

**Internal communication channels within a Multinational
Organisation – GoldenMoments Ltd.**

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<p>The subject of this Bachelor's thesis is internal communication at GoldenMoments Ltd. The aim of this research is to find out the level of satisfaction with internal communication; the preferred channels of internal communication; the most effective channels of internal communication; and suggestions for the improvement of GoldenMoments Ltd. internal communication.</p> <p>The thesis is commissioned by Paul Cheatele, International Commercial Director at GoldenMoments Ltd. GoldenMoments is a medium size multinational company with headquarters in Portsmouth, United Kingdom. GoldenMoments services include over 7000 gift experiences, at 3000 locations across 14 countries.</p> <p>The theoretical part of the Bachelor thesis covers reviews on internal communication theory, methods, forms and channels of internal communication and challenges that affect communication flow within the GoldenMoments Ltd. multicultural environment.</p> <p>The empirical part of the thesis covers the selected quantitative research method, a quantitative research survey that was distributed to entire GoldenMoments team.</p> <p>The results of the study cover the answers to the research questions and solutions to the research problem. A product of the research is internal communication improvement recommendations.</p>	
<p>Keywords Internal communication, organisational communication, multicultural organisation, quantitative research approach</p>	

Table of contents

1	Introduction.....	1
1.1	Thesis subject and research questions.....	2
1.2	Research problem and objectives of the thesis.....	2
1.3	Thesis limitations.....	3
1.4	Introduction of GoldenMoments.....	4
1.5	Thesis process management.....	6
1.6	Structure of the thesis.....	7
2	Theoretical framework.....	9
2.1	Workplace communication.....	9
2.2	Internal communication in an organisation.....	12
2.3	Forms and channels of internal communication.....	16
2.4	Cultural diversity in multicultural organisation.....	19
3	Research approach and method.....	22
3.1	Quantitative approach.....	22
3.2	Sample and population.....	23
3.3	Data gathering.....	23
3.4	Data analysis process.....	24
4	Results and data analysis.....	26
4.1	Internal communication flow.....	26
4.2	Current situation of internal communication.....	28
4.3	Preferred internal communication tools.....	30
5	Conclusions and recommendations.....	32
5.1	Conclusions.....	32
5.2	Recommendations.....	34
5.2.1	Management organised monthly staff meeting.....	35
5.2.2	Internal newsletter.....	36
5.2.3	Internal communication training sessions.....	36
	Bibliography.....	38
	Appendices.....	42
	Appendix 1: Questionnaire.....	42

1 Introduction

In an ever evolving business society the need for well-established internal communication is important for organisations survival in the competitive markets. The thesis is commissioned by Paul Cheatle, International Commercial Director at GoldenMoments Ltd. GoldenMoments is a medium size multinational company with headquarters in Portsmouth, United Kingdom. GoldenMoments services include over 7000 gift experiences, at 3000 locations across 14 countries.

GoldenMoments operates mostly in the UK market in: Southern England, London, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. Coordination with employees in the main office in Portsmouth, spotters and experience supervisors has shown an increase of communication challenges due to the geographical location of employees.

Current internal communication situation is based on everyday face to face meeting among co-workers, e-mail use and phone calls to the employees who are at the experience sites. Managers are communicating information and tasks to the employees via Outlook or e-mail. Currently GoldenMoments employs 12 full time interns and 11 permanent employees.

Employee commitment is essential in efficient internal communication management.. Employees are highly educated in their field of profession with need to be communicated about the insight information of the company. It helps an employee to be informed about their job importance and value in the company. Highly motivated employee is more likely to produce their abilities in efficient manner. (Gennard & Judge 2005, 329-333.)

Research study on the internal factors in GoldenMoments is essential because well-established communication channels are influencing employees' dedication and the internal communication flow in the company. Employees have to be informed about the correct channels in communication with other employees in order for the project process, task delegation and future tasks are correctly communicated to other employ-

ees. The results of the study cover the answers to the research questions and solutions to the research problem. A product of the research is internal communication improvement recommendations.

1.1 Thesis subject and research questions

The thesis subject is the internal communication at GoldenMoments Ltd. As international company a well-established internal communication is a priority. The author of the thesis will introduce beforehand researched internal communication analysis with practical solutions and recommendations for more effective internal communication channels to be used.

Communicate instantly with co-workers in a professional manner is important. Internal communication is even more essential when the employees are working in different offices, locations and departments. Thus, nowadays organisations are putting a lot of effort into establishing a self-sustainable internal communication flow. Organisations have hierarchical structure, different department teams and expect employees to make decisions and take action in collaboration with other departments. (Guffey & Almonte 2007, 86-87.)

1.2 Research problem and objectives of the thesis

The research objective is to research and analyse the current internal communications channels used by GoldenMoments and the ways to improve internal communication channels. The research problem is defined as the study of current internal communication channels and their inability to function as effective as they are supposed to. The improvement of these internal communication channels are depending on the research results and their potential need of improvement.

GoldenMoments is interested in the research due to the fact that the company is international with international workforce dealing with internal communication challenges on day to day basis. Study of GoldenMoments internal communication channels namely formal and informal communication work within the company, determine the fac-

tors that influence them and to see if there is urgent need for innovative internal communication processes to be implemented if there are concerning internal communication problems found.

The research will focus on GoldenMoments current employees and their satisfaction level of existing internal communication channels. The main purpose of the study is defined as: “How current internal communication channels can be improved in GoldenMoments Company?” In this research the author is also finding out the answers to the following sub questions:

- How GoldenMoments employees perceive the internal communication in the company at the current situation?
- Which communication channels are used and are preferred by the employees?
- How internal communication within GoldenMoments could be improved based on the research?

To answer these research questions the author will research and analyse the current internal communication channels used in GoldenMoments.

1.3 Thesis limitations

Author has set various limitations to the thesis in order for the study to be relevant and valid for the case company as a commissioner of the thesis. These limitations are as follows: focus of the study is internal communication channels and their use in GoldenMoments Ltd, not focusing on the content of the internal communication channels used. Second limitation that has been set by the author is that the quantitative research survey is distributed to the staff and employees of GoldenMoments, not the entire clientele and partners of the company. Furthermore, the quantitative research questionnaire will be based on the interview module survey; this limitation is set due to the geographical challenges.

1.4 Introduction of GoldenMoments

GoldenMoments Ltd. is England based Gift Experience Company founded in 1999. Company is made up of professionals who strive for excitement and wellbeing experience provision to customers. GoldenMoments offer over 7000 gift experiences, from 3000 locations across 14 countries. (GoldenMoments 2013.)

GoldenMoments experiences ranges from candle light dinner on the river bank of River Thames in London to skydiving experience in Italy. Some of these experiences are exclusively GoldenMoments owned, such as Ferrari Driving experiences across United Kingdom. As these gift experiences are owned by GoldenMoments, responsibility for the experience's execution, planning and safety is entirely GoldenMoments responsibility. There for more personnel had to have been employed such as driving supervisors and mechanics. (GoldenMoments 2013.)

Company is based in Portsmouth, England and the official language is set as English. As there are many subsidiaries in experience provision in various European countries such as Spain, Italy, Germany and others there are number of interns whose mother tongue is not English. In the company Spanish, German, Dutch, Italian and French is spoken to communicate with the customers, wholesalers and service provider partners. (GoldenMoments 2013.)

GoldenMoments quality in experiences and services has been recognised by the United Kingdom Governments Department of Trade and Investment in the presentation of the "Excellence in International Trade Winners Award". This award according to GoldenMoments officials is a stamp of approval for everyone in the team who helped to achieve this historical milestone with their hard work, enthusiasm and dedication. (GoldenMoments 2013.)

Mission and Vision

From the start in 1999 GoldenMoments have grown into one of the United Kingdom gift experience market leaders. According to GoldenMoments since the company was established in 1999 the company's mission has not changed and it is stated as follows:

“As Experience Hunters it is our mission to discover the greatest range of experiences across Europe and share this passion with our customers”. (GoldenMoments 2013.)

The mission of the company is based on the enthusiasm and everlasting driven force of experiencing the experiences themselves before providing this service to the customers.

“We've climbed the highest summits in the world.

We've jumped into caverns from 9000 feet.

We've crossed seas and oceans.

We've driven a Ferrari at 195 mph.

We've had supper in old castles in Indre-et-Loire.

We've been shopping in the most fashionable boutiques in Europe.

We've given in to the pleasures for the body and the soul.” (GoldenMoments 2013.)

In their statement to the public GoldenMoments is communicating the message where it is expressed that GoldenMoments staff has tried the services they provided not because they needed to do so to validate the reliability of the product provided but rather because they love that they do and are as involved in the service provided as the customers experiencing it. (GoldenMoments 2013.)

Company's strategic vision statement is completing day to day processes and strives for excellence of bringing the most memorable experience possible to the customer.

“To be competitively priced, easy to find and buy from, whilst demonstrating our passion for experiences.” (GoldenMoments 2013.)

“To be the front of mind provider of experiences to European buyers” (GoldenMoments 2013.)

1.5 Thesis process management

The thesis process was started in January 2013. The subject of this Bachelor’s thesis is internal communication at GoldenMoments Ltd. The aim of this research is to find out the level of satisfaction with internal communication; the preferred channels of internal communication; the most effective channels of internal communication; and suggestions for the improvement of GoldenMoments Ltd. internal communication. The subject for the Bachelor’s thesis was chosen in the field of students professional studies. The subject of the thesis was chosen by the author, regarding his interest and passion for the subject. Commissionaire was introduced to thesis process after the thesis subject was defined. Thesis topic was introduced to the commissionaire as pre-created product, which made it more difficult to sell the idea to the commissionaire. Discussion of the thesis subject with commissionaire beforehand is allowing commissionaire to introduce current challenges and subjects to be researched. Despite challenge mentioned above, the author and the commissionaire agreed on the current thesis subject study in the company.

Thesis writing process was done independently by the author. Thesis structure and implementation was done by pre-existing author’s knowledge of the subject and Bachelor thesis requirements. Throughout the thesis process the author used thesis supervisors and thesis seminar members’ recommendations and insights on the subject. Thesis author took thesis supervisors recommendations into account when correcting, restructuring or fulfilling the thesis. Meetings and feedback on the existing work was asked by the author to develop Bachelor’s thesis by the requirement of HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences.

During the thesis process the author has developed deeper understanding on the thesis subject and valid insights to be used in future career development. Learning also included the overall thesis writing process. Issues mentioned in the first paragraph re-

garding thesis commissioner would have been avoided if commissioner was agreed before thesis subject was defined. Also, closer interaction with thesis advisor and commissioning company in the early stages of the thesis writing process would have resulted in information exchange. The author has learnt to work independently and researching necessary information and components needed for successful completion of the study.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

The author has already worked in GoldenMoments Ltd. as a marketing assistant. Author had worked in a position of Marketing and sales content specialist in United Kingdom market, focusing in the “GO” brand development in the Company. Thus, the work place environment is familiar to the author and based on it insight information and knowledge of the working environment the author of the study is able to reflect on various aspects within the Company.

The thesis is built on five main sections also known as the thesis structure. Firstly Introduction is section is communicating with the reader about what the research is about, how and why is it done following by the introduction of the case company in question.

Theoretical framework follows as the next main section of the thesis structure. The study is based on the links between theoretical framework and empirical part to have a strong bond and practical use of the theory used in the study. The main purpose of the theoretical framework is to introduce reader to key definitions and practises of internal communication and channels used in multicultural company. Firstly introduction to definitions of communication and internal communication will be given to introduce the reader to the thesis subject. Furthermore, internal communication theories will be explained and given bases for using these methods in the study process. Researched internal communication channels will be explained based on the various sources and external information resources seen in the bibliography chapter.

Research approach and methods are explained and communicated with the reader in the next section. A quantitative research method is used. Author has chosen to use quantitative research approach in order to achieve maximum validity of the study. The quantitative research study is done using a research questionnaire to be distributed to entire GoldenMoments team. Furthermore, in this section sample and population, data gathering and data analysis process is explained.

Results and data analysis are explained in chapter 5. The section is introducing reader with quantitative survey results and analysis, based on the theoretical framework theories and practises.

2 Theoretical framework

Theoretical framework section will introduce the key theories and definitions of internal communication within an organisation. The section will allow the reader to understand the fundamental aspects of internal communication used throughout the thesis.

2.1 Workplace communication

Communication is an essential part of everyday work interaction. Employers and employees as well as the customers of the particular organisation who are buying, selling and working within the organisation are directly or indirectly involved in workplace communication. Knowing the tools needed for successful communication at work place will lead to wider influence on other people and increase of effectiveness at set organisation. (Gerson 2007, 2-3.)

According to Blundel (2004), communication is an instrument used by humans in their everyday interaction. Essentially, communication is a process where information is transmitted between the sender and the receiver. Clear message exchange between two parties is a sign of good communication and in order for the information to be transferred successfully to another person, the receiver, needs to know how to communicate in the modern age. (Blundel 2004, 2-4.)

Communication is used as a means of any organisation to coordinate communication and information exchange within the organisation to establish effective coordination of activities between the members of organisation. Organisations persuade effective communication in order for the members of organisation to achieve set aims, goals and have a clear vision of the organisation. In organisations communication is an essential part of the business strategy to motivate members of organisation and increase overall satisfaction in the organisation leading to increase of the organisations workload and revenue. (Argenti 2009, 28-30.)

Organisational communication is also defined as the process of transmitted messages interpretation within the organisations units. The overall purpose of the communica-

tion and tools used in communication is to establish and moderate mutual beneficial understanding between the units in order for the organisation to successfully achieve set goals for the business. (Gerson 2007, 4-5.)

In communication within the organisation there are three distinct dimensions which are defined as communication flow dimensions. These dimensions are as follows: downward communication, upward communication and horizontal communication. (Hartley & Bruckman 2002, 2.)

A downward flow communication is an exchange of information within the organisation from one level, usually the managerial level to the lower level. The Board of Directors, the leadership group and the management level coordinators are setting goals, providing instructions and training to the employees, informing about the policies used in the organisation and urgent matters that need attention of the lower levels of workforce. With this downward communication the feedback that has been collected in the process is used to inform leaders of the current status in the organisation. (Downs & Adrian 2004, 54.)

An upward flow communication is an information flow from lower levels of organisation, employees, up the organisations structure. This communication can be defined as formal or informal communication. Upward communication is defined in a sense when the employee has finished their current assignment and the employee sends the work report to the supervisors for feedback or instructions. Organisation environment tone is set by how available is the ability for the employee to communicate with the direct or indirect supervisors. When successful upward communication is established in the organisation it will lead towards more relaxed and friendly atmosphere in the organisations surroundings leading to more efficient work environment. On the contrary, the upward communication is struggling and lower levels of workforce are unable to freely communicate with the supervisors it can lead to stressed work atmosphere where there is no room for error due to the lack of feedback which is needed for the successful completion of the task. Upward communication has to be filtered and only the task

at hand and useful information is presented to the higher levels of organisation.
(Downs & Adrian 2004, 54-55.)

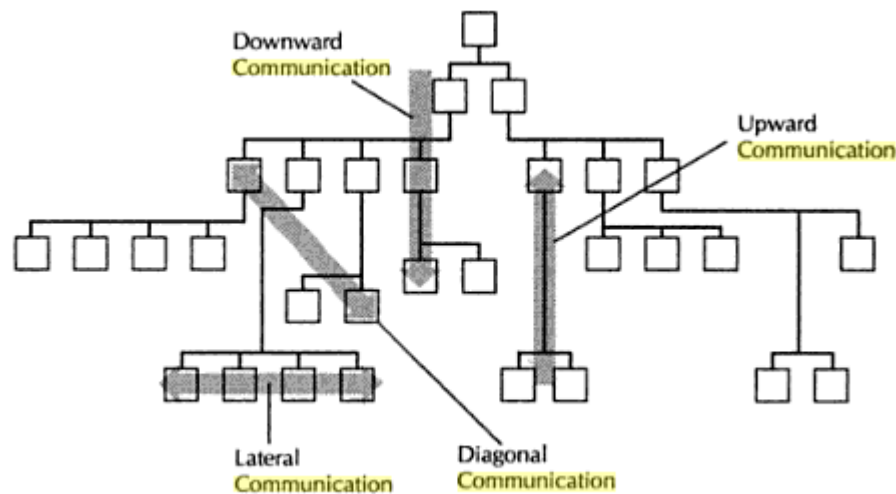


Figure 1: Forms of organisational communication (Montana & Charnov 2000, 340.)

A horizontal communication flow is the most common dimension of communication at organisations. Communication takes place in horizontal way in a perspective from organisations structure module including communication with peers, colleagues and fellow workers with whom they are on the same hierarchical level. Furthermore, informal communication style is used more likely than formal communication depending on the social reasons and the internal structure of the organisation. (Downs & Adrian 2004, 55.)

Workforce has more initiative to work harder and stay in the organisation because horizontal communication is stimulating the individual to continue employment in the organisation when there is friendly work atmosphere. Horizontal communication is overlooked and neglected in some case organisations, focusing more on the tangible aspects of the organisational process. However, horizontal communication remains unmistakably necessary process in organisation structure. (Downs & Adrian 2004, 55.)

Communication is meant to be an equal process between the sender and receiver in order for the message to be fully understood and perceived in a manner that it was intended. Need to communicate is essential part of process in organisations as well as

the society itself even in relatively small groups which is defined as two way communication module. (Downs & Adrian 2004, 4.)

2.2 Internal communication in an organisation

Organisations are putting the most effort on customer satisfaction. The more satisfied are the customers with the product, service and meaning of the organisation the more turnover the organisation can generate. In today's competitive business world organisations are expected to focus their attention to the employees' knowledge of the organisation in order for the organisations core message and values to be communicated with the customers. Successful internal communication is a key factor in organisations ability to create increasing financial performance indicators. (Argenti 2009, 183.)

Internal communication is cooperate culture building tool that is not just persuaded as the method, broadcast or publication of the daily interactions between organisations employees'. Strengthening the relationships with employees is one of the main aspects of creating well integrated internal communications module. (Argenti 2009, 184.)

Internal communications is also defined as relevant tool in creating understandable, clear and precise organisations image within the internal process of the organisation. Approaches of the internal communication are to motivate, discipline and educate the employees of the set organisation, in order for the recipient to clearly understand the fundamentals of the organisation and be ready to discuss the arising issues presented in everyday communication. (Kalla 2006, 26.)

Internal communication is a concept stated as data and information transactions between individuals or different size social groups within the same or different levels of expertise in an organisation. Intent is to create smooth daily transactions of information between the employees of the organisation in order to secure coordinated work process. (Blundel 2004, 11.)

Internal communication is a tightly organised process through which organisations workforce is coordinating the work process on daily basis to ensure the functionality of

the organisation. Addressing every employee's communication skills and functions are essential in building a self-secure communications module. Organisational communication addresses communication skills of all employees, management communications is focused on the development of the managerial competences of the managers, cooperate communication focuses on the formal cooperate function and organisational communication provides understanding to the employees of spiritual issues and more theoretical based challenges that may accrue working in an multicultural organisation.

(Kalla 2006, 27.)

Increasingly complex and highly competitive nature and environment of today's business world is creating a demand for well-established internal communication and is putting more pressure in the employees and their communication skills. (Argenti 2009, 184.)

In any organisation employees are expected to know all the processes of the organisation they are employed in. It is not only personal relations departments' responsibility any more and more emphasis is on employees' ability to communicate organisations structure, meaning and values to the public. When presented with an explicit question about the organisations, an employee has to be able to discuss, explain and motive answers whatever kind of question might be asked. Asked questions may vary from mission and vision of the organisation till current situation in organisation topic. Internal communication has to provide understanding and ways how to communicate with the public when the conversation is touching sensitive subjects such as investments, financial stability or working policies in an organisation. Employees' preparedness and ability to freely discuss and explain in a clear and understandable way about the organisation to the customer shows organisations professionalism and preparedness towards PR. (Kalla 2006, 142.)

Organisations internal communication development is based on the current state of the internal communication. In a process of developing internal communication strategy the information of the current methods, existing channels and service are collected for the purpose of examination to determine whether the internal communication tar-

get is met in the organisation. Knowing the results of analysis of the current state is essential for reliable internal communication plan implementation. (Smith 2008, 15-16.)

Internal communication system requires three self-preserved communication stages. Crucial information has to be distributed freely in the organisation in order for the employees to know the current state in which the organisation is in. This information can be perceived as appointments, investments that affect lower level in the organisation as well as the modifications in business strategy. Furthermore, internal communication system has to have servers, databases where the needed information is stored and the channels from which the person can access the needed information for easier access from the employees' perspective. Needed information is defined as catalogues, contact information, client register, legislation documents and privacy policies. The third necessary action that is needed for internal communication system's effective work is to know where needed information is stored and how to get to that particular information. It can be achieved by reminders for important happenings, such as business trips, meetings or upcoming events. These reminders can be done via e-mail, face to face meetings, bulletin boards or internal news server. (Grunig 1992, 533-536.)

In order for the internal communication to be effective internal communication channels has to be modified so that there is no leakage or interpretation of the information provided. Information has to be structured in a set way by the organisation, a module to follow in order for the message to be delivered correctly. The system via messages are sent in the organisation has to be analysed for the information flow channels to be improved. (Grunig 1992, 541.)

Internal communication methods are used in organisations. In organisations communication basic assumption is defined as: communication regarding organisations image, mission, vision, and future trends. Communication regarding organisations strategies is a key aspect for the employees' ability to understand the importance of their tasks. The other concept which is being used to describe internal communication in an organisation is day-to-day matters, defined as current organisational structure, financials of the organisation, future aspects of the organisation, changes in the organisation, personal

development possibilities, training, employee policies, other department progress, products and services. (Turner 2003, 61.)

In organisational level the most important is to receive clear messages from the supervisors. The upper management is setting the tone for the entire organisation. Senior staff has to be fully committed to the importance of the internal communication to create fluent communication flow within the organisation. Managers are communicating with the lower level in the organisation to get hard data, information and process report of how the work is being carried out. This information has to be filtered before presenting to the managers. Professional coach whose task is to develop employees' internal communication skills, is an effective method to remedy internal communication challenges. In addition the managers have to be precise what kind of information is presented later on to the senior staff. Board of directors are expecting short, concrete and insightful report in which it is stated the progress review. (Turner 2003, 62.)

When approaching internal communication structure it is important that communication style is led by a supervisor's example. Superior communication directly impacts the whole organisations style and atmosphere. Communication affects workers motivation level and willingness to put an extra effort for the good of the organisation. (Kalla 2006, 24-25.)

Information that is exchanged in the organisation is perceived as information received directly or indirectly from the managerial level. Unofficial communication is a type of communication that is gathered or perceived when communication is between employees. This unofficial communication is perceived as a rumour or half-truth. Only when the information is received from the supervisors only then the information is official and there is no room for speculation of 'Who said what?'. (Blundel & Ippolito 2008, 187.)

In many organisations, communication is seen as a function that is done by special departments such as cooperate communication, public relations and marketing commu-

nication departments. Communication is a specialised function used by all the departments in the organisation in formal and informal communication. Communication plays important role in all areas of the organisation particular in overall integration of the organisation, and in shareholders relations.

(Barker & Angelopulo 2006, 43.)

2.3 Forms and channels of internal communication

Internal communication has three methods in transmitting information in an organisation. These two methods verbal communication, written communication are perceived as the most reliable. Gestural communication which can be interrelated with two main methods is becoming hard to predict and used only as an addition to verbal communication. Two most reliable communication methods are verbal and written communication, because gestural communication is very hard to predict, understand and interpret in a business life. Verbal communication is defined as a casual conversation, formal conversation. Non-verbal communication also called gestural communication is active when an information sender is transferring the information to receiver through body language and gestures. It can range from salutations, greetings and expressions. Written communication is defined as all the information that is transferred in a written form such as memos, notifications, notes, posters and any form where the information is passed through written text. (Stuart & Sarow 2007, 200.)

Forms of internal communication are defined as follows: Intrapersonal communication, interpersonal communication, mediated communication, business communication and integrated business communication. Intrapersonal communication is an activity that occurs within your own body. Intrapersonal communication is helping one individual to gather thoughts and information within the mind and play out a scenario in mind of an interpersonal conversation. This communication form is used in order to be precise and organised when the information has to be delivered to other person in the organisation. (Stuart & Sarow 2007, 11.)

Interpersonal communication is defined as exchange of information between more than one people. In theory it is persuaded as communication in one on one conversa-

tion or individuals interacting with many people in the organisation or society. It is a process where ideas, thoughts and feelings are communicated between sender and receiver. This process can include all aspects of a conversation such as listening, assessing, persuading and also non-verbal communication. Furthermore, interpersonal communication can be made using direct and indirect communication channels such as face to face meetings and indirect interaction such as computerized setting interaction. (Stuart & Sarow 2007, 11.)

Mediated communication form is when the interaction between employees or staff in the organisation occurs via computer-mediated communication tools such as instant messaging, e-mails, chat rooms or internal communication network. Social media is also part of this form of communication, because nowadays companies have their own internal social networking site where the interaction between the employees can be carries out in secure and safe fashion. (Stuart & Sarow 2007, 12-13.)

Business communication refers to message transfer which is a part of a business sector. This form is also called formal communication within an organisation due to its subject matter. Business communication can vary from personal e-mails, office memos, sales presentations, conferences and staff meetings to daily greetings, cooperate branding strategies and department meetings. (Stuart & Sarow 2007, 14.)

Integrated internal communication form is defined as organisations current forms of communication. This form is usually persuaded in small and medium size organisations, due to the fact that the departments are closely interrelated and the communication forms are overlapping and creating united communications network. (Stuart & Sarow 2007, 14.)

Internal communication is higher management and employee joined network. Meetings, conferences, happenings and gatherings are regular occurrence in weekly schedule of employees and personnel. Meetings are used in order for the operational information to be communicated to the responsible department or a person. Meetings and gathering are also process used to discuss the on-going organisational development,

news feeds and relevant external information that affects the organisation. Partly the operational information is being communicated horizontally from a person to person at the same level in the company and it can be positive and negative at the same time. Positive aspect is that the information is being transferred fast and to the right person, but the negative aspect is that the information can be misleading and altered in the process. When the information has been past from a person to person the original meaning can be lost in the interpretation of the set individual. (Stuart& Sarow 2007, 14.)

Considering the formal channels of internal communication aspect in the organisation the employees are aware and on edge when receiving the information, because formal communication involves more stress factors than informal. Informal communication network include processes from private conversations between employees till personal jokes and gossip shared in the common room. Informal communication is in cases more important than formal communication, due to the reliability of the content and the fast message delivery time comparing to formal memos and staff meetings. Organisations are putting more effort into the informal communication due to the increase of productivity because of it in the recent years. (Argenti 2009, 197.)

Communication with the management level is important process of internal communication. With this process the management is present in the eyes of the employees and who the interest of their work as well as acknowledgment of their effort. When manager is expressing regular interest in employees work it gives the incentive to work harder and prove the worth of the job their doing. Communication in a group is proving to be the best indicator of the work efficiency due to the instant feedback that employees present to the management level representative. In organisations where there is clear hierarchy managers should arrange frequent meetings with the employees and daily "check ins" on the employees floor. (Argenti 2009, 191.)

Distant communication channels also known as online communication transmit information in instant messages within the organisation community. This process is reaching wider target group personnel with less effort saving time in arranging regular

meetings. Organisations internet platforms serve as the data transmitter for the online communication which is preserving privacy of the information provided as well as the urgent information is very unlikely to be misunderstood. Consequently companies have to invest considerable time and thought effort into ensuring that these messages that are communicated through the online communication are getting through the employees and to the intended target group. Organisations intranet, internal communication, has to be dynamic and engaging with the home page regularly updated. It also has to be communicated to the employees that it is their responsibility to daily check the intranet for details, news, announcements and changed that can occur on a spot. Employees who are checking the intranet every morning before they start their work day are the ones who have insight information of the organisation and are on top of their day to day duties and responsibilities. (Argenti 2009, 191-193.)

Corporate meetings are held when urgent and very important information has to be delivered as soon as possible to the target group. These meeting usually affect the organisations community in whole and are important to be held at least one in a quarter. It is efficient way to communicate important message that otherwise could be interpreted in different ways in which the message is losing the original impact and importance. (Kalla 2006, 141.)

Operational guidelines in internal communication are specifically designed for the integration in all communication projects in the organisation. These guidelines are set by the superiors in order to create standardised communication method. When there are set operational guidelines the personnel in the organisation are able to understand, modify and explain the information communicated to them by the higher level of the organisation. (Barker & Angelopulo 2006, 43.)

2.4 Cultural diversity in multicultural organisation

Most of the 21st Century workforce is diverse, regards to the research on internationalisation aspect in Section 2.3 of the report, meaning workforce is consisting of people from many different national and ethnic backgrounds. From the legal stand point people are entitled to freedom of speech, differing sexual orientations, religious affiliations

and family structures. People diversity has to be acknowledged and respected in all interactions and communication aspects. (Brief 2008, 1-3.)

From around 1960 International companies are pressured to establish equal opportunities to minorities in the work place starting from admission to the work till day to day interaction with them. The initial statement that is upon for the companies to follow is stated as: "Equal rights necessarily came to mean we are all the same". Although in nowadays companies are pressured to follow modified version of the statement which has developed into one in regards of internationalisation and uniqueness of a person at work: "Viewing people having equal rights while being different. Each person has its own personality, background, culture and ideas that should not be tossed in one category rather than taken each person as a unique and rare specimen. (Guirdham 2005, 6.)

Workplace diversity focuses on empowering people to not shy away from their culture and difference rather to develop and contribute with their unique talents and skills in solving organisations business challenges. Organisations strive to encourage personnel to interact with all the employees to achieve the most effective solution to the problem or task. Recently the need to adapt for cultural difference has become major concern of organisations' general management. Reasoning behind the concern is the fast growing internationalisation in business life. Furthermore, research shows that cultural differences in the society and in workplace strongly effect on subconscious level how people behave. (Guirdham 2005, 6-7.)

Internal as is external communication draws people to speak in one language and also use nonverbal messages. Factors such as context, mood and individual personality plays significant role in the day to day communication. As communication is interactive influencing the tone in the company the set rules of the day to day communication has to be established within the organisation. Miscommunication may lead to hostile work atmosphere, conflicts and unsatisfied behaviour. (Guirdham 2005, 7.)

Cultural differences are known to affect people's purchasing power and knowing how to market to specific target market is essential in organisations development of strategic planning. For instance Scandinavian countries are known to faster take of rates

meaning that the introduced product or services is exception in the society faster than in other countries. In service economies, meaning most of the European countries, business success depends on the effective interaction and communication with customers, partners and other levels in the organisation. Employees have to be well trained in the art of persuading people to buy or use the product provided, requiring well-developed interpersonal knowledge of the target market. (Guirdham 2005, 8.)

Well established internal communication tools and channels help to avoid the multicultural differences in workplace. Thus, making sure that the organisation has up to date work etiquette and set rules to follow through can help to avoid confrontational situations. A person who comes from different culture, environment and beliefs has to have a neutral mind set coming to the workplace, if that has not been done then the organisations responsibility is to communicate company's work etiquette, rules and present work atmosphere to the set individual as soon as the misunderstandings has accrued. (Brief 2008, 55-57.)

3 Research approach and method

This chapter introduces the reader to the research approach and method. The research approach is explained in section 1.1. This research is targeted to and explanation of the decision. Afterwards, data gathering and data analysis will be explained.

3.1 Quantitative approach

Quantitative research method is providing projectable research outcome. With this methodology the researcher employs a large sample which is the representative of the whole population. Quantitative research method is usually done by mail, telephone or internet solutions to reach a larger scale of respondents to receive large quantities of hard data, usually expressed by numbers within a scale, but not focusing on the open ended questions. (Muijs 2011, 1-3.)

Quantitative approach is useful as it helps the researcher to prevent bias in gathering and presenting research data. Quantitative data collection can be viewed as more subjective and the results can only be realized by means of transcending personal perspective. The quantitative data gathering methods are useful especially when a study needs to measure the cause and effect relationships within the organisation. The purpose of the quantitative approach is to avoid subjectivity by means of collecting and analysing information which describes the experience being studied. (Newman & Benz 1998, 1-3.)

The author of the thesis has chosen quantitative research method. Quantitative research approach is used due to the thesis objectives, aims and limitations. Firstly, GoldenMoments is located in Portsmouth, England but the thesis author is doing the research from Porvoo, Finland and geographical challenges accrued. The author is unable to have face to face meetings, interviews or discussions with the respondents directly. Furthermore, the GoldenMoments employees and managerial staff are extremely busy during the summer period with business processes of the company, therefore Skype or phone interviews are ineffective due to the schedule. Respondents will be more eager to fill the questionnaire when given time to finish it without pressuring

time deadline. As for some employees English is not a native language it is essential to give time to process the information provided rather than to put them on the spot with semi-structured, in-depth interviews regarding qualitative research approach method. Taking into consideration the above mentioned reasons the author is convinced that the quantitative research approach is the most effective approach to be used.

Quantitative approach will generate hard data concerning internal communication current situation in GoldenMoments as well as the preferences in internal communication from respondents point of view. Using this method author is creating quantitative survey questionnaire to be distributed among employees at GoldenMoments headquarters in Portsmouth, England, seen in the Appendix 1 of the thesis.

3.2 Sample and population

The thesis aim is to research the internal communication tools within GoldenMoments Company and the preferred communication tools for the current employees. GoldenMoments headquarters in Portsmouth, England currently are employing 22 people; therefore the research focuses on these employees exclusively.

GoldenMoments currently are employing 12 interns from various countries such as: Spain, Italy, Germany and France and 10 employees are considered permanent employees including experience supervisors, financial department, human relations department and upper management.

The author has chosen to use probability sample due to the facts that the research is focused on entire population. Employee who is currently employed in GoldenMoments is eligible to participate in the research done by the author.

3.3 Data gathering

Data gathering for the thesis process is collected from data and information provided by GoldenMoments and Survey Method used to retrieve information from the current employees. Beforehand established privacy setting between the author and respondents

helped data gathering process, which states that the information given will be anonymous and used only for the research purposes.

Research Method used is quantitative approach; the technique used is the survey method, which is otherwise known as normative survey. The results and findings of the study are compared with the standards taken from the theoretical framework of the thesis. With the survey method, researchers are able to statistically study the specific areas where the company must concentrate. Findings regarding the common practices being done and the methods which are commonly adopted by the employees are obtained with the use of the survey method. (Vaus 2002, 5.)

The survey, seen in the Appendix 1 of the thesis, has been done using Webropol, survey creation tool to reach entire sample population. The survey is based on the Theoretical Framework data, information and theory. The survey is distributed to all the employees of GoldenMoments with the support from the Human Relations department. The author contacted the department in order to forward the invitation to complete the survey to all current employees. This method was used in order to reach maximum efficiency in distribution of the survey. The author, in regards to the theory, used this distribution approach because employees are more eager to answer the survey if it has been ordered by the managerial level officials rather than from external person doing the research.

Gathered data and results are stored in the Webropol internal server, only the thesis author has rights to access the data. When the survey data collection is concluded the author will export the results of the survey from Webropol to later be used in chapter 4.

3.4 Data analysis process

After gathering the completed questionnaire from the respondents, total responses from each question is obtained and extracted from Webropol analytical tools to research report. Data analysis process is based on the gathered data, theoretical framework and current internal communication situation as a baseline. Data analysis process

is active from the point when the quantitative research survey link is made inactive and further recipient participation is not allowed.

Quantitative research survey is based on the theoretical framework information and the theories behind the questions are made to link the theoretical part of the thesis to practical part, also known as empirical part.

The analysis covers three sub-sections, following the research survey's structure. The three parts are defined as follows: internal communication flow, current internal communication effectiveness, and preferred internal communication tools. This study has a structured questionnaire and analysis following these set sub-sections for more structured and valid results.

Results involving numerical scale, multiple choice questions and preferred communication channels will be analysed from information displayed as graphs. This is done for the reader to understand the data presented for better understanding in a visual way. For data gathering the quantitative survey approach is used meaning there are no open ended questions presented to the recipients.

4 Results and data analysis

This section of the thesis is presenting the results of the quantitative research survey distributed to the employees of GoldenMoments and analysis of those results. Analysis is done based on the answers given from the recipients linked to the theory presented in section 2.

A quantitative research survey was distributed to the entire team of GoldenMoments employees (22), out of which 10 employees completed the survey, which makes 45%. The survey results showed no pre-meditated answers. The survey was anonymous and the questions were to be answered truthfully.

Respondents were from various nationalities and all 10 respondents are in the age category from 21 to 30 years of age. From 10 participants 6 respondents are working at GoldenMoments 3 to 6 months, 2 respondents less than 3 months, one respondent for 1 and 5 years. Most of the respondents are working at the Marketing and Sales departments in the company responsible for the online marketing campaigns, product revision and SEO target procurement.

4.1 Internal communication flow

The results show that GoldenMoments employees are mostly communicating among each other. The link between the departments is strong and information is shared freely between the departments. Most of their daily information needed for the tasks successful completion is received from co-workers meaning that horizontal communication flow is used, shown in Figure 2.

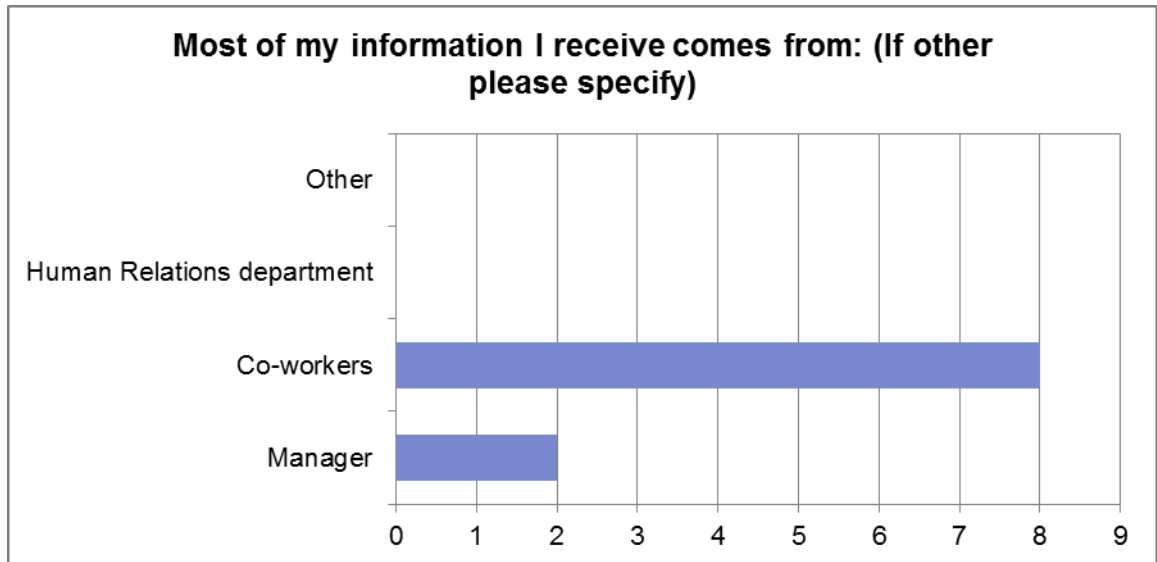


Figure 2: Most of the information received comes from these channels. (n = 10)

Majority of respondents identified that co-workers are the main source of information shared in the office. Rest of the respondents said that manager is communicating with them. These respondents also acknowledged that the information received on day to day bases is dependent on their current tasks.

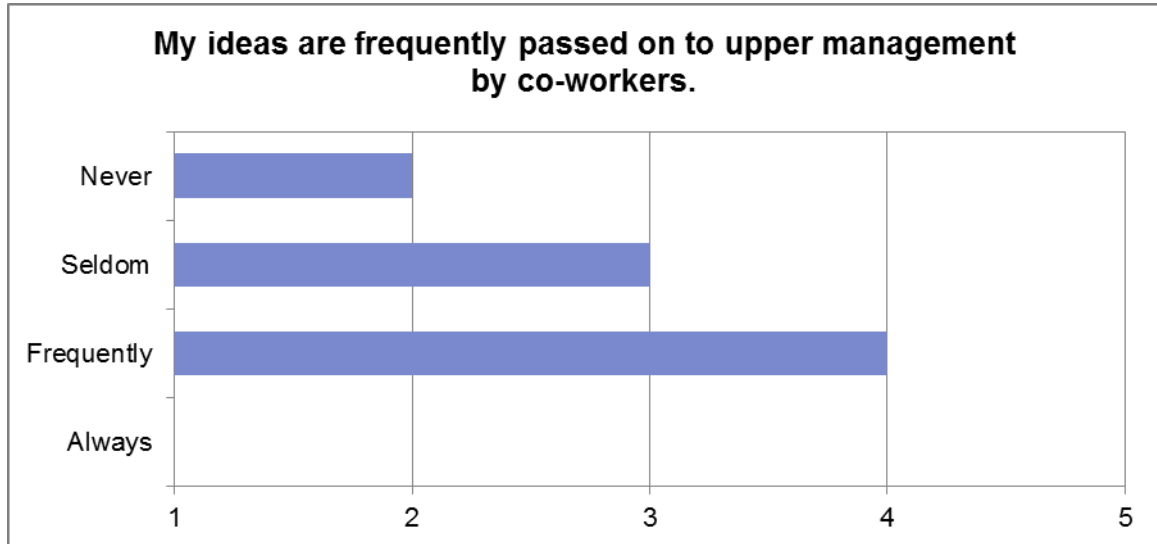


Figure 3: How frequent ideas are passed on the upper management? (n = 10)

Figure 3 shows respondents opinion and their notion of co-workers willingness to communicate ideas to upper management. Majority of respondents answered that their ideas a frequently passed on to the upper management. Other options chosen were that ideas are passed on seldom or never, 3 and 2 respondents. These answers indicat-

ed that upward communication flow is also used in the office. Upward communication flow is up most important tool to be used in the company and results show that it is used on frequent basis. The respondents indicated that they feel comfortable to directly share ideas to upper management. Managerial level is accessible to the lower levels, pending on the results.

4.2 Current situation of internal communication

Respondents were asked series of inter relater questions concerning current internal communication situation and effectiveness of the tools used. Firstly, question of how they perceive the information provided to them for successful completion of their tasks. In most situations the received information was necessary to effectively preform their job, 7 respondents agree that they are receiving the information needed, rest (3) are disagreeing with the statement. Please see the Figure 4.

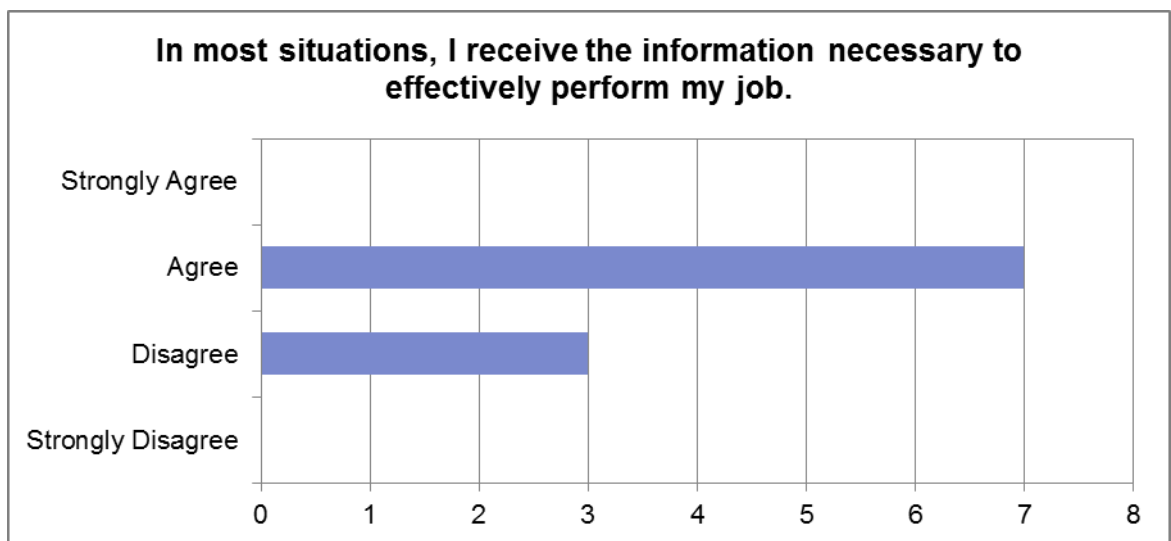


Figure 4: Received information to effectively perform duties. (n = 10)

Furthermore, staffs meetings are perceived to be in sufficient amount. These staff's meetings are also informative and the information received in the meetings are perceived as informative and structured. See Figure 5.

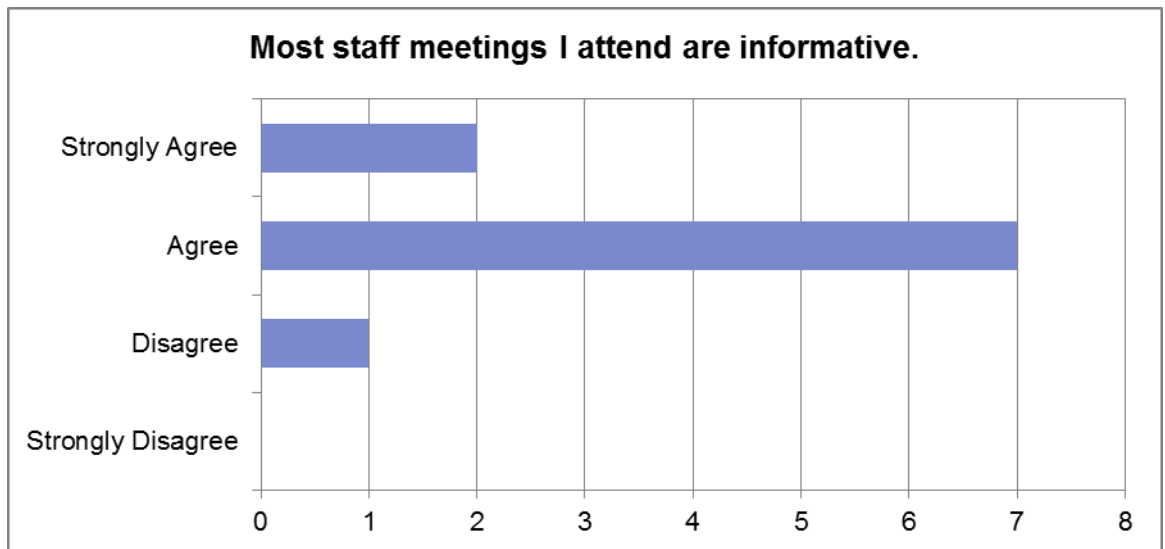


Figure 5: Staff meetings attended was informative. (n = 10)

When discussed about the upper management role in internal communication respondents were convinced that hesitant in communication with lower level employees is the major issue. 70% of the respondents think that executives are reluctant to communicate news about the company to employees and only 30% believe that information concerning company is communicated freely. See Figure 6.

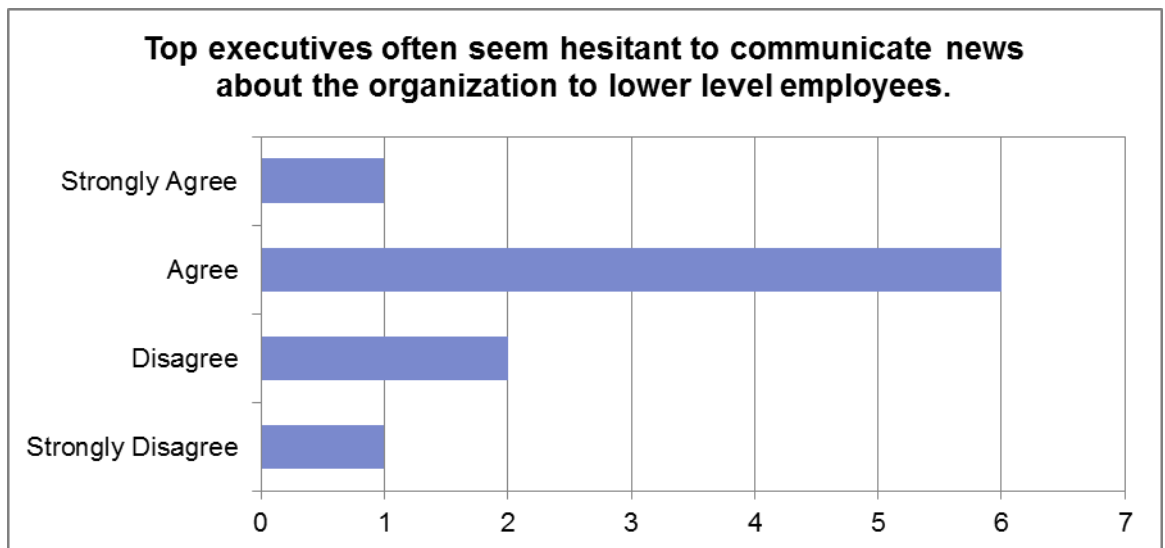


Figure 6: Top executives often seem hesitant to communicate news about the organization to lower level employees. (n = 10)

Regarding the overall information received on day-to-day basis 50% of respondents indicated that it is not detailed nor accurate. Even though according to them information shared within the office is contributed as reliable. Information coming from managers is seen as reliable but not detail-oriented (Figure 7).

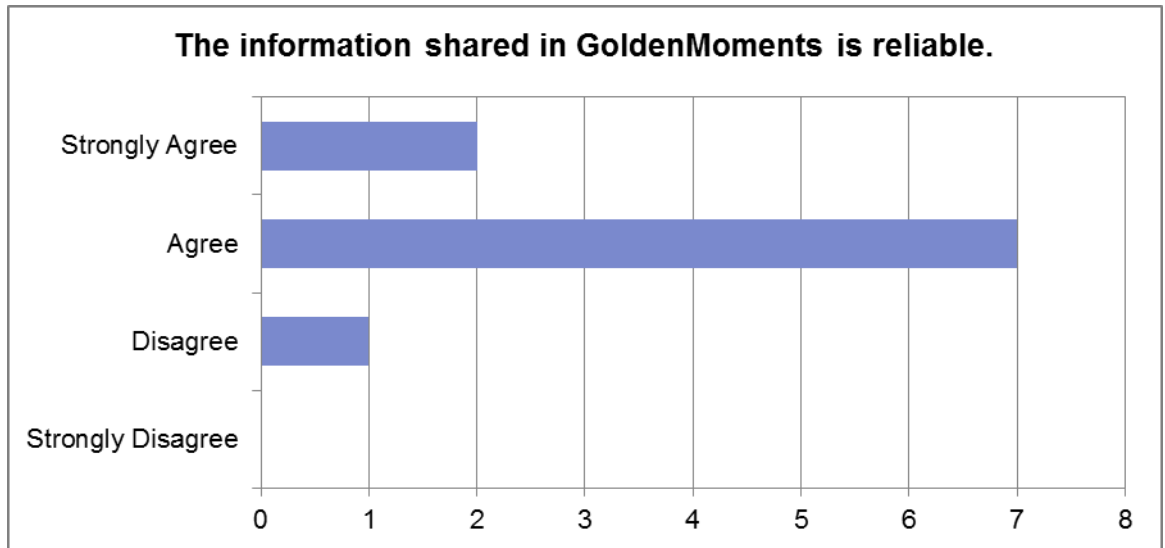


Figure 7: Reliability of information at GoldenMoments. (n = 10)

Respondents have expressed mixed opinions on current internal communication effectiveness. Internal communication is working well at current moment but expressed upper managements challenges in communicating with lower levels of the workforce gives impression that they are not completely satisfied with internal communication.

4.3 Preferred internal communication tools

Respondents expressed their opinion on preferred communication tools and the most effective way to communicate with them. The most efficient way to communicate is face to face meeting, according to 70% respondents. E-mail communication was chosen as the most effective way by 30%. In conclusion, majority of respondents feel that in face to face meetings information can be received faster and more efficiently. Respondents who chose e-mail as the most effective communication tool have been working at GoldenMoments longer than respondents choosing face to face meetings. Employees who have been working at GoldenMoments less than 6 months, feels that receiving information directly at the meetings are more trustworthy and informative

rather than other communication tools. Options of communication via: intranet, Outlook, phone calls or Skype were not considered to be the most effective way.

Regarding which channels of communication is the most effective in GoldenMoments day-to-day interactions, personal meetings are the most important tool in company's internal communication with 50% of respondents choosing this channel. E-mail as the most effective internal communication tool chose 2 respondents, outlook only 1. See the Figure 8.

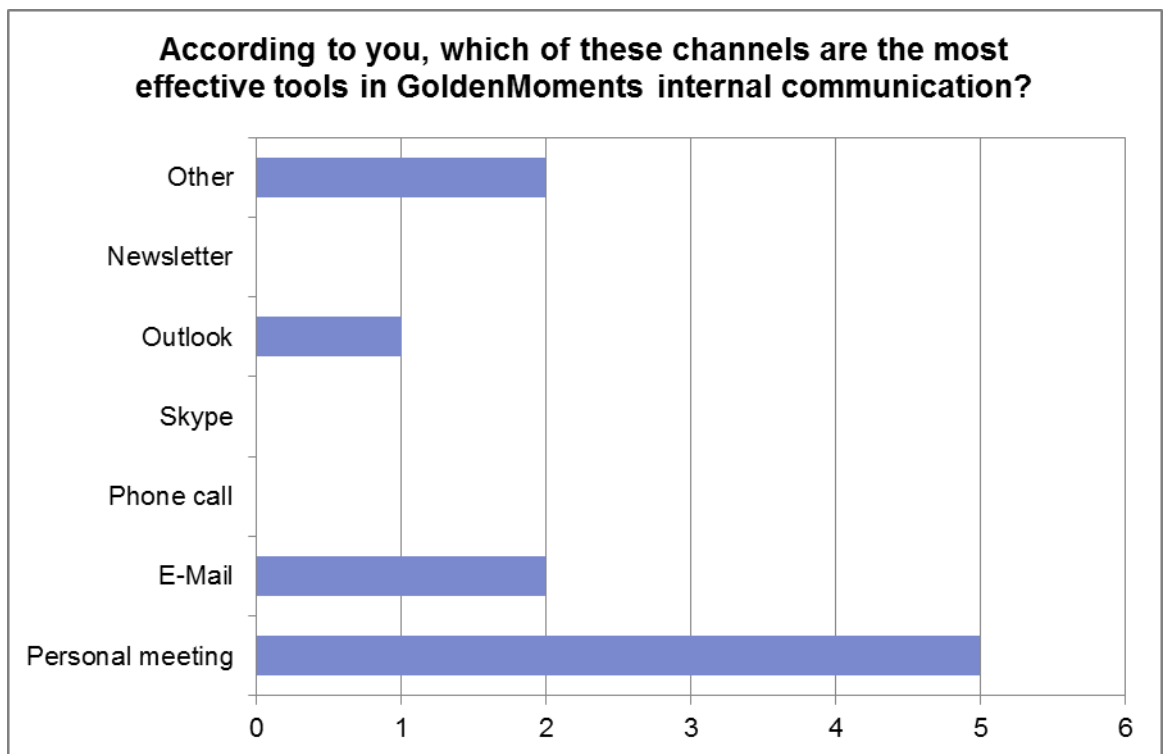


Figure 8: Most effective internal communication channels in GoldenMoments. (n = 10)

Even though the preserved channel of communication is personal meeting with the managers, the majority answered that the information that they receive is received from co-workers who have attended the meetings or have insight information regarding particular news. Analysis shows inconsistency with the internal communication within GoldenMoments, exception is the expressed need for personal meetings as they are the most effective and preferred internal communications tool within the company.

5 Conclusions and recommendations

This section is presenting the conclusions of the study based on the results and data analysis (section 4). Furthermore, the reader is presented with internal communication improvement recommendations based on the theoretical framework (section2).

Recommendations are based on the initial research questions, theoretical framework, quantitative research survey, analysis of the findings and conclusions. Suggestions are based on the above mentioned data and are not intended to be viewed in contradictory fashion regarding GoldenMoments existing internal communication knowledge and expertise.

5.1 Conclusions

This study is focused on the critical evaluation on the current internal communication situation in GoldenMoments. The research also aimed to identify the internal communication channels used in the office as well as the preferred internal communication channels. Primary and secondary resources were used in the study. For the primary data, the author chose to conduct quantitative research survey questionnaire using entire GoldenMoments employee staff as participants. A survey was constructed in Webropol, data collection and analysis tool. The answers given by the respondents in Webropol were used as basis for data analysis. Furthermore, various publications in books and scholar journals as the secondary resources were used to support the findings.

Based from the results of the survey which reached 45% of respondents, GoldenMoments employees agree that the current internal communication system works well in their day-to-day duties and responsibilities. Although, the respondents also expressed concerns regarding some aspects of workplace communication and that the internal communication be improved to become more effective. Information communicated within the company is perceived as reliable and trustworthy. Furthermore, respondents supported the notion that the staffs meetings are in sufficient amount, as well as the personal meetings are constructive and informative. As the personal meet-

ings are the most effective tool in internal communication used in the GoldenMoments, being constructive and informative is up most important.

A horizontal communication flow is mostly used at GoldenMoments which is the most commonly used method in today's organisation. Communication between co-workers is an essential part of a business and at GoldenMoments the methods seems to be working well, increasing the probability of friendly work atmosphere. Other communication flow method, a downward communication flow, has been identified. Moreover, while this method is present in current internal communication system it is not working as effective. Survey results support this motion. According to the article written by Downs and Adrian (2004), communication professionals defines a downward communication flow as information communicated from upper management to lower levels of workforce. Management is reluctant to communicate information about the company to employees. Schedule, time or personal reasons can be influencing factors for the action.

Although, the downward communication flow can be improved, the results from the survey indicated that the overall information circling in the company is reliable. According to Argenti (2009), the more satisfied are the workers are with the product, identified as internal communication, the more productive workforce is. Good internal communication develops friendly and relaxed work atmosphere. Participants expressed this notion because the information is received directly from the management, increasing the validity, as well as the information presented has been checked and validated.

Inconsistencies in answers regarding current internal communication flow were shown in survey results. In some responses to the question regarding upper level willingness to communicate news about the company to employees, majority expressed notion was that management is being hesitant. Although, towards question were employees are receiving information about the company the majority said from co-workers. The author concludes that there is an information leak in the company. According to Downs & Adrian (2004), when information is not presented in clear manner because official

information has not been provided by the upper management. Misunderstandings and rumours spread in the company whilst the situation is present.

Despite the positive aspects of internal communication obtained from the research the validity of it can be questioned. For instance, the respondents could have used answer patterns and influence factors obtained from co-workers during the completion of the survey. The entire team was invited to participate in the survey, responded 45 %. Following recommendation section is based on the results and analysis gathered from completed surveys and theoretical knowledge.

5.2 Recommendations

Regarding results from quantitative research survey and conclusions these recommendations are to be perceived as critical internal communication in GoldenMoments evaluation result that can influence the overall internal communication effectiveness.

Regarding information presented in conclusion (section 5.1) the focus should be put on downward communication channel improvement. According to Grunig (1992), crucial information has to be distributed freely in the organisation in order for the employees to understand their current work importance for the organisation. In order for the improvements to take place entire team has to be informed about the importance of internal communication and the effects on workplace.

The author presents three recommendations based on the analysis and the conclusions of the study supported by chapter 2. The three recommendations are defined as follows: management organised monthly staff meeting, internal newsletter, and internal communication training sessions.

The recommendation regarding management organised monthly staff meeting the author is basing on chapter 4 and section 5.1 supported by Turner (2003), module on effective internal communication (section 2.2).

The recommendation for the need of internal newsletter distribution regarding news and information discussed in monthly meetings, the author is basing on section 5.2 discussed downward communication challenges, supported by Argenti (2009), statement on distant communication channel importance and discussion on newsletter importance by Smith (2008).

The recommendation regarding internal communication training sessions the author is basing on chapter 4 and section 5.1 supported by Smith (2008), integrated communication methods.

5.2.1 Management organised monthly staff meeting

Therefore, management organised monthly staff meeting is recommended for internal communication improvement. All division and employees should attend the meeting, where up to date information is presented. According to Turner (2003), managers are communicating with lower level employees in order to retrieve hard data, information and current task status. A monthly staff meeting is an efficient way to retrieve all employee status reports at once.

Agenda of the meeting would be as follows: to inform different divisions of the company what are the current tasks and situation, what are the existing results or predicted results, the importance of the tasks they are doing, the urgent matters and matters that can wait, is there help needed and if so then from whom, and finally to achieve clear understanding GoldenMoments current tasks and future trends. Monthly staff meeting to be held is important. The results of the meeting are that different divisions are closer interrelated and employees are informed about processes within company and have clear vision where the company is headed. By bringing different divisions closer to each other this meeting can improve not only internal communication flow but also affect workplace atmosphere. Creating efficient workplace and friendly workplace atmosphere is one of the goals for successful organisation.

5.2.2 Internal newsletter

Furthermore, GoldenMoments should have monthly internal newsletter. According to Smith (2008), newsletter would serve as up-to-date information source about the topic presented and discussed in the monthly staff meeting. Furthermore, newsletter can serve as a reminder of the actions taken and information acquired by the management.

Some employees might not be present in the meeting due to various reasons such as: illness, work related travels or other circumstances. The newsletter should include information on the current tasks, projects, acknowledgements and information on upcoming events. With this system all employees are reminded of the items discussed, so that entire team has received up-to-date information. In discussion by Argenti (2009), notion of entire team to receiving up to date information is for coordination purposes. Employees' awareness of the existing processes in the company allows management to allocate different tasks, knowing they have insight information for the task they are about to do. Furthermore, interaction with company's external partners such as customers will bring more value, due to the employees' knowledge of company's processes.

On the downside, allocation of a person who is responsible for the newsletters monthly creation is needed, draining GoldenMoments recourses. The newsletter should be in electronic format sent by e-mail or outlook with privacy conditions to be used and viewed only internally.

5.2.3 Internal communication training sessions

Internal communication training sessions has proven to be effective tool to coach the personnel to interact with co-workers, management and different divisions in a professional manner. The challenge of internal communication is to keep diverse organisation motivated. (Smith 2008, 177.)

These training sessions would be done by internal communication specialist who would hold the sessions quarterly or annually depending on the ever chaining work-

force needs. Sessions would provide understanding to employees how to use communication channels, which information has to be communicated directly to management and which information has to be communicated to other divisions before presenting it to the managerial level. Information would be flowing to the right and intended target and the internal communication gap between management and employees would disappear increasing the internal communication effectiveness.

According to Smith (2008), training sessions also will help boost the confidence of the managers, not only employees. Training sessions for managerial level will help managers to anticipate and prepare answers to various internal communication situations.

The purpose of the research was to study what is the current internal communication situation at GoldenMoments and how employees perceive it, which communication channels are used and preferred by employees and to come up with relevant recommendations for the improvement of internal communication. The research has answered these questions thus; the goal of the study has been reached.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

1. What is your age?
 - Under 20
 - 21-30
 - 31-40
 - 41-50
 - 51 and older

2. How long have you worked for GoldenMoments?
 - Less than 3 months
 - 3-6 months
 - 1-4 years
 - 5 years of more

3. In which division are you working in? If other please specify.
 - Sales
 - Marketing
 - Financial
 - Administration
 - Other

4. Most of my information I receive comes from: (If other please specify)
 - Manager
 - Co-workers
 - Human Relations department
 - Other

5. I feel comfortable sharing my ideas directly with upper management.
 - Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly Agree

6. My ideas are frequently passed on to upper management by co-workers.
 - Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly Agree

7. In most situations, I receive the information necessary to effectively perform my job.
 - Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly Agree

8. Staff meetings in GoldenMoments are in sufficient amount.
 - Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly Agree

9. My department shares important information with other departments.
 - Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly Agree

10. Most staff meetings I attend are informative.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

11. Most efficient way to communicate with me is via: (if other please specify)

- E-Mails
- Phone calls
- Face to face meetings
- Memos
- Skype
- Outlook
- Intranet
- Other

12. Top executives often seem hesitant to communicate news about the organization to lower level employees.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

13. I freely communicate the information that I receive from my manager to my co-workers.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

14. Most information I receive on a daily basis is detailed and accurate.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

15. The information shared in GoldenMoments is reliable.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

16. I get most of my information about company, news and events via: (If other please specify)

- Co-workers
- Manager
- Human Relations department
- Financial Department
- Other

17. According to you, which of these communication channels are the most effective tools in GoldenMoments internal communication?

- Personal meeting
- E-Mail
- Phone call
- Skype
- Outlook
- Newsletter
- Other