appendix 1) can function as an analytical tool to diagnose a company's strengths and weaknesses in employee communication so that the company can structure the change communication and position communication to facilitate the overall change. The Scorecard of Current Employee Communications

(Appendix 2) allows a “quick and dirty” assessment of the company’s current communication practices. The use of best practice definitions and their opposites is one method to begin to educate management in what strategic employee communication means while determining the company’s improvement targets. In addition to the assessment, a few interviews of key managers and a cross section of employees to gain insight into their perspectives and to start to built their support combined with an audit of current communication vehicles and a review of any employee surveys that human resources may have conducted will reveal enough to gain a sense of the organization’s typical communication approach and any communication areas needing particular improvement. The previous tools can be used also in In-flight customer service department to diagnose the department’s strengths and weaknesses in employee communication, to assess where the communication breakdowns are and determine the improvement targets. According to Barrett (2002, 231) employee communication consists of the basic components of messages, media, and audiences, but also much more. Effective employee communication is the glue that holds an organization together, and during major change that glue becomes even more critical. Thus, it can be the ticket that allows a company to move onto that short list of successful change programs. (Barrett 2002, 231.)

As a consequence, it is important that the obstacles in the development of internal communication in the In-flight customer service department have been investigated in order to become a high-performing company and have better possibility to success in its current and future change programs.

6.1.3 How to achieve successful change in delivering improved customer experience?

This sub-question was asked as the changes and challenges encountered by the company have been ample, but the most important from the front-line service employees’ perspective is how to motivate and commit these employees to the company’s objectives in order to help the company to become an international winning team. Since, in the end it is in all of the stakeholders’ interest that the company will succeed in its objectives. First of all, the success of any change communication program will depend on a company having a clearly stated, believed in, understood and meaningful vision statement, which management should be involved in developing and communicating. Finnair has clear vision, specified success factors and the given customer promise etc. but the employee communication needs assessment and improvement as discussed in the previous section. The communication needs to create collective planning which is based on dialogue between the employees and the management. The change communication implanted by external consultants and determined by the formal top-down decision making paths rarely succeeds because it does not involve people in the process, to consult with them or to get them to take ownership of the ideas. The informative and participative communication helps to give employees pride in what they do and the grassroots change is the only way to ensure that the process becomes firmly embedded. In addition to the participative communication, the In-flight customer service department has to learn to work with their employees and they have to train their managers to do that. Naturally, some managers are afraid of sharing information, while thinking that knowing makes the employees more powerful. Instead they should understand that informed employees are motivated and loyal workers.

In addition to communication, the empowerment and training of employees is important from the perspective of practical realization. The empowerment is a motivating factor for getting people to be committed to what they do, and training gives tools to do that. The management of the department is hoping initiative activity from the employees but if it has not been the custom to do it is difficult to expect to change the behavior without proper training. The spontaneous development seems to be missing from people because for a long time it has not been the custom to do.

In order to be able to develop and change the working environment one has to control the means of the development. The work itself or the organization can either encourage or prevent the professional skills forming and using the competence. Vartiainen (1994, 86-87) have suggested different work development instruments in order to increase job satisfaction and shrink the disconnect between the inside and the outside of an organization. The universal trend among the organizations is that the job descriptions are expanding and become more demanding. As a consequence, the requirement of collaboration, interaction and communication are increasing between the personnel, management and the customer in order to be able to be more efficient in every aspect. The employees expect to be participated in decision making process and to have tools in organizational influencing in order to commit into the decisions as they will see a decision real if they have interacted with it and feel that they have an emotional investment in their work.

The employee development was suggested to be an answer into gaining employee commitment, succeeding where traditional internal communication programmes have failed. The successful application of the concept is translated into positive employee attitudes towards their work including organizational commitment, job involvement, work motivation and job satisfaction. Especially in the service business, the employees have to be an engaged, well-trained, well-educated, motivated work force in order to provide high-quality services. This is something that the In-flight customer service department has to take into concern. Based on my personal observation, far too many of the company’s actions have been corrective actions in order to repair the damage which has already happened. The preventive measures and precautions would be better along with systematic development in order to keep the employees know-how and readiness for the change situations.

Hence, first of all the employees need to be informed about what is happening in the company in order to know the direction where the company is going: effective employee communication. Second, the employees have to have the tools to do what the company is expecting from them to do: training, and third the employees need motivation and appreciation towards their work: employee development. The final part is the most important from the work performance point of view because it is hard to motivate employees to do the extra mile for the customer if they do not feel pride in what they do. In addition to the employee motivation, the management has to learn to pay attention to human resource management and internal organizational issues before they are able to motivate the contact employees.

6.2 Development suggestions for In-flight customer service department

The issue with In-flight customer service department, its challenging communication and change management, is the lack of effective communication, collaboration and interaction of its employees. The characteristics of the flight work, lack of resources and the speed of change in the department are obvious limiting factors in the development of communication, but there are still possibilities to develop the operations of communication by better planning, goal-orientation and sharing information. The issue with work- and employee development is something which should be taken into consideration in the department and in human resource management in order to motivate and increase job satisfaction among the employees. Therefore, the suggestions of this thesis based on the results of this study are as follows:

- Creating Strategic Employee Communication Model
    - In order to have clear and consistent internal communication; the communication must be planned, goal-oriented and follow-up.
    - Share the relevant and important information with the communication specialist, inside the department and with employees.
    - To avoid confusion, employees need to know which channel to find the relevant and updated information.
    - The model helps to find how best to reach the employees with the key change messages and to help management to understand the strategic role communication play in the day-to-day success as well as during major change. Management set the tone for an open or closed flow of information.
    - Scorecard of Current Employee Communications can be used in order to make analysis of the current employee communication situation and to find out where the communication breakdowns are.
- Developing supervisory communication
    - In order to increase trust in the department and to build positive communication climate.
    - The responsibility and authority of the supervisors has to be balanced and concrete actions have to be shown.
    - Systematic, transparent and regular communication with the own group members, sharing information of the department operations and ongoing projects for example once a month letter in order to create closer relationship.
    - Development discussions are a good way to survey the individuals' needs, feelings, attitudes towards the work and willingness to the department's development work.
    - Feedback giving should stay inside the working teams, and should be given right after the work performance. Example the case of SIA service delivery teams.
- Training

  - The employees need attitude and skill training in order to be able to change the old ways of doing and working, as well deport old presumptions.
  - Training gives tools to develop the work and self, and should be planned starting from the employees needs. For example different training days to different supervisor groups because the needs in different age groups are different. Present training days are the same to all the flight attendants.
  - Continuous training and retraining will equip the employees with open mindset, to accept change and development.
  - Work development is a way to increase job satisfaction and motivation of employees.
  - Work related training cannot take place only at free time.
- Implementing work development instruments
  - The employees' knowledge and know-how of the customers and service work should be utilized better by developing the project involvement, and give employees to take ownership of the new ideas.
  - The department should develop systematic team and databank for the development proposals in order to reduce inconsistent development.
  - Employee involvement and co-development by the means of collaboration, communication, interaction: the discussion forum such as CAB is a good start, but not adequate.
  - The employees need interactive discussion in order to increase understanding and share thoughts and feelings. For example informal communication- and meeting situations, complaining situations, in order to create concrete action, constructive communication and discussion culture.
  - The employees need personal attention and encouragement into the development, job enrichment is one example; special assignments etc.
  - Collaboration cross-departments in order to increase understanding and diminish mistakes due to the lack of knowledge. For example with catering, engineering etc. as well inside the customer service division.
- Implementing employee development programme
  - Might help combat against the organizational malaise caused by change efforts and the loss of appreciation.

- Can be used to change the attitudes and behavior of employees towards being more service and customer oriented.

7 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter provides the concluding aspects of this thesis. It summarizes the aims, methods and findings of the thesis.

7.1 Research summary

This thesis has pursued the general aim of development suggestions to the In-flight customer service department how to develop communication and work development to be used as a change management tool. The challenges and changes confronted by Finnair in recent years have been ample and the need for high performance takes an additional importance within the current market challenges. Finnair has chosen to be a quality airline with the concentrate on operations into customer-orientation and delivering improved customer experience to its customers. The front-line service employees such as flight attendants are a key input for delivering service excellence and productivity for the company because they are in constant contact with the customers. Hence, it is important to find the right tools to motivate and commit these employees into the company’s objectives.

The operational environment of the airline business and Finnair was presented in order to provide the background and motivate the objectives of the research. The literature review of this thesis focused on providing insights into organizational communication, change management and work development. All these aspects are connected, as the general aim for the thesis was to find development suggestions into communication and work development in order to motivate employees into the strategic objectives of the company during its change efforts. The discussion of the theoretical framework followed the literature review, and provided the theoretical foundation for this thesis.

The research process started by examining internal communication situation in the In-flight customer service department with a focus on development orientation. The development questions were developed during the research process to find answers beneficial to the department. The main development question that this thesis aimed to answer is as follows: What is the role of communication in a change in an organization? This main question was supported by the following two sub-questions: What are the obstacles in developing internal communication in the department? and How to achieve successful change in delivering improved customer experience? The answers to these questions were obtained through the interviews, participant observations and document analysis.

The main findings for this thesis were presented in detain in section 6.1, examined in accordance with the development questions posed. The role of communication in a change is to describe and implement the change. In addition, the need of information increases among the employees during the change as well the need to discuss and share ideas. The communication in the department seems to be insufficient to motivate and commit the employees into the changes as there is no continuous flow of information between the management and employees. The atmosphere in the department was experienced as authoritative and informing of the changes was far too positive in nature and forceful without the possibility to influence or share one's own ideas. Even though the company has a long history; the discussion culture is only developing inside the company, with the unions and employees.

The main issue brought up by the interviewees concerning communication was that the communication was experienced as shooting into the air of the messages with different means and channels. The systematic, goal-oriented and regular communication and discussion expected by the employees is missing in the department and for this reason the change communication will not succeed in achieving its objectives. The obstacles in the development of internal communication seem to relate to the old organizational culture, practices and self-interest. The speed of change and pressure of renewal actions of the company have lead into inconsistency in development. The blocks to effecting change reflects in the department such as the lack of cooperation and sharing information.

The issue of achieving successful change in delivering improved customer experience is one example of the ways in which Finnair is trying to differentiate from the competitors. It is also the most important must win battles from the front-line service employees' perspective because they can have their own contribution towards it. The biggest challenge in the changes confronted by the department is how to motivate and commit the employees into the changes. According to the interviews and my own observations in addition to the development of communication, the department is not provided with training and work development options to be able to be equipped with tools for spontaneous development and ways to motivate employees.

The findings and recommendations of this thesis correlate with some of the previous researches on the topic together with some other airline researches (Chen 2006; Jones 1996; Hall 2002; Murphy 1998; Langer & Thorup 2006; Kochan 2008; Babbar & Koufteros 2008; Wirtz, Heracleous & Pangarkar 2008; Proença 2011; Assaf & Josianssen 2009; Bamber, Gittell, Kochan & Nordenflycht 2009). The change efforts often fail because the changes are not communicated well and because they do not facilitate learning or advanced training. From the main findings, it can be seen that the In-flight customer service department’s communication may not be as effective as it can be. Among the reasons for this ineffectiveness may be the fact that the management is not working with their employees in order to find where the communication breakdowns are or investigate with its employees to develop a shared diagnosis of what is wrong in an organization, what can and must be improved. The department should involve people in the department processes, consult with them and commit them into taking ownership of the ideas. In order to be able to develop and change the working environment, one has to control the means of the development. The work itself or the organization can either encourage or prevent forming the professional skills and using the competence.

7.2 Practical implications in the In-flight customer service department

First, the communication breakdowns should be investigated with the department management, communication specialists and employees. The Scorecard of Current Employee Communications presented by Barrett (2002) can be used as an analytical tool. The supervisory communication should be developed in order to create closer relationship with the group’s own members, create and maintain systematic and regular communication and to be able to share information concerning department operations and ongoing projects. Second, continuous training and retraining should be developed with work development instruments in order to encourage employees into the organizational development and increase motivation and job satisfaction. Employee development could be considered in order to gain employee commitment which has been lost in the change efforts. Third, the management should use efforts to interpret the causes of organizational malaise in order to put right the internal organizational issues that cause malaise. Otherwise it is hard to motivate employees to do the extra mile for the customers if they are dissatisfied with the conditions.

7.3 Limitations

This study has certain limitations. The study started by exploring the current situation of internal communication in the department. However, during the research process the research scope was expanded into change management and work development in order to have better development orientation and usability of the results.

A general limitation is that this study was based on one organization, which means that the results may not apply to other organizations. This limits the possibility to generalize the results but possible similar trends in other organizational environments can be discussed. In data collection and analysis, the theme interviews could have been expanded into a wider group of people than was used in this research. However, I do not believe that by increasing the sampling would have changed the research outcome. Data collection was challenging while the employee group of flight attendants is large and the answers vary depending on the interviewees. In addition to the external pressures in the company's operational environment, the change is a continuous process and during the research process many elements have already changed in the company. Hence it was hard to complete the thesis while the organization and the department changes constantly. Limitations in the researcher role were presented in section 4.2.2.

7.4 Suggestions for further research

This research has provided an overview of the communication situation and change management challenges in the In-flight customer service department based on the findings of which were related to relevant literature. For the future, topics such as communication, change and work development could be interesting to take separately under closer examination. The In-flight customer service department is in many ways an interesting object to be studied. Perhaps the most important aspect from the employees' viewpoint is the work development and training possibilities in the department in order to develop the professional skills and competences for improved utilization of tacit knowledge of the employees. The employees working in the department have very diverse educational backgrounds and previous working experiences which could be interesting aspects to be studied and possibly to be utilized for the benefit of the organization.

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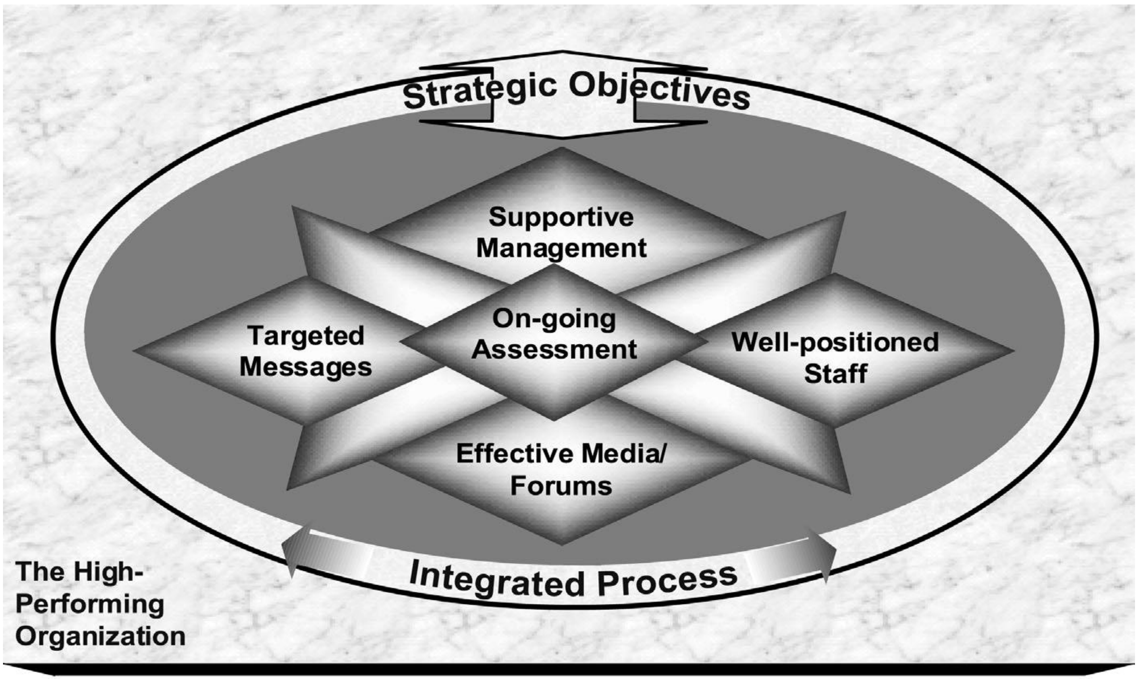
APPENDICES APPENDIX 1

Strategic Employee Communication Model (Barrett 2002)



APPENDIX 2

Scorecard of Current Employee Communications (Barrett 2002)

Where are the company's employee communication practices at present? Place an X on the scale below to indicate your preliminary assessment opinion:

Strategic Objectives	Communication planning aligned with company's strategic goals	Not aligned
Processes	Communication integrated into yearly business planning process	Not integrated
Management	Management accepts major responsibility in communications	Does not accept
Messages	Targeted, consistent, strategic	Short-gun, inconsistent, tactical
Media/Forums	Emphasis on informal, face-to-face	Publication focus
Communication Staff	Strategically placed as change agents	Functionally isolated
Communication Assessment	Measured frequently and included in performance appraisals	Not measured, included