



The lack of communication between departments in An Phu Hotel Vietnam and its affection for the company's sales department performance

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Abstract

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<p>The paper is the commissioning thesis, followed by a mutual agreement between the researcher and An Phu Hotel Group, in order to examine the current situation at the company, thus, recommendations or solutions could be created in order to reach the goal of the company.</p> <p>The paper aimed to dig into issues in An Phu Hotel Group – a middle-scale hotel company in Hanoi, Vietnam, to find what is holding the company back from achieving new milestones. Thus, the two main problems regarding communication were established: the lack of a clear communication structure when it comes to the expression of employees regarding stress or an overwhelming workload; and the miscommunication between departments of the company.</p> <p>Thus, literature from academic researchers was found based on the theme of the issues, with research on general communication in business, internal communication, employee's thoughts and satisfaction, and information flow. After that, methodological approaches were considered, including how the interviews would be conducted, what the population of the research would be and how they would be selected for research. Fishbone analysis was also used to find the root cause of the issues, along with the Open-Coding method.</p> <p>Therefore, two solutions were formulated to face two issues: a sharing workshop adding to the extra-curricular activities schedule of the company so employees may have a chance to speak out their thoughts on the work and the work environment; and also a frequent gathering of the heads of departments to ensure the transparency of the information flow between departments within the company. The solutions were then discussed by the researcher regarding their validity, reliability, and potential risks during the implementation phase, and some feedback on the solutions was gathered from the company to see how practical the solutions might be.</p>
Key words Communication, Interdepartmental communication, Business communication, Information, Employee, Expression.

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List of Abbreviations

APES	An Phu Employee Survey
FQ	Fieldwork Question
HOD	Heads of department
HR	Human Resource
GT	Grounded Theory
SSI	Semi-Structured Interview

1 Introduction

The research aims to dive deep into the communication-related problem occurring in-side departments of a middle-scaled hotel company in Hanoi, Vietnam. An Phu Hotel Group was first established in 2012, with the initial aim of providing comfortable accommodations for passengers during their transits at bus or train stations in the city of Hanoi, Vietnam. Gradually the company has developed to serve not only passengers but also customers for both business and leisure purposes. Until 2023, the company owned a total of six different hotels located in different cities across the country of Vietnam. According to the company's mission and vision, in 2030, the number of hotels would reach fifteen across the country, and also promote the company's brand, from a middle-scaled company, to a higher-middle scaled hotel group. Therefore, the researcher and the company came to an agreement on the research, to find occurring issues within the company that are blocking the way to thrive its success. One of them is internal communication, or in other words, employee's thoughts and the connection between departments. Thus, the research aimed to provide the employees a better communication structure when they wanted to address problems, and erased miscommunications across departments.

Academic sources were used in the paper to provide a broad and acknowledging perspective on the main theories of the paper. Thus, theories regarding communication, internal communication, employee's thoughts, and information flows were considered thanks to sources, leading to two fieldwork questions aiming to determine the occurring issues. Also, the methodological design was carefully explained and defined such as probability sampling methods, fishbone analysis, and semi-structured interviews.

The root causes were found thanks to academic articles in the "Literature Review" chapter. These studies have shown that to form a continuous flow of communication between departments, and a friendly environment where employees are welcomed to address their challenges, a different communication structure should be utilized. Based on the literature review re-researched by the writer, fieldwork questions are made to cover two main problems of the company. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to get the perspectives of the employees regarding the problem. The root causes were found when analyzing the results of the interviews. The interview was conducted by the researcher and held in An Phu Hotel Group office in Hanoi, Vietnam via face-to-face interviews. The first step is to inform the interviewee that the interviews will be recorded, and then the researcher gets familiar with the company through small talks. The overall goal of the company is discussed later, before diving into specific departments and the issues relating to them.

The main objective is to get concepts about quality-related topics via interviews. Thus, problems are formulated and narrowed to 2. Interviewing different employees helps the researcher gain more viewpoints about the company's situation

- There has been no particular period in a working year when employees can express their concerns. Therefore, problems were hardly or not addressed.
- The marketing and IT departments do not share the same perspective, which leads to a misunderstanding between these two departments

The topic appears to be interesting to the writer because most middle-scaled hotels in Hanoi, Vietnam have been ignoring the importance of a healthy situation for the company itself. Quality brought to the customers is more prioritized by these companies rather than the inner quality. However, the company's efficiency could be boosted greatly if the inner quality of the company is focused and enhanced. In such a harsh market of Vietnam, where service quality is competed closely by all the competitors, one of the game-winning factors is the sustainability of the company, which can be reached by establishing a healthy environment for the employees. Nevertheless, this is not one of the priorities of these companies; not many managers can realize such a factor, which has been usually thought to be guaranteed, can change a company's position in the accommodation market in Hanoi, Vietnam

Communication is one of the most basic human activities. It often takes place in every moment of life and business. In the hospitality industry or accommodation industry, communication plays a pivotal part in the success of a company. It can originate from the most simple action point, such as the receptionist to the customer, to the information flow within the sectors, or departments within a company. Thus, both the inner and outer communication of a hospitality company should be taken into consideration with details since the ultimate goal that most companies desire is reaching sustainability for the company, and by enhancing the communication structure, especially across departments, the company can take a further step in the journey of achieving a sustainable level for the company, making sure the company would become a decent competitor in the market.

1.1 An Analysis on the Company

1.1.1 External and Internal Issues

It can be seen that An Phu Hotel Group is highly impacted by external and internal issues, which influence their way of working. Market dynamism has large direct impact on business performance and shows indirect impacts on quality management. Unforeseen changes in the market highly influence working pressure within departments (Matyusz et al., 2012). Within the sales department of An Phu Hotel Group, a change in external factors has been seen in the influence of work

pressure so much that communication and quality within the company suffered. The company has had difficulty in managing the influence of External and Internal Issues.

Employee satisfaction is indirectly influenced by external factors, when changes in the market influence the work pressure on department procedures is lost in the process. This then affects the employee's way of working negatively (Van Loosbroek, 2022).

1.1.2 Communication Structure of the company

For An Phu Hotel Group communication is very important, since it is a complex company that needs to operate on different stages. Interdepartmental communication is needed to successfully run the company, many different departments work together to achieve goals. Interdepartmental communication is directly linked to the organization's performance (Gondal and Shahbaz, 2012).

It is found from interviews that the current communication chain within An Phu Hotel Group is not up to par. Employees from different departments run into the same issues and have difficulty trying to change this. By tackling this issue not only will the company have higher performance, but this will also influence the employee's development and satisfaction. This results in better relationships between employees and the company.

1.1.3 Improvement Tracking in the Company

An Phu Hotel Group is continuously improving by conducting a companywide survey, the APES, once a year they try to receive as much feedback as possible regarding employees experiences. When this survey is completed and discussed Action Holders are assigned. These Action Holders are responsible for initiating action toward a certain point of improvement. These points of improvement can range from new desks to internal issues.

Within An Phu Hotel Group, it has been shown that simply using the APES is not enough, employees do not always feel heard or have a place to voice certain concerns, nor is there an end responsible if these problems are handled

1.1.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, An Phu Hotel Group leaves room for improvement regarding the handling of internal and external issues. By improving upon this topic employee satisfaction and the quality of the product delivered will increase. Next to this communication shows issues, by implementing a better method of interdepartmental communication the company's performance will improve as well and the employees will be more developed and satisfied. Finally, on the topic of improvement, An

Phu Hotel Group shows the need for change which could result in quality improvement and employee satisfaction. To improve upon the lack of communication structure within the sales department of An Phu Hotel Group and with tackling these, talked about, points of improvement is the target of this project in order to provide employees with a better communication structure when they want to address problems and eliminate miscommunications between departments.

1.2 Problem Statement of the company

The researcher conducted interviews with employees of An Phu Hotel Group, the interview was described in details about methodology, type of interview used, population of the research, and the sampling method in the chapter 3 "Methodology Design and Approaches". Having interviewed the people working in An Phu Hotel Group, especially sales department, the researcher managed to gather information on the current situation and finally came up with two existing issues below:

The sales department in An Phu Hotel Group lacked a clear communication structure when employees wanted to address obstacles in their process. This was an overarching problem that has been an issue for years now. All the problems were piling up. As a result of this, another important problem has been identified.

Eventually, there was no clear communication line between departments (interdepartmental communication), which included marketing, IT, sales, and operations. Since sales is a transversal department and needs to sell the information they get from marketing and IT, communication is key.

Therefore, the problem statement was to: improve communication when; employees want to address problems about obstacles in their specific process within sales, when there are interdepartmental adjustments in marketing, IT, sales, and operations, and when the company achieves milestones in sales, by setting up a clear communication structure

The figure below demonstrates well the current situation at An Phu Hotel Group, the occurring gap, and the desired situation for the employees

Current Situation	Gap	Desired Situation
Employees can address problems in team meetings and at the end of the year in the APES. Because of the	No clear communication structure is provided when employees want to address	Create a clear and documented communication structure to address problems. So, laying an extra emphasis

<p>high workload and pressure when it gets busier, employees are overwhelmed and do not have the time during these team meetings to address problems</p>	<p>problems (except for the APES).</p>	<p>on meetings where employees have the chance to speak their mind about a problem where one person takes responsibility.</p>
<p>Marketing informs sales too late with adjustments and sends emails or information via phone calls. This results in a chain reaction for the operational department and customers.</p>	<p>No clear communication line when there are adjustments from marketing toward sales. This comes from the late updates from IT to marketing</p>	<p>Create a continuous flow of communication between sales, marketing, IT, and operations where all departments are in a mail group and IT sends updates.</p>

Figure1. Current situation, Gap, and Desired Situation in An Phu Hotel Group

2 Literature Review on Different Communication Aspects and Involving Elements

Below the researcher has attached academic sources which are related to the researching topic.

2.1 Communication in Business

It is common knowledge that communication is the foundation of business and that a company's success or failure can be determined by a few emails or words exchanged. It's even necessary to find a satisfactory solution to the issue of communication in the workplace. As a result, effective communication at work is progressively more crucial and required in every organization. A corporation can easily achieve consistency and solidarity among employees, which leads to great job efficiency, provided there is strong communication between employees in different departments.

(Black Enterprise, Clemons, 46)

2.2 Internal Communication

Effective internal communication doesn't require a lot of intricacy; instead, frequent updates between staff members are crucial, even when tasks might not be finished quickly. That point, but receiving updates right away will enable the team to assess its current state more thoroughly and come up with short-term fixes for any issues that may crop up.

Sustaining positive connections inside the organization is essential for facilitating effective communication. An organization or corporation is made up of many distinct people, and because of communication among them, each of those people will try to support the regular operation of the company.

Unpredictable outcomes can result from unclear communication. Therefore, an open communication environment in projects is essential, nowadays. (USA TODAY, 1999)

A person has successfully communicated their ideas and thoughts to others when they are able to effectively express their message. This also holds true for interdepartmental communication: a more efficient work flow might result from one department effectively informing another department of any changes or updates. In order for a company to thrive, communication between departments is extremely important (Uzma Hanif Gondal, 2012). When things fall flat, the speaker's intended message is not conveyed by those concepts, which may cause stagnation. Within a business, a lack of communication can have an impact on employee performance, as well as the company's efficiency. Thus, interdepartmental communication is significantly needed within the organization to achieve the desired goal and sustainability. (Hindi et al, 2004)

2.3 Employee's thoughts

Since they are still only human, employees will inevitably have issues that need to be discussed with management. They can be positive, such as when individuals or teams reach significant goals at work, or negative, such as when they feel overburdened by the heavy workload. The increased responsibilities of employees, as a result of upskilling and the delegation of decision-making, were seen to be an important factor leading to higher levels of work pressure and work strain (Capelli et al. 1997; Gallie et al. 1998).

In the end, they are unwilling to work with any members of the organization. Information can be transmitted down the organization in a variety of ways, but it can be transmitted upstream in a very limited number of ways.

2.4 Employee's Satisfaction

Each employee individually has different job satisfaction, even though they are in the same type of job, this depends on the level of their needs and the system that applies to them. According to (Handoko, 2015) states that job satisfaction is a pleasant or unpleasant emotional state in which employees view their work. (Hasibuan, 2015) states that there are types of employee satisfaction at work, such as: Enjoying his job, Loving his job, Morale, Discipline, and Work performance. (Mangkunegara, 2015) states that there are five theories of job satisfaction, including balance theory, difference theory, needs fulfillment theory, group view theory, and two-factor theory. (Wibowo, 2013) states that two approaches are widely used to measure job satisfaction, namely: 1) Single global rating, which is nothing but asking individuals to respond to one question, such as by considering all things. 2) Summation score, which identifies key elements in the job and asks employees how they feel about each element.

2.5 Information flow

The problem of information flows in social organizations is relevant to issues of productivity, innovation and the sorting out of useful ideas out of the general chatter of a community. How information spreads determines the speed with which individuals can act and plan their future activities. In particular, email has become the predominant means of communication in the information society. It pervades business, social and scientific exchanges and as such it is a highly relevant area for research on communities and social networks. There are, however, differences between information flows and the spread of viruses. While viruses tend to be indiscriminate, infecting any susceptible individual, information is selective and passed by its host only to individuals the host thinks would be interested in it. (Wu et al., 2004)

Inside organizations, information flow has a similar impact on its receivers (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). As the information flow (about organizational goals and means) increases in the organization, the familiarity of employees about organizational goals and means increases significantly (Kellermanns & Floyd, 2005). The familiarity with organizational goal and means guides the behaviour of the employees in a consistent manner resulting in increased congruence with other layers of the organization.

2.6 Fieldwork Questions

In the fieldwork questions (FQ's) written down below, the researcher discussed the two problems mentioned in the problem statement and tried to gain a deeper understanding from the employees what the current situation is and how they would like to see this in the future, while suggesting possible solutions found in the literature review.

The shape of these questions may vary in other interviews since the researcher interviewed different departments and teams that are connected to sales and their communication.

Internal communication structure

FQ1: Could you explain what the process looks like when someone needs to address issues about anything?

FQ2: What are your opinions on the structured meetings to discuss issues in the process of workload?

Interdepartmental Communication

FQ3: Does the current interdepartmental communication lack something in structure?

2.7 Open Coding Methods

Open Coding is one of the popular methods for qualitative research, where the researcher codes all the data obtained in different ways. Open coding is guided by several rules and questions which by their proper use limit descriptions to the emergent problem. The first rule is to constantly ask of the data "What is this a study of?" This question severely limits descriptions by having to have them related to the core problem and possible emerging core categories. As the core category generation firms up, descriptions get limited. The second question follows closely behind: What category does the problem incident indicate or what property of the core category does the incident indicate? As a GT becomes more and more generated it becomes easier to choose only

descriptions that earn their way into the emerging theory. No forcing the data with concepts that do not apply severely limits descriptions to concepts that do apply (Glaser and Phd, 2016)

3 Methodology Design and Approaches

The approaches to the research are well-described below, with the assistance of academic sources.

3.1 Methodological Design

The researcher chose qualitative research since it helps solve problems regarding quality in general, and also provides a clear insight into the vision, and mission of the company for the people who work in it. Also, Qualitative research prioritizes the perspectives of research participants and to “unravels the subjective meanings, actions, and contexts of those being studied” (Popay J, Rogers A, Williams G, 2016)

The researcher used interviews with the company to acquire quality-relating issues by qualitative research method, which is suited to gain insight into the perspective of individuals and companies on quality-related issues. These factors might be difficult if quantitative research methods are used. Qualitative research methods were also suitable for collecting personal and corporate contextual data to improve the reliability and validity of survey tools and research questions (Fossey, Harvey 2001).

Based on the literature reviewed above, fieldwork questions are formed below. They are conducted regarding two problems regarding communication within the company. They are expected to reflect employee’s perspectives on the problems of the current situation and their ideal future scenarios. The questions’ formats could be varied in interviews since they are carried out in different departments that are connected to sales department

Q1: How would you explain the current flow when you want to express your thoughts on work-load, stress and anything work-related?

Q2: Do you think the interdepartmental communication is lacking/missing information?

3.2 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are utilized to generate reliable questions in order to determine the perspectives of the participants regarding experience about the topic. Semi structured interviews are used to get detailed and reliable questions when the researchers had enough objective knowledge related (Morse & McIntosh, 2015)

Conducted conversationally with one respondent at a time, the SSI employs a blend of closed- and open-ended questions, often accompanied by follow-up why or how questions. The dialogue can

meander around the topics on the agenda—rather than adhering slavishly to verbatim questions as in a standardized survey—and may delve into totally unforeseen issues. Relaxed, engaging, in-person SSIs can be longer than telephone surveys, although they seldom last as long as focus groups. About one hour is considered a reasonable maximum length for SSIs in order to minimize fatigue for both interviewer and respondent (Adams, 2015)

The use of semi-structured interviews made the respondents' responses unique when compared to other interview methods in terms of subject relevance, while still being responsive to the participants (Bartholomew, Henderson & Marcia, 2000).

3.3 Problem Approaching Method: Fishbone Analysis

Fishbone analysis is a cause-and-effect chart with the shape of a fishbone that aims to provide all the possible causes of a problem occurring. “Root” causes of the issues are expected to be revealed from a systemic perspective rather than personal blame (Hughes et al, 2009)

Then the root causes are meant to answer these questions: “What happened?”; “How did it happen?”; “Why did it happen?”; “What solutions could be drawn and developed and given back to staff?” The fishbone analysis provides roots causes rather than symptoms based on the issue occurring then those causes are carefully analysed leading to possible solutions in a visual diagram (Europe PMC, 2019)

3.4 Sampling

The researcher used probability sampling because the results would represent the population. The researcher interviewed every person working in the sales department, so their thoughts and reasons for the problems are shown in a much deeper way. This way, information is precise and gathered after the interviews

Probability samples are the gold standard in sampling methodology and also for ensuring generalizability of the study results to the target population. By probability sampling, each individual in the population has an equal chance of being selected for the study (Acharya et al., 2013)

Furthermore, in this paper, the researcher used a specific probability sampling method, which was simple random sampling. In this method, every individual involved has an equal chance to be selected from the population. Data received during the interview was analyzed and chosen by using a random number from the list of participants. All participants were enumerated in ascending order. This method benefitted the researcher in that minimal knowledge of the population was required,

thus the validity of the sample was easier to analyze and high. The limitations of this method, however, are errors are more likely to occur, as well as the less precision compared to other probability sampling methods such as stratified random sampling (Acharya et al., 2013)

The population is everyone working in An Phu Hotel Group in the sales department. The total number of employees in the sales department is 10 people. The interview was conducted with a number of participants of 13, with 10 people working in the sales department and 3 others in marketing, IT, and R&D development respectively.

3.5 Data Analysis Method: Open Coding

To analyze the findings from the interviews, Open Coding methods were applied. The determined issue within the transcribed interviews were marked with colors, and conclusions therefore were discussed, and solutions were created. The figure below showed how concepts are marked according to color

Table 1 Data Analysis: Color Coding.

Employee's Expression	
Interdepartmental Communication	

4 Findings on the Interviews

After conducting interviews with the people working in the company, the researcher successfully gathered the information and analysed it. It came to the points below.

4.1 Internal Communication Structure

Having interviewed quite a few different departments connected to sales, it was found that within An Phu Hotel Group, there is an unclear communication structure when employees want to address problems or points of improvement. There is a lack of formal communication, which makes it difficult to address problems or concerns. These outcomes are shown in separate ways throughout different departments. There is no clear place or time where employees can address their concerns or problems, resulting in these points not being resolved. The communication regarding this is too casual and lacks a “black-and-white” structure that can be relied upon. Next to this, there are no clear responsibilities due to this lack of communication. This leads to problems not being resolved since it is not known who is responsible.

4.2 Interdepartmental Communication

There is a lack of interdepartmental communication between IT, marketing, sales, and operations. Since sales is a transversal department that has close contact with all the departments mentioned, they rely on specific information from these departments to sell the right product to the customer.

The value chain now works as follows: marketing creates a product and sends specific implementation points to IT. IT implements not all points, because of the high workload and pressure. Since marketing has already informed sales about the product, they have already communicated it to the operations department. Operations sold it to the customer, and so on, as a continuous flow. Since the marketing and IT departments do not communicate well with each other about product releases, the sales department sells products that do not completely correspond with the right product created.

This results in bad customer service since the whole cycle needs to be repeated. Besides, it is very inefficient since it leads to more 'unnecessary' work that could have been prevented in the first place.

4.3 Fishbone Analysis

By using a fishbone analysis, it allowed us to identify potential causes for a certain problem. In this case, it was adapted to fit the current situation with An Phu Hotel Group. The analysis gives a simple and clear overview of the current problem and where it originates from. The fishbone-shaped

below describes the main themes of the issue occurring in the company, which specific problems mentioned, and potential recommendations by the writer.

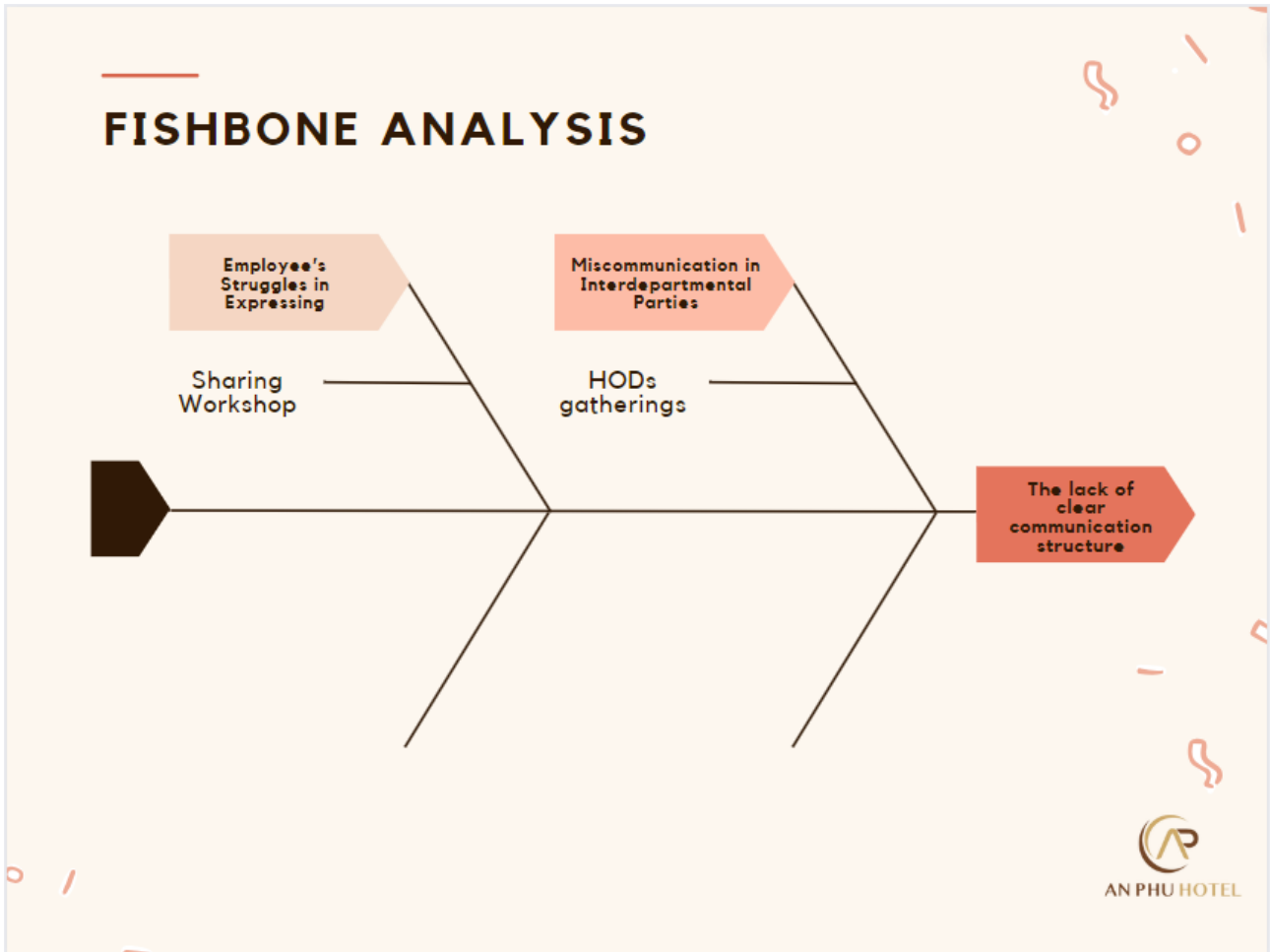


Figure 1. An Phu Hotel Group's situation

5 Conclusion of the findings

FQ1: Could you explain how the current process looks like when you want to address problems?

FQ2: What is your opinion about structured meetings that are planned once a month to discuss problems in the process of workload/ stress?

The first fieldwork question connects to the problem of internal communication where employees can't address problems in a proper way to the management, because of high workloads and stress. This connects to our literature review that there are very few ways to transmit information upwards, and that can lead to stagnation. This is exactly what happens in the sales department. Everybody wants to take part in the responsibility, because they have an open working and informal environment.

Besides, there are very few moments where employees can express their actual problems (see FQ2). Research has shown that too much workload or overwhelming work can be a sign that different communications methods should be implemented (Capelli et al. 1997; Gallie et al. 1998).

FQ3: Does the current interdepartmental communication lack structure?

The third FQ connects to the issue regarding the interdepartmental communication, sales employee's struggle obtaining information from the other departments linked within the value chain. This problem occurs due to the high workload within the other departments and lack of responsibility concerning the spread of information.

This links to our literature review, as there should be constant updates between departments to ensure clear communication. Unclear communication results in a decrease in relation between departments, resulting in poor work performance (USA TODAY, 1999).

6 Future solutions\

After analysing the issues, the researcher has come up with recommendations, which were presented to the company and asked for feedback.

6.1 Solutions

6.1.1 Solution 1: Sharing Workshop

Right now, An Phu's sales department must face several communication-related issues. One of them is the need for the employees to mention problems that they are not able to solve due to the elevated level of workload that makes them feel overwhelmed.

By setting up a workshop at the end of every month, the employees will have a chance to temporarily get away from the heavy pressure of the huge workload, as well as to speak their minds and state potential problems. The employees will be divided by department to express the issues within their department. Therefore, the level of Communication will increase.

The operator of the "Sharing Workshop" is best to be someone in the Human Resources Department or Public Relations Department, who can speak fluently, listen to the crowd, and understand the participants' thoughts. So, there will be a volunteer form sent to the 2 sales teams, where they can apply.

What is more, during the workshop, there will be both physical and mental exercises which aim to take away the employee's stress from them. The workshop will last 1 hour and will take place each month, scheduled by sales management. Sales management will appoint employees at the end of the workshop, to come up with solutions and present their findings to the team. The activities/conditions should be considered:

The agenda sent 24 hours before the meetings; the Agenda should include points of discussion of the attending employees and the structure of the meeting.

- Quick meditation to prevent stress.
- Open talk to prevent stress and chances to listen to employees' sharing about problems occurring within the company.

The workshop will be evaluated once every 3 months. The participants are expected to have more positive feedback, and reviews. The results from the survey can be compared to the results of previous surveys conducted over the last years. Also, the workshop coordinators are set to receive

participant's thoughts on their current situation and be able to help them if possible. The problems mentioned by the participants should be considered serious.

At the end of the 3 months the employees are expected to present their findings of solutions to the team and sales management will produce an implementation plan on how to implement the given solutions

6.1.2 Solution 2: Heads-of-department gatherings

Since there has been no clear communication between departments in the company, this has led to interruptions in the workflow between An Phu Hotel Group and their clients. There could be several reasons for the situation, but it is clearer that communication should be improved, to become clearer and more precise. There should be a communication structure between the heads of departments (HODs) within the value chain. The HODs inform within their department thus creating the structure.

By having gatherings between the HODs (Nguyen Thi Bich Thuy – Sales, B. Truong Trong Sang Marketing, Nguyen Anh Dung – IT) before any changes are made. The information will be transmitted more directly to the employees; therefore, they will have the most trustworthy source of information, which will reduce the level of confusion and misunderstanding whilst updates are made.

The gathering should be set up every two weeks. The goal here is to ensure that every HOD (heads of department) understands the upcoming situations. The gathering is held in the morning and lasts around 30 minutes and is expected to include only HODs within the value chain. This aims to ensure that the information is as transparent as possible. The information that needs to be taken into consideration should be:

- Time date that changes are applied.
- Information on changes, specifically progress on the changes.
- Requirements needed for the changes.
- Requirements regarding his/her department.

After the gathering, significant information should be conveyed immediately to the department's employees by the head. If he / she cannot do it, there should be someone authorized to announce the changes to the others. To track the success of the solutions, surveys are sent to each department every 3 months to evaluate the level of transparency in the information they receive, the communication levels are expected to increase every 3 months. The questionnaire should include:

- How clear do you feel after getting a direct announcement from your own head of department on a scale of 1-10?

- How many times do you or your colleagues need to contact other departments for extra help and clarification?
- What is your feedback regarding the flow of communication between departments?
- What else is expected to increase is the smoothness of the workflow; the time connected between 2 or more departments regarding one problem will be minimized

7 Discussion on the potential solution: Implementation Phase

After coming up with the recommendations, the researchers presented below the plan of execution for each.

7.1 Solution 1

The sharing workshop meets the goal of An Phu Hotel Group, since it contributes to the need of providing their employees with a better structure HOW they can address these problems about workload/ stress. Since a person from HR is leading the workshop, and not someone from direct sales management, they should feel more comfortable sharing their problems and giving suggestions on how to improve this. As a result, employees feel that they are being heard and that takes away (at least a part of) the stress and heavy workload the employees currently carry with them.

However, during the implementation phase, there would be potential risks which need to be specifically taken into consideration:

- Since the sharing workshop concept is very new, and none of the employees have worked with it, their expectations could be different than what the workshop offers.
- By having these regular workshops in busy time's crucial time can be lost. It is therefore extra important to keep these workshops in the monthly program, so employees can express their stress and talk to each other. Earlier this year, the team meetings were skipped, because of the high amount mortgage requests (see preliminary interview).
- The operator of these workshops can influence the outcomes of the workshops. By being biased or employees not feeling comfortable sharing crucial points can stay hidden.
- Employees can wrongly implement the findings after the 3-month evaluation, this because it could lead to stress or simply by wrong interpretation.

7.2 Solution 2

The head of department gatherings meet the goal of An Phu Hotel Group, since it provides a structure regarding interdepartmental communication, directly eliminates misunderstandings, and creates a continuous flow of communication between IT, marketing, sales, and operations. The line of communication should give more clarity about the release of marketing-created products and prevent miscommunications in the value chain.

Since every head of department spreads the information to their own department, employees do not need to contact all other departments to gather information, in order to sell the product to customers. This will improve employee satisfaction, since it optimizes efficiency and decreases the workload directly.

Alike solution 1 above, the implementation plan may face obstacles. These can be:

- Employees can feel demotivated since communication will become more centralized, in this case, will decrease their responsibility. However, it prevents miscommunications, because employees do not have to gather all the information themselves.
- By implementing this solution more responsibility and work pressure will be put on heads of departments, resulting in a higher workload for the heads of departments.
- The social environment and coherence can go down between the departments, since the employees will have less contact with employees from other departments.

7.3 Feedbacks on the Solutions from the Company

After the interviews with the company, the researcher came up with one potential solution for each issue detected. A Sharing Workshop was designed to face the issue regarding Employee Expression, which was mentioned in the 6.1.1 section of the paper. The solution was well-received by the company, reflecting on the interview of the researcher with Nguyen Phuong Nhi - the assistant manager from the sales department. The assistant manager mentioned the reliability of the solution, which is practical and easy to apply to the extra-curricular activities of the company. The assistant manager said: "I will talk to the manager of the sales department about the solutions you have made based on occurring issues within the sales department, it was interesting since the company is looking to expand the range of extra-curricular activities to increase bonding as well as to reduce stress from overwhelming workload, especially after holidays, when there are a huge amount of demands in accommodations in Hanoi, he (the manager of sales department) will try to mention the solution in the general meeting with other heads of departments to ensure everyone not only people working in the sales department, can have this opportunity to release their thoughts on work."

However, the solution mentioned in 6.1.2, regarding the requirement for a frequent gathering of heads of departments did not get that positive effect on the employees. Nguyen Phuong Nhi – the assistant manager of the sales department mentioned that the possibility of implementing the solution in the company was not very high: "We understand that information should be spread downstream from the fewest people as possible, to ensure the transparency and the validity of the information, however, when it comes to the gathering of other heads of departments, it would be more difficult since every department of the company has its workload, duties, and tasks, which makes the frequency of the meetings not stable to apply for a long-term period." The full dialogue will be attached in the "Appendices" chapter below.

7.4 Own learning process and Thesis process

The researchers used most of the knowledge gained during the studies in Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences while conducting this report, including the method of gathering trustworthy sources for the topic, the sampling method, and how to conduct interviews are taken into consideration as well according to courses in Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences.

The thesis process kicked off with the selection of the topic, with the home country of Vietnam, the researcher decided to choose a company in Vietnam due to the understanding in the culture, then a scan of a company was made to provide better insight into the situation. Then, the researcher spent approximately one week to seek academic sources relating to the topic. And another week to decide and clarify the methodology approach. After all theories were brought, the researcher spent 2 days of conducting interviews with employees inside the company, which resulted in data in the next 2 days. Then, the researcher spent another 3 days to analyse the data to come up with the conclusion on the findings. The recommendations took another 3 days to finalize, with discussions on the implementation plan. The recommendations were sent to the company for feedback, and the feedback came back in 1 week, with both positive and negative feedback from the company. The total time spent for the paper was approximately one month and one week.

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9 Appendices

9.1 Interview with the assistant manager of the sales department

Thanh: I'd like to start with some general questions, what is An Phu's mission and vision and how do you look at this?

Nhi (assistant manager of the sales department): An Phu Hotel Group is dedicated to providing exceptional hospitality experiences while maintaining a commitment to environmental sustainability and community engagement. The mission revolves around exceeding guests' expectations through top-notch service and creating a positive impact on the environment and local communities. The vision is to be a leading hospitality brand synonymous with excellence and responsible business practices

Thanh: What makes An Phu Hotel Group unique compared to its competitors?

Nhi: An Phu Hotel Group stands out in the hospitality industry due to its unwavering commitment to excellence, a fusion of traditional hospitality values with modern sustainability practices, and a focus on creating memorable guest experiences. The attention to detail, personalized service, and continuous effort to exceed guest expectations set us apart from competitors

Thanh: What internal and external departments does the company work with?

Nhi: An Phu Hotel Group works together with the operational department, which are teams. But if policies have to be accepted or mortgages, we have intensive cooperation with market management. Then there are some more supporting departments, such as an intermediary management department, which is where we process and maintain the new collaboration with advisors.

Thanh: How are these relationships maintained among employees?

Nhi: An Phu Hotel Group places a strong emphasis on fostering positive relationships among employees, recognizing that a cohesive and motivated team is essential for delivering exceptional hospitality. Several key practices contribute to maintaining these relationships: Communication channels, Team Building Activities, etc. Overall, these practices contribute to a workplace culture where employees are not just colleagues but a closely-knit team working towards common goals. This positive environment translates into better guest experiences and ultimately strengthens the reputation of An Phu Hotel Group in the industry.

Thanh: How satisfied are you with the sales performance of the company?

Nhi: In evaluating the sales performance of An Phu Hotel Group, I am quite satisfied with the overall results. The company has consistently demonstrated a robust ability to attract and retain customers, and its sales strategies align well with industry trends and guest expectations.

One aspect that stands out is the effective utilization of diverse sales channels, including online platforms, partnerships, and direct marketing efforts. This multifaceted approach not only reaches a broad audience but also ensures that the company remains adaptable to changes in consumer behavior.

Thanh: How do the different departments at An Phu Hotel Group communicate with each other?

Nhi: Communication among departments is a crucial factor in ensuring the seamless operation of a hotel, however, I have to say that An Phu Hotel Group still has gap in communication, especially internal communication.

The company has established regular cross-departmental meetings to facilitate information exchange, discuss ongoing projects, and address any potential challenges. This approach not only ensures that everyone is on the same page but also promotes a sense of unity among the various teams.

Thanh: How do you feel about the transparency of information transferred from the other departments?

Nhi: Well I wanted to say, I think informing is mainly saying that we are aware of what is going on within our own company. And that can be in all kinds of areas. It can be Legal; if there are legal changes that we are updated automatically, so to speak. But also, for example, if there are product adjustments that we just know of them. Or if things go structurally wrong or things are done correctly might also be useful, so to speak. What is the communication that will take place towards the customers? So that we also have an image of that. That does not always go smoothly.

Thanh: Yes, okay. And what are the consequences of that if that communication does not go well? How does that manifest itself?

Nhi: In particular, say that you sometimes work with old information. And if you work with old information, you just paint the wrong picture

Thanh: What are the current sources from which you get that information?

Nhi: Uhm, well we sometimes get an email of what we ought to communicate to participants or intermediaries. And sometimes you are completely surprised, so to speak. That no one actually

knows but something has been adjusted, for example in the quotation. That you no longer have a certain kind and that you can only have an undetermined kind

Thanh: Yes, so actually that current communication now looks like you are actually too little informed, get incomplete information and that current information that you are now getting that is being sent more via mail?

Nhi: Yes, and I have to say we have a monthly meeting with the account managers. That's where marketing comes in and that's also a very important one in the whole thing. To update us on the developments. So it's important that in terms of communication that we continue to structure that. That marketing has a chair there and at least half an hour to catch us up. But also in that period, in between, that if there are important changes that we are informed about them. Now the information is very often retrieved so then we notice something as an account manager or we hear that internally. Then we will request that information from marketing. And then we also get the information, but it is of course much more useful if we are structurally fed with that information from marketing.

Thanh: How can employees raise their concerns regarding workload or stress at work?

Nhi: We have an annual meeting of the whole company in December every year. At the gathering, we conclude what we have achieved for the last year, and also welcome people to say everything that made them uncomfortable regarding work.

Thanh: That's interesting. How many responses to personal issues were gathered during last year?

Nhi: There were 20 anonymous letters concerning stress, and being overwhelmed. However, not everyone's issues were addressed properly, since I have seen the same issue coming from the employees for the last two years.

Thanh: I think the problem was about the frequency of the meeting. During your interview, I have found that there are two main problems regarding communication in the company. Firstly, there is not a lack of communication structure, especially when the employees want to address problems either about work or about their stress at work. The second one is the miscommunication between departments in the hotel, the sales department and marketing department is an example of an interrupted connection, to be exact.

Nhi: OK, yes

Thanh: So I have come up with two potential solutions to deal with these two issues. First, to cope with the employees' expression, I think establishing a sharing workshop would be a great idea. A

Sharing Workshop with physical activities such as meditation, will help the employees reduce stress. Thus, they are more open to expressing issues regarding their own mentalities and potential work-related problems. The workshop could be held monthly.

Nhi: I am really into meditating and yoga, I feel it can truly reduce stress from our human physical and mental health. I will consider talking to the manager of the sales department about the solutions you have made based on occurring issues within the sales department, it was interesting since the company is looking to expand the range of extra-curricular activities to increase bonding as well as to reduce stress from over-whelming workload, especially after holidays, when there are a huge amount of demands in accommodations in Hanoi, he (the manager of sales department) will try to mention the solution in the general meeting with other heads of departments to ensure everyone not only people working in the sales department, can have this opportunity to release their thoughts on work.”

Thanh: Lovely, that is nothing but great to know. Moving to the second issue regarding interdepartmental communication, I suggest that if we can try to minimize the touch points of the information when transmitting downstream as few as possible, we can guarantee the transparency of the information. So if heads of departments gather more frequently, then updates on the campaigns, products, events, etc will be accessed more often. Thus, they can transfer the information to the employees effectively.

Nhi: We understand that information should be spread down-stream from the fewest people as possible, to ensure the transparency and the validity of the information, however, when it comes to the gathering of other heads of departments, it would be more difficult since every department of the company has its workload, duties, and tasks, which makes the frequency of the meetings not stable to apply for a long-term period.

Thanh: You have some great points with that! That can be a little bit too complicated to arrange a gathering with everyone attending. I can try to modify this suggestion or come up with a more practical suggestion that can benefit the company face the problems. I appreciate that you were honest and open to me about this interview. It was a good session that I could know more about the company's culture at the moment and I hope some of my suggestions could be used to assist the company achieve a sustainability workplace. Thank you for your time!

Nhi: You are welcome! Thank you for your dedication toward our company, I wish you the best upon your research!

