

**Finding out the reasons for unsatisfactory internal
communication, especially between departments and units in
the case of the Ministry of Defence**

Beata Pykäläinen

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<p>Author or authors Beata Pykäläinen</p>	<p>Group or year of entry 2009</p>
<p>Title of report Finding out the reasons for unsatisfactory internal communication, especially between departments and units in the case of the Ministry of Defence</p>	<p>Number of pages and appendices 68+5</p>
<p>Teacher(s) or supervisor(s) Merja Drake</p>	
<p>The commissioning party for this Bachelor's thesis was the Ministry of Defence. This thesis is based on the work related well-being questionnaire of the Ministry from the year 2011, that suggested that the personnel of the Ministry was somewhat unsatisfied with the communication between its departments and units. Therefore this thesis examines the possible problems in the internal communication of the Ministry and especially problems in communication between its departments and units. The first objective of this thesis is to find out is there really dissatisfaction in internal communication of the Ministry, both inside different units and departments and also between different departments and units. The second objective is to find out what are the possible problems.</p> <p>The theoretical part of this thesis concentrates on organisational communication and especially internal communication in the context of the Ministry of Defence.</p> <p>The research part of this thesis consists of a questionnaire, its results and an analysis based on the results. The questionnaire was released in the intranet of the Ministry in June and another time in September 2012. The method of the research is therefore a quantitative research method. The results were analysed during the winter of 2012. This thesis was completed in April 2013.</p> <p>The results of the research tell that the personnel is quite satisfied with the overall internal communication of the Ministry, that they are satisfied with communication inside their own department or unit but that they are somewhat dissatisfied with communication between departments and units. There were four key reasons for the problems in the internal communication and they are explained in detail in chapter six. The recommendation is that there would be more discussions about communication in the departments and units of the Ministry.</p>	
<p>Keywords organisational communication, public administration, work community, communication barriers</p>	

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1 Introduction

In this thesis I will examine organisational communication inside different departments and units, and also between different departments and units in the Ministry of Defence. Thus the context of my study is limited to organisational communication and especially to internal communication which is covered more in the chapter number three, Organisational communication. During this thesis I will cover the process, the results and the theoretical background suitable for this report.

I performed my work placement in the Ministry of Defence of Finland. While working there I experienced that communication inside the Ministry does not always work properly. I noticed that sometimes the message can get caught somewhere. Sometimes it can make other people's work more difficult and increase stress because of the sudden deadlines and lack of information. Sometimes the employees do not get the necessary information related to their current task and they can't perform their job until they get the needed information.

In January 2012 the results of the work related well-being questionnaire from the year 2011 were published and it was obvious that personnel were somewhat unsatisfied with the communication between different departments and units. I got interested of the subject and wanted to examine the possible reasons for the dissatisfaction of the internal communication in my thesis.

Internal communication is crucial to any public or private company. Effective communication means that the communication process generates the wanted results. There can be obstacles in the way of effective communication. I will examine the possible obstacles in the internal communication in the Ministry of Defence.

I think that the subject is important and interesting. The Ministry of Defence also welcomes my subject and wishes to examine the possible problems.

The objective of this thesis is to first of all find out, if there really is a problem in the internal communication of the Ministry of Defence. Does my research back up the fact that in the work related well-being questionnaire employees were clearly dissatisfied with the communication between different departments and units.

My second objective is to find out what are the possible obstacles that disturb the communication chain. There are always some obstacles that come in the way of perfect communication, but in this case is there something that could be done better? Something that will remove or lower the barriers that comes in the way of internal communication.

First chapter of this thesis is reserved for the introduction of the topic and the objectives of this thesis. In the second chapter I will introduce the Ministry of Defence and its departments and units. In the third chapter I will focus on the theory, concentrating on organisational communication and especially internal communication in the context of the Ministry of Defence. In the fourth chapter I will tell about the method used for this research and introduce the research questions. Fifth chapter reveals the results of the questionnaire and the sixth chapter will analyse the results more deeply. Seventh chapter tells the conclusion of my research and analyse the questionnaire's and answers' reliability.

2 The Ministry of Defence

In this chapter I will introduce the commissioning organisation, the Ministry of Defence, its responsibilities and its structure. I will also shortly introduce the Media and Communications Unit of the Ministry and tell about the reform of the defence administration.

Ministry of Defence is part of Finnish Government and in charge of national defence policy, national security and its task is also international cooperation in defence policy matters. The Ministry is responsible for the resources and operations necessary for an independent military defence. The Ministry must be prepared for international crisis and be able to take the management in crisis situation and to cooperate with security structures in Europe. The Ministry must carry out its tasks in changing operational environment and in cooperation with its interest groups. (Ministry of Defence 2013a.) Its responsibilities are also the budget for administrative branch, the purchase of defence materiel and development of its administration (Ministry of Defence 2013b). The annual defence budget is approximately 2.8 billion euros which is about 1.55% of the GDP. The Ministry is a link between the Government and the Defence Forces; the Government controls the Defence Forces through the Ministry of Defence and also the Defence Forces can communicate with the Government through the Ministry of Defence. In administrative matters the Defence Forces are subordinate to the Ministry of Defence. (Ministry of Defence 2013c.)

The media and Communications Unit of the Ministry is responsible for the internal and external communications of the Ministry. The unit also takes part in the strategic planning of the Ministry and for the follow up of the communications in the entire administrative branch. The unit is responsible and organizes the communications services for the Ministry's top management by e.g. taking part in the preparation of official visits and organising the arrangements for press conferences. The unit is also taking care of the Ministry's media relationships and follows the national and international media. (Ministry of Defence 2013d.)

The communication instructions of the Ministry consists of different statutes of which the most important are the Language Act and the Act on the Openness of Government Activities, instructions like the Public Administration's Communication in Crisis Situations, Communication in the Defence Administration, the Communication Recommendation of the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry's internal instructions for the communication of an official. The Ministry's internal communication instruction is short and compact and it contains information about the publicity of matters, the difference between communication in the roles of an official and a private person and instructions for how to act with the media. The personnel is advised to contact the Media and Communications Unit if there are any questions regarding communication. The same rules and instructions for communication are valid also in the social media. (Peltonen, E. 18 Apr 2013.)

2.1 The structure of the Ministry

The Ministry of Defence employs approximately 145 of which around half are women. The management structure of the Ministry is similar as in any other civilian government agency. (Ministry of Defence 2013e.) There are three separate departments, four units, and the Secretariat of the Security and Defence Committee and the Secretariat of the Advisory Board for Defence Information. The three departments of the Ministry are Administration Policy Department, Defence Policy Department and Resource Policy Department. The four units are Legal Unit, Media and Communications Unit, Administration Unit and Auditing Unit. (Ministry of Defence 2013b.)

2.2 The reform of the Defence Forces

It has been a lot in the headlines lately that the Finnish Forces are starting to reform. The whole point of the reform is to ensure that the Defence Forces can continue to fulfil its tasks and maintain Finland's military defence capabilities in the 2020's. The outcome of the reform is that the Defence Forces can be efficient in the security environment, yet cost efficient and its personnel is reduced. One of the objectives is to make sure that the defence budget is directed better for the maintenance and

development of the defence capability. The reform is completed by 2015. The reform will cut down the wartime troops of the Defence Forces and reduce the number of personnel. Part of brigade-level units, centres and other entities will be closed down or combined, less important areas and properties will be given up. Ministry of Defence will cooperate with other ministries and authorities to reduce regional impact. (Ministry of Defence 2013f.)

3 Organisational communication

This chapter will concentrate on the theoretical background of the subject. The theory will focus on organisational communication and especially internal communication in the context of the Ministry of Defence.

Although this thesis is about internal communication, I will first explain generally about organisational communication and its concepts and then focus on the internal communication. I will mostly lean on to Juholin's (2009; 2008) thoughts in this thesis, and according to Juholin internal communication and all other communication can't be separated from each other anymore because they are strongly connected together. I also think that all communication is linked to each other and different theories can be applied in different situations.

In this chapter I will explain the concepts of verbal and non-verbal communication, one-way and two-way communication, and inter-personal and mass communication because they are some of the basic classifications of communication. From Juholin's (2008) new agenda of organisational communication I will explain the concepts of daily communication, informing and the exchange of information, commitment to the organisation, profiling, reputation management and image building, work community, communication that brings employees closer together and communication that estranges employees from each other and the communication channels and forums. I will also explain the concept of rich and lean communication channels.

3.1 Generally about organisational communication

Miller (2003, 4-5) says that the industrial revolution of the 19th century made the classical organisational theorists use the machine metaphor in their theories. The organisation is seen as a machine and its workers are different parts of the machine, which all have different functions. In the classical approaches organisations are hierarchies. One of these classical approaches is Max Weber's Theory of Bureaucracy. In his theory an ideal organisation is a bureaucracy, which should have a clearly defined hierarchy. Bureaucracy has division of labor and decision making and power are

centralized. A bureaucracy is a closed system, which don't take any influence from the outside environment. The theory emphasizes the fact that the organisation functions with rules. Bureaucracies have rational-legal authority which means that the power is in a system of rules and norms that have been created with expertise and rationality. The communication in the organisations of the classical theories should be about task-related topics, the majority of communication should flow downward in the form of rules and orders, communication should be in written form, especially rules should be written down, and the style of communication should be very formal. (Miller 2003, 4-5, 11-13, 16-23.)

According to Miller (2003, 20-21) these classical theories can even be seen in the modern world, even though they were made for the organisations of the early 20th century. They can be seen e.g. in hierarchical structures of organisations, in paper work and bureaucracy, in many manufacturing and service organisations where departments are responsible for specific tasks and in military organisations (Miller 2003, 20-21).

I also think that some parts of the classical theories can be seen in many organisations in today's world. These parts are especially the hierarchical organisational structure, rules, centralized decision making power and specialization of tasks. What has changed the most is that organisations are not closed systems that don't take any influence from the outside world. Also communication has changed dramatically.

Like Miller (2003) said, that the classical approaches can be especially seen in military organisations, I think that the Ministry of Defence also have many features of the classical organisation though it is not an actual military organisation. First of all it is a hierarchy, it has a division of labor, decision making and power is centralized, rational-legal authority is at least partly followed, it has rules and directions, large part of the communication is in written format, style is often formal and many times the communication flows downwards. What differ the most is that the Ministry listens to its national and international environments, and its communication is much more versatile and modern.

Blundel (2004, 9) says that organisational communication is a field of study that covers the academic disciplines of psychology, anthropology, organisation studies and also professional fields of marketing, public relations and human resource management. Therefore it can be said that organisational communication is a wide-range field of study (Blundel 2004, 9).

According to Åberg (1996, 48-49) organizing is a happening where people join together to accomplish goals, which they couldn't accomplish by themselves. As a result a community, an organisation is born. An organisation is therefore a group of people who strive systematically towards certain goals by using their resources. A group of people, common goal, resources, division of power and work load, structural communication, the fulfilment of the needs of the members of the work community are all characteristic for a work community. (Åberg 1996, 48-49.)

Åberg (1996, 49) says that the communication of a work community is not coincidental, but it is built according to common rules of the work community. The rules consider communication relationships, the content of the messages and the different arrangements for communication inside departments and in different levels (Åberg 1996, 49).

Åberg (1996, 49) states that the goal-directness and organizing of the work community have a great impact on the communication of the work community. Tactical and operational plans are based on the strategy of the organisation. The strategy also gives the direction for the communication, but the strategy can't be planned or implemented without communication. (Åberg 1996, 49.)

Åberg (1997, 31) says that organisational communication differs from the communication between two persons or inside a small group. This is because communication is practised in an organized way, which influence on the arrangements of communication. Organisational communication is also goal-oriented; it supports individual's and organisation's goals. Also technical devises like computers, networks,

other equipment in the office and small mass communication means like personnel magazine are in use. (Åberg 1997, 31.)

I think that in the modern world where social media is everyday life for most of us this has dramatically changed. First of all I think that modern one-on-one communication is more and more organised; you are trying to maintain a certain image in the social media and therefore your actions are carefully thought through. Maybe you try to think how often you should update your Facebook status, publish something on your Twitter account or post to a blog. Also you try to keep your friends on Facebook and therefore write to them more often. One-on-one communication is also goal-oriented because you try to maintain a certain image in the eyes of other people. Maybe you try to keep an image that your organisation is requiring for, this way it also supports the organisation's goal and image. Also technical devices are in common use both at work and in our personal life.

According to Åberg (1997, 31) a communication system is an entirety, which is composed of the communication channels that are in use, the arrangements for communication and the rules for communication. Communication maintains the organisation. On the other hand organisation also restricts communication; if there were no arrangements for communication in the organisation, the end result would be a chaos because everybody would communicate with everybody about everything. (Åberg 1997, 31.)

I think that it would be good if it would be explained to employees that why there are rules and restrictions for communication. It would be easier to understand why to communicate in a certain way, what to tell and what not to tell and for whom. Communication rules and the meaning of communication should be gone through together in the organisation because alone it can seem complicated, troublesome and even unnecessary task.

Like mentioned before, I will lean much to Juholin's thoughts about her new agenda of organisational communication. This is because I think that Juholin's thoughts are up-

to-date and they can be easily placed to the work community of today. Juholin describes the perfectly communicating work community in her books and it is easy to think that communication would be on very high level with her remarks. Also while reading Juholin's books I automatically applied her visions to the case of the Ministry of Defence and therefore I think that Juholin's thoughts are suitable for this work. Also I noticed that her thoughts about modern work community and communicating in one fit to the observations of the respondents of the questionnaire for this thesis.

According to Juholin (2009, 26) an organisation or a community is any kind of functional entity, which has a meaning and purposes and which has the need to tell about itself and to communicate with its surroundings. Organisations and communities have different kind of objectives and they have resources for achieving their goals. An organisation can be a company, municipality, region, state government, association, union or any kind of project or network. Work communities are special organisations. In addition to having objectives, strategies and resources, they have responsibilities for their interest groups and for the surrounding society. People who work in them give their contribution and know-how for the use of the organisations and expect to get a salary and to fulfill their professional and social needs in return. (Juholin 2009, 26.)

Juholin's (2009) definition for organisation is very similar to Åberg's (1996) one. In this case the Ministry of Defence is closest to state government. Objective of the Ministry is to administrate in order to maintain the defence of Finland in a given budget. It has the need to communicate with the citizens, with defence forces, with international defence organisations and with other interest groups. The Ministry can be seen divided into several work communities, which are the departments and units of the Ministry. The Ministry has its common main objectives but its work communities can have their own objectives and tasks, which will help the Ministry to fulfill its main task.

I think that Juholin's (2009) definition for organisation suits best for the profile of a modern organisation. In her definition also interest groups, individual workers, society and work communities are noticed. Especially I like the definition of a work community because I think that people tend to take their work community more

personally than the organisation itself. Work communities can also have different tasks and objectives, different atmosphere and different communication surroundings than the organisation itself.

Cornelissen (2008, 3-5) on the other hand justifies the importance of organisational communication by the needs of what the stakeholders have for the company. In today's business world the future of the company often depends on how the stakeholders see the company and what is the image they have about it.

Communication practitioners have to therefore strategically manage and implement communication programmes in order to take care of the relationships with the stakeholders. Many CEOs and executives think that protecting the company's reputation is one of the most important strategic objectives and also the core task of company's communication practitioners. However in many organisations the function and input of corporate communication is not completely understood. The ideal situation is that both communication practitioners and senior managers can recognize and target management problems that are related to communication, and also understand the strategies and actions that can be implemented in these kinds of situations. (Cornelissen 2008, 3-5.) Cornelissen's (2008, 5) definition for corporate communication is, "Corporate communication is a management function that offers a framework for the effective coordination of all internal and external communication with the overall purpose of establishing and maintaining favourable reputations with stakeholder groups upon which the organization is dependent."

Although I think that stakeholder reputation is very important for a company and an important part of its communication, I think it is not the core of organisational communication. I think that organisational communication should be about supporting the organisation's operations not just for pleasing the stakeholders. Stakeholder reputation is important when thinking about strategies and the external communication but for regular employees it is somewhat difficult to only think about how the company is seen outside. An employee is thinking more how communication affects on his/her own work and to the work community. I think that reputation is more like a side effect of the organisation's actions, values and purposes than the main target of

its communication. When everything is done correctly and the company has a clear goal, its reputation can also be positive.

According to Juholin (2008, 62) communication happens in forums, of which the most important is physical or virtual work station or environment where members of the work community work spontaneously and collegially. The purpose of communication is the establishment of working conditions, the upkeep, fortification and development of the work community, and its members' individual and collective learning, which happens through dialog and responsible interaction. The members of work community modify organisation's reputation with their work and communication, both consciously and unconsciously and reflect it back to the work community. (Juholin 2008, 62.)

I think that Juholin's (2008) definition of the purpose of communication is very ideal. When Cornelissen (2008) thought about the stakeholders, Juholin is focusing on fortification and development of the work community. In Juholin's definition the organisation's reputation comes from the work and communication of the employees. I think it makes sense that a happy work community would reflect a positive image of the company.

Employees and the management are the target of internal communication and the clients and other interest groups are the target of external communication. Sometimes the boundaries are not clear though, for example in some situations stakeholders, potential employees and residents of the surrounds can be in the same position as the employees. Their knowledge and attitude towards the company can be as important for the existence of the company, as is the employees' satisfaction with their work and their work community. The better the company takes into account its interest groups' needs and hopes, the better the company succeeds. Also prerequisites of the public administration's operations are determined of how useful the citizens find it. (Juholin, 2009, 40.)

I think that Juholin's (2009) ideas are thoughts of perfect organisational communication, when the true benefits of communication are understood in the

organisation. The problem is that very often the greater good is not seen or understood. Also reality often comes in the way like for example the lack of time and heavy work load. I think that when the work community is good, functioning well, people trust each other and like each other, the communication is also naturally working better. You like your work community and therefore you want to communicate with its members and help to gain the objectives of the community. If you feel that you are not respected member of the work community, you don't want to help with the common goals but to just carry out your tasks and nothing in addition. Also if you are only thinking about your own position and trying to gain power by keeping information, the greater good can't be accomplished.

According to Blundel (2004, 2) communication can be sometimes seen as time-consuming and demanding option, it would be easier to just avoid the communication situation or resolve it by force or with fight. This is because communication requires some effort from the individual in order for it to be effective. Even though communication can seem more difficult option, effective communication has its benefits. It can help the organisation to gain well-motivated employees, a positive reputation and innovative and creative strategies. (Blundel 2004, 2.)

I think that it is true that communication can be sometimes seen as difficult and demanding option. Own work tasks can seem much more important than communicating tasks. Therefore it is crucial to understand the benefits of communication and also perhaps change own working habits. I think that it is even selfish not to communicate and keep the information oneself.

The challenges that organisational communication have to consider are: formal organisation structures, reporting arrangements and procedures, organisational stakeholders such as other organisations, departments and employees of the organisation, political, financial and time pressures and competing managerial priorities and demands. The challenges of organisational communication are quite similar, whether the organisation is working in the public, private or voluntary sector. (Blundel 2004, 3.)

Organisational communication is a versatile system, and according to Blundel (2004, 11), it is a mixture of internal, verbal, mass, inter-active, external, non-verbal, inter-personal and one-way communication.

3.1.1 Verbal and non-verbal communication

According to Blundel (2004, 10) verbal communication means messages that are coded into spoken or written words. Written communication uses the rules of grammar and punctuations, and spoken communication uses for example pauses and stress on particular words. The challenges of verbal communication can be for example using the appropriate vocabulary for the audience or translating into different languages. Non-verbal communication can be kinesics which means human posture, gesture, body language, or the use of visual media such as pictures and signs and other non-verbal sensory stimuli like for example sounds and smells. Both verbal and non-verbal communication can be used simultaneously for example when text and images are shown in a business report and the presenter is using words and gestures. (Blundel 2004, 10.)

According to Guirdham (2005, 91-92) verbal communication is suitable for communicating information and intentions with spoken or written language. Non-verbal communication on the other hand is for communication relationships and feelings. With non-verbal communication it is possible to transmit many messages in the same time and it can be unintended and hard to control like emotions. (Guirdham 2005, 91-92.)

Great amount of communication is verbal communication, especially today when e-mail, social media and technical devices are in wide use. Non-verbal communication is especially important in meetings, video conferences and in public speeches. In the case of the Ministry verbal communication is important when deciding what kind of language to use, especially in public documents, notices and when performing in public. Also the language of the web pages is important. Both verbal and non-verbal communication is important for the public figures of the Ministry and for the directors

and heads of departments. If any of the employees of the Ministry would have to perform in public, they should use both verbal and non-verbal communication suitable for the Ministry.

3.1.2 One-way and two-way communication

According to Blundel (2004, 10) one-way and two-way communication means the direction where the messages are going. Two-way communication channels are for example face-to-face interviews and meetings, both have the possibility of instantaneous feedback. One-way communication channels are for example posters and webcasts. All forms of communication are usually open for feedback, the technique can then be for example communication audits or market research. (Blundel 2004, 10.)

The benefit the two-way communication is the possibility for instant feedback. However it is not always the case that feedback can be given. In hierarchical models it is somewhat difficult to give feedback to the superiors. Therefore I think that in some cases a two-way communication situation can be then seen as a one-way communication situation. In modern work communities it is more common and even recommendable to use two-way communication in order to develop. I think that in public administration the communication can be one-way communication in many cases.

3.1.3 Inter-personal and mass communication

Blundel (2004, 10) says that until the industrial era, communication happened between individuals or in small groups and primarily in face-to-face channels such as meetings. The pioneering forms of mass communication were newspaper and book, followed by radio and television later on. Modern organisations use both inter-personal and mass communication. Mass communication is often under the control of professional specialists. (Blundel 2004, 10.)

3.2 The objectives and functions of organisational communication

According to Juholin (2009, 42) organisational communication can be divided into four parts; reputation management, external and internal communication, guidance and training, and measurement and evaluation of the functionality of communication.

Definition of communications duties is an important phase in the planning and implementing of communication. The purpose of communication is to support the operations of the community and be part of making results. Today also influencing the society, taking part in social discussion and the corporate social responsibility and environment management are more and more important. (Juholin 2009, 42.)

Åberg (1997, 32-33) says that the functions of organisational communication are supporting the activities, profiling the work community, informing, introduction to new workers and social interaction. The work community can affect and decide how the first four functions work, but social interaction happens naturally despite the rules that the organisation might have for it. Social interaction is very important form of communication. (Åberg 1997, 32-33.)

Åberg's functions for organisational communication don't consider the outside environment or the interest groups at all.

Argenti (2007, 49-57) says that the functions of organisational communication can be divided into reputation management, corporate advertising and advocacy, media relations, marketing communications, internal communications, investor relations, corporate social responsibility, government relations and to crisis management. In addition to strategy, organisation should have strong organisational communication function that would support its mission and vision (Argenti 2007, 49-57).

I think that Argenti's division of organisational communication's functions is good because it is very comprehensive. Every part of communication has been taken as an individual and therefore it might be easier to plan and monitor each function.

Although it takes the interest groups and the outside world very well into consideration, the internal communication is not that well represented.

Prime Minister's Office (2010, 13) says that the aim of public administration's communication is to support the functionality of democracy and that the rights of the citizens are fulfilled, and to create prerequisites for the operations of communities and companies. Public administration and its communication are made for the citizens. It also says that communication should be active and helpful. (Prime Minister's Office 2010, 13.)

Prime Minister's Office (2010, 21) also says that with internal communication it is made sure that everybody who is working in the organisation knows the objectives of the operations and the essential information that is needed to do the work. Bureau's management and the managers have a central role in the internal communication. Internal communication is essential part of every work community's activities. Because working life is changing all the time, the personnel of bureaus and establishments needs current and versatile information regularly including about operations and the economy. (Prime Minister's Office 2010, 21.)

Prime Minister's Office (2010, 22) also says that open and interactive internal communication strengthens communality, increases personnel's work satisfaction, strengthens the confidence in management and promotes the results of operations and the economy. The personnel's experiences of the work community's internal communication are strongly depending on how committed the organisation's management and managers are to good internal communication. Also every employee has the responsibility to search for the information that they need and to pass on the relevant information to them who need that information. (Prime Minister's Office 2010, 22.)

Ministry of Defence (2010, 4) says that the communication of the Ministry of Defence supports the operations of the Ministry. Communication is taken into account in the strategic planning of the Ministry and in the part strategies that are made according to it. The Defence Command's Public Information Division is functioning in cooperation with the Communications and Media Unit of the Ministry and is responsible for the communication of Defence Forces. (Ministry of Defence 2010, 4.)

In the year 2020 communication of the defence administration is implemented target-oriented and interactively with the citizens, public administration, interest groups and with own personnel. Communication of defence administration has a central role in surroundings that are based on networked defence systems. The communication of the defence administration is taking advantage of the newest technology. Communication is open and interactive by its nature. The use of social media supports administration's other communication. The communication supports the public image of the administration and the cooperation with Prime Minister's Office, other Ministries, the media and with interest groups. Communication is an essential part of international crisis management. The communication of the administration is following the common planning and follow-up system of the defence administration. Communication is taken into account in the strategic and operative plans and development projects and in daily operations. (Ministry of Defence 2010, 1.)

According to Juholin (2008, 76) social medias are internet services where the users create the content themselves and it is made possible by Web 2.0. Web 2.0 is based to a community or a process where people are connected to people without any gatekeepers (Juholin 2008, 76).

The Ministry of Defence started to use social media in September 2010 and Facebook, Twitter and YouTube accounts were created. Facebook was piloted already in the summer of 2010 when SuomiAreena event was arranged in Pori. YouTube account is now closed because it didn't work in the required way. Facebook and Twitter are used to support the official communication of the Ministry and to reach more people. Pictures are used in Facebook to complete the newsfeed. The Ministry is also interested in the interactivity and the feedback in social media. (Peltonen, E. 18 Apr 2013.)

Social media is not used in internal communication of the Ministry. There have been some discussions about it but the situation is unlikely to change in the near future. (Peltonen, E. 18 Apr 2013.)

The future plan for defence administration's communication sounds very modern and seems to be an ideal base for good and open communication. Communication seems to be planned to develop more into two-way communication and interaction with interest groups is required. Also the use of social media is two-way communication.

3.2.1 Daily communication

According to Juholin (2009, 42) daily communication means all the exchange of information and the discussion, what is needed for accomplishing daily routines. Communications supports and enables working, but also failure in communication shows easily. Daily communication consists of communication between managers, teams, units, departments, clients, partners in cooperation etc. Well working daily communication assures that tasks, products and services are done and delivered to the customers and that feedback works. Daily communication needs guidelines, agreements, rules and methods. In information and specialist work daily communication consists of exchange of knowledge and experiences, making decisions with colleagues and partners in projects and networks. Everyone has their own role and responsibilities. Because of daily communication employees, partners and interest groups knows what is happening and what is about to come. Openness and good team spirit makes daily communication more fluent, whereas cover-up and competitive spirit complicates it. (Juholin, 2009, 42-43.)

3.2.2 Informing and the exchange of information

Informing is more disciplined and formal than daily communication, and it means all the exchange of information that is done in organisations deliberately and according to plan. Informing is one-way communication, neutral in tone and it is guided by organisation's own advantage and goals. The targets are interest groups and currently related persons. The risk of informing is the message overload, which can cause that communication turns ineffective. (Juholin, 2009, 44.)

New technology has brought new ways to communicate and it is assumed that people's ability to receive new messages and to handle information has also improved, which is

not true. Also rapid work pace has taken time from spontaneous information search. (Juholin, 2009, 44.)

According to the act of publicity, the right for information is one of the basic criteria of democracy. Because the citizens' right for information has been defined by law, the informing responsibilities of officers have also grown. (Ministry of Defence 2010, 3.)

3.2.3 Commitment to the organisation

Organisational communication's duty is also to commit the employees to the organisation and to strengthen their commitment to work and to the work community. Commitment is enabled when the employee knows his/her work community's basic mission, objectives, the economic situation and the plans of the future. A person who is committed feels a sense of solidarity to the work community and is ready to give his/her work contribution and development ideas to the use of the organisation. (Juholin 2009, 45.)

According to Juholin (2009, 45) there has formed a new group of employees to the working life, that don't want to commit to the organisation, but to their own career and personal development. Many organisations have to compete for getting the best and talented employees, and then it is meaningful to use different ways to commit them. Those ways can be for example salary, rewarding, healthcare, sport or free time benefits, or even options. The benefits that come along communication are communality, enterprise culture, atmosphere and the possibility to be able to influence one's own work and work community. (Juholin 2009, 45.)

New employee's orientation is also important. Orientation means that the community's goals and methods, values, people, facilities and practical routines are introduced to the new person. Commitment generates also well-being at work. An employee who is committed and enthusiastic is feeling good and experiences joy at work. It can be supported with good orientation, interactive feedback and the fact that the person can affect at the work community. (Juholin 2009, 47.)

I think that this is very true; an employee that is feeling good in the work community, knows people and practices of the organisation is also more committed to the organisation and to his/her own work community. When you are committed you want to help to obtain the common goals and do positive things for the work community. It is also true that today everyone don't even want to commit to the organisation because of personal plans. Also in today's economic environment organisations make more and more fixed-term contracts because then it is easier to get rid of the employees if the economic situation turns unfavourable. When employee is feeling unsure about his/her job, he/she is also cautious in committing to the organisation. If the organisation doesn't want to commit to the employee, why should the employee commit to the organisation?

3.2.4 Profiling, reputation management and image building

Juholin (2009, 47) says that profiling means that organisation or community strives to influence to the images that arise from the company or community. Company image arise from good operations and communication. Good image is build when organisation is functioning irreproachable and is making good result and tells about it in the means of communication. Image is a visual entity whereas reputation contains everything what is done and said. Reputation is refers more to reality and to real actions. Reputation management means that organisation strives to maintain good reputation by functioning according to its interest groups expectations and is having an interest group dialog with them. (Juholin 2009, 47.)

According to Juholin (2009, 47) whether the question is about profiling or reputation, it is felt separate from other communication. But in reality organisation's actions and employees' and other people's talk has the biggest influence. Organisation can affect to its image and reputation with its actions and communication. (Juholin 2009, 47.)

3.3 Work community

According to Juholin (2008, 52) work community can be energizing or careless. In an energizing work community its members give each other energy and they inspire each

other. This way they feel themselves respected, trust each other, share their knowledge and lean on their colleagues. Unrestrained change of current information, relaxed feeling and permissive atmosphere makes all this possible. Characteristics that describe energizing work community are emotional communality, learning and doing together, interactive, responsible management and responsible individual communication. In an energizing work community its members have spontaneous role. (Juholin 2008, 52.)

An opposite of energizing work community is careless work community. There the atmosphere is locked, mutual competition and control of knowledge are self-seeking. This kind of work community's values are individuality, mutual competition, hierarchical leadership and competition with knowledge. (Juholin 2008, 52.)

It is obvious that communication should work well in an energizing work community. Careless work community is described with hierarchy and competition with knowledge, and that fits well with how many of the employees described the work community of the Ministry in the questionnaire. I think that some departments and units of the Ministry have unique, energizing work communities but the Ministry can be also described as a careless work community. Probably the new organisational reform has improved the situation, like it was also mentioned in the answers of the questionnaire.

Also Juholin (2008, 55) says that both types of work communities and their intermediate forms can be found from every work community. The situation also changes all the time. The change can happen by itself or it can be affected to, e.g. secretive leadership culture can be changed into an open and interactive one. (Juholin 2008, 55.)

According to Juholin (2008, 55) the experiences of work community are strongly related to mutual feeling of connection, being together, being available and to mutual conversations. Thus work community is a concept of communication (Juholin 2008, 55).

3.4 Communication that brings employees closer together and communication that estranges employees from each other

According to Juholin (2008, 58) the old model of communication believes that communication is same as transferring information from one place to another, from the sender to the receiver. In a work organisation this meant traditionally pouring the information from the management to the employees. It was thought that there is absolutely right knowledge and the question is only how it was transferred to the person that needed it. (Juholin 2008, 58.)

In the 21st century's knowledge organisations this old model will encounter problems, yet it still exists. Collisions occur when the old and the new world confront. The next table illustrates the collision. There are the careless and energizing work communities and the communication that either estrangers or brings together. The thick boxes highlight the similarities and the thin boxes highlight the differences. (Juholin 2008, 58-59.)

Careless work community is traditionally hierarchical and based on management; the status tells who has the say. Careless work community matches with communication that estranges employees from each other. There one speaks and others listen. Communication that estranges people from each other pushes people away from each other and then also mutual understanding and knowledge are in danger. Important information is not received if natural conversation is missing. However communication that estranges employees from each other can still work. The organisation can be used to certain way of communication and stays satisfied if the turnover of employees is low. In changing conditions satisfaction can turn into dissatisfaction if the needed information is not available, employees don't have the courage to ask and the conversation that brings understanding is missing. (Juholin 2008, 59-60.)

In an energizing work community people feel like they are doing what they can and what they want, that they are doing important work, that they have an influence on matters and that they learn and develop. Energizing work community does not exist without mutual conversation and being involved. Energizing work community arises

and lives from communication that brings together. Communication that brings together allows different views and opinions, mutual trust, interactive and responsible management and responsible individual communication. Like you can see the energizing work community and communication that brings closer together are a match and in the same time communication that brings together strengthens the energizing work community and vice versa. Whereas communication that estranges is more typical for a careless work community. (Juholin 2008, 60-61.)

The collision happens when a careless work community is trying to make communication that brings together, or when an energizing work community is forced to communication that estranges (Juholin 2008, 60).

Table 1. Juholin's (2008, 59) comparison of work communities and the beliefs of organisational communication in them

Communication	Estranges employees from each other	Brings employees closer together
Work Community		
Careless	Hierarchical organization Communication is described as a monolog	Hierarchical organization Communication that gives strength to communality
Energizing	Participative work community Communication is described as monolog	Participative work community Communication that gives strength to communality

I think that the Ministry of Defence is partly, and it should be today, careless work community where communication brings employees closer together. Ministry of Defence and public administration in general are hierarchies by nature and therefore they take the form of careless work community.

I think that partly Ministry of Defence is also a careless work community where communication estranges employees from each other. Being a hierarchy the

information moves from management downwards and can be sometimes described as a monolog. Especially because the Ministry of Defence is an old institute and old practices can be embedded deep.

But especially smaller units of the Ministry can have the form of energizing work community where communication brings employees closer together. There the orders always come from the hierarchical management but the work culture inside the unit can be unique.

Juholin (2008, 62) says that the new agenda of organisational communication challenges the old hierarchical model, that was already explained in chapter 3.1. Generally about organisational communication. The modern way of thinking is that communication happens there where people are and work, and where they produce and exchange information and experiences. Information is not moving only in the hierarchical way or according to people's status. Members of the work community are equal with each other. Subordinate can question the manager's decisions and vice versa. (Juholin 2008, 62.)

I don't know if the new model will ever come fully true in the field of public administration. After all, hierarchy is very characteristic for public administration.

3.5 Communication channels and forums

Blundel, Ippolito and Donnarumma (2013, 7-8) say that, "The communication channel is the route or the technology that is used to convey the message to a receiver." Modern organisations use different communication channels like for example letters, telephone, e-mail, face-to-face meetings, reports, posters, blogs, brochures and video-conferences. Because of the technological development some channels like fax messaging have declined and some channels like text messaging have increased. Depending on what channel is in use the message are also encoded differently. (Blundel et al. 2013, 7-8.)

According to Juholin's (2008, 64) new agenda, organisational communication is not a separate function but an organic part of everything that is done in the work community. Communication is difficult to define as separate channels and contents. The easiest way is to define communication as circulation or breathing. (Juholin 2008, 64.)

Juholin (2008, 72) says that communication forums are an option for communication channels. In a channel the message will move from sender to the receiver. Forum on the other hand is an interactive space where the members of the community come to discuss and deal with important and less important matters. Forums also connect work communities and organisations to the outside world. In forums you can act spontaneously, semi-officially or officially. In a forum it is essential that you are interactive and that the members of the community are initiative. (Juholin 2008, 72.)

Blundel's, Ippolito's and Donnarumma's definition for communication channels is very traditional and it is probably what people usually think when talking about communication channels. I like Juholin's idea that communication is happening through forums and not through channels. It is true that communication is happening everywhere and all the time, not just in defined communication channels.

Juholin (2008, 73) says that all essential interaction happens in forums, either as face-to-face communication or taking advantage of technology. Forums are divided to following principal groups; work forums, hybrid forums, internal and external networks, social media, semi-official forums and official forums. Forums offer a base for functionality of organisational communication. (Juholin 2008, 73.)

Physical work station is a central communication forum where people work, spend breaks and communicate with colleagues and interest groups. Communication technology means those technologies and technical forms of communication that the members of the organisation use to communicate with each other. These are for example the internet, e-mail, different instant messengers, intranet, blogs and mobile communication networks. Network based common platforms or environments are

functioning as a substitute for physical spaces and virtual meetings have replaced traditional meetings, especially in international companies and projects. (Juholin 2008, 73-74.)

Hybrid forums are a creative mix of different forms of communication. These applications work best in an open work space and digital communication is an essential part of those. Hybrid forums are a mix of different forums, which individuals create and combine according to the situation. When you shout to your colleague through a screen, walk to a colleague, send an e-mail, make a phone call, go to the internet or go to search the internal or external database, you are using hybrid forums. Hybrid forums form from the fact that people are communicative and spontaneous and then separate instructions or rules are not needed. Hybrid communication is not just passing current information but doing and learning together. (Juholin 2008, 74.)

Internal networks form naturally inside work communities as a result of working together. They form when people work with same issues, have common goal or interest. Internal networks form spontaneously but they can be built on purpose by connecting people from the same field. Then everybody will benefit from their networking. (Juholin 2008, 75.)

There can also be inner circles, whose members are naturally selected or invited. The inner circle lives independently inside the work community but it doesn't isolate itself from others. The inner circle change information with each other at work as well as outside work. Often the matters of the work community and the industry are already known before they come public or even they wouldn't come public at all. In modern work communities knowledge is raw material, relationships are intangible asset and internal networking is a neutral concept. Communication in the inner circle can have negative effects if the circle starts to hide information and use it for self-seeking purposes. The inner circle can also create pressure for the management if they want something to be published. (Juholin 2008, 75.)

Networking is such an important area of specialists' work that it is hard to imagine how information work of today could be done without knowing others who work in the same line of business and who influence outside one's own work community. Every one of us have different networks that are related to either qualification, profession, education, hobbies or anything that is important to oneself. Some are better and more enthusiastic in networking than others. The idea behind networking that exceeds the borders of organisations is that people who are in the network has common interests and that all participants benefit from it. (Juholin 2008, 75.)

Juholin (2008, 76) says that the internet before social media was about transmitting and publishing information to one-direction. But we have moved to a new phase in the development of the internet, where involvement, public discussion and creating and modifying the content are important. Peculiar for the new culture is that in the community you act according to the rules of it. Varieties of social medias are for example blogs, Wikipedia and different networking medias. Social medias offer new kind of possibilities to network and they can replace or complement one on one meetings and communications. (Juholin 2008, 76.)

Blundel, Ippolito and Donnarumma (2013, 173) say that social media allows its users to collaborate, interact and share content with social networking tools and in online forums.

Kortesuo (2010, 12) says that social media is different than the traditional organisational communication channels, also the way to write to social media is different. One-way communication has turned into conversation and there are no longer communication authorities because in social media everyone has the right to communicate. The content is made for fast consumption and therefore the text in social media has to be compact, short, easy to read and easy to glance through. The core of social media is interactivity, communicating and creating together. Also the text in social media has to be interactive. (Kortesuo 2010, 12.)

How the Ministry is using social media was already clarified in chapter 3.2. The objectives and functions of organisational communication.

Ministry of Defence (2010, 3) says that the fast development of technology will change communication practices. Effective use and follow-up of the social media will require growing resources. The decision makers and officials will be connecting to the citizens through blogs, Facebook, Youtube and video clips. The new technology means that speed and the accuracy of information are more and more important. (Ministry of Defence 2010, 3.)

According to a research e-mails were divided to three categories; notice messages, postman messages meaning information or attachment files which are meant for information or for actions, and dialogue discussions. The language of the messages changes according to the category of the message so that the dialog messages' language is more free. The exponential growth of the use of e-mail, and at the same time the growth of junk mail, has ruined the original idea. People can't read tens or hundreds of e-mails daily which means that the efficiency of communication reduces. Also unrealistic expectations are set for e-mails when discussion and problem solving are done in big groups through e-mail. (Juholin 2008, 77.)

In many work communities intranet has at least partly replaced and reduced the use of e-mail when doing routine check-ups, asking something or agreeing on something. Also new instant messengers and new functions of mobile phones have replaced the use of e-mail. Intranet is organisation's internal network where outsiders don't have the access to. In recent years intranet has become very common and it has become an important forum of internal communication. Attitude towards the intranet varies, for some it is a daily routine to check the intranet and a way to update current information and for some it is a frustrating experience if it is hard to find the information or it refreshes slowly. (Juholin 2008, 77-78.)

The communication channels of the Ministry are the intranet, e-mail, Lync instant messenger, telephone and of course face-to-face meetings and social media.

3.5.1 Semi-official forums

E-mail and intranet are informal, semi-official forums rather than official forums. But it can also vary, for some the intranet is one-way channel for informing and for some is an interactive forum. Semi-official and official forums are difficult to separate from each other but for example quarter meetings, monthly meetings, planning days or cooperation procedures are official forums. Semi-official forums complement those forums with more informal touch. (Juholin 2008, 78.)

I think that in the case of Ministry of Defence the intranet is quite formal forum and also mostly one-way channel for informing. I think that if e-mail is considered informal and semi-official depends on whose e-mail is in question. When having correspondence with a superior who you don't know very well, the e-mail is formal and official, especially in hierarchical organisations and especially in public administration. Also when sending official documents or agendas and invitations for meetings, e-mail is formal and official forum. When e-mailing with a colleague you know well, e-mail turns into informal and semi-official forum. I think that informal and semi-official forums are meant for easy and fast interaction when you don't have to think about the language of the message so much.

Cooperation between specialists or between teams happens when these people are working with similar subjects or are doing same kind of work. Cooperation situations happen when these people seek each other's advice voluntarily and when they coordinate matters when things proceed. Cooperation between specialists have three functions; learning from each other, being up to date, avoiding overlapping and cutting down unnecessary work. (Juholin 2008, 78.)

Coffee breaks are an ordinary form of semi-official communication which is agreed jointly. Coffee breaks happen in appointed time and place and the working environment makes it a semi-official gathering. In common coffee break information, personal affairs and feelings are exchanged without an official agenda and people are positively more well-informed about matters. In some organisations official content is also added to coffee breaks and it can raise the interest towards these gatherings.

Coffee breaks can also increase the feelings of insecurity, fear, concern or provocation if the subjects in them are rumors and speculations about things that are still unsure. (Juholin 2008, 78.)

Events and gatherings are combination of entertainment and business where matters are discussed officially, semi-officially and informally. Often the purpose is also that people would get to know each other. When people are acquainted with each other also work goes better and creativity is increased. The popularity of events can vary from enthusiasm to unwillingness and the feeling of being forced. Typical events or gatherings where both official and informal matters are represented are kick-offs, strategy days, retreats, planning days and seminars. (Juholin 2008, 79.)

3.5.2 Official forums

Official forums are regular weekly, monthly and quarter meetings or yearly result publications. The contents can be divided into three categories; what has happened, what is happening right now and what will happen in the future. Common meetings and publications are important for the work community because the information that comes across from them is official and pondered carefully. Information is communicated to everyone in the same way and in the same time. The information from official occasions is also available in other forums for example in the intranet or at the noticeboard and it can be transmitted via e-mail, text messages or by taking advantage of other techniques. (Juholin 2008, 79.)

Personnel magazines and other publications represent the traditional organisational communication. The role of magazines is not however primary but additional to other forums. (Juholin 2008, 79.)

3.5.3 Rich and lean communication channels

Daft and Lengel (1986, in Puro 2004, 47) have made a classification of communication channels into rich and lean communication channels.

Table 2. The classification of rich and lean communication channels (Puro 2004, 47)

Rich channels				Lean channels
Face-to-face communication				Formal announcements
Group communication				Videos
	Video conference		Bulletin board	
	Telephone		E-mail	
		Intranet		

The idea behind the classification is that the leaner the channel is, the more indefinable understood is the message that is transmitted through it. If the sender wants to avoid uncertainty and inaccuracy, he should use rich channels. If the case is about a routine message, which is not supposed to influence the receiver significantly, a lean channel is a good choice. The point is to choose the right channel for the right purpose and to think which channel will decrease most the uncertainty that is related to the subject. Very often the chosen channel is also the easiest channel and it is not thought enough how the message is received with this particular channel. (Puro 2004, 47-48.)

3.6 When communication fails

”Effective communication requires an open mind i.e. willingness to take on new and unfamiliar ideas.” (Blundel 2004, 1.)

Blundel (2004, 25) says that communication is about overcoming barriers, which can effect that the message is lost or misunderstood. The cost of inefficient communication is not only that time and resources are wasted in preparing the message, but also that the receiver probably needed the information and that the sender thought that the message arrived intact. People tend to be over-optimistic about the messages that we send, we assume that messages will survive undamaged from our brains to the receiver. Though messages are vulnerable to “noise”, which means anything that can interrupt or distort the message in the way that the original form of the message does not reach the receiver. (Blundel 2004, 25.)

Originally noise referred to technological problems but the concept has changed over time, and nowadays it is clear that human limitations are the reason for communication barriers. Thus to avoid communication failure, the sender should be self-aware. The sender should ponder carefully the needs of the receiver and the characteristics of the relevant channels in order to overcome the barriers of communication. (Blundel 2004, 26.)

4 Methods

In this chapter I will open up the research questions of this thesis. I will explain the method of the research, the process of collecting the data for the research and the methodology and the structure of the questionnaire.

4.1 Research questions

Like mentioned before in chapter 1, Introduction I got the idea for this thesis from the work-related well-being questionnaire of 2011. Therefore my first research question is; are there really communication problems or dissatisfaction in communication between departments and units in the Ministry? My second research question is; how communication works in general in the Ministry, how it works inside different departments and units? Research questions also try to find the reasons for possible problems in communication and improvement suggestions.

4.2 The method

I chose to make a questionnaire for the employees of the Ministry and hence my method is quantitative research method. The quantitative method means that the research data is mainly figures instead of words but according to Hirsjärvi, Remes and Sajavaara (1997, 136) it is difficult to distinguish quantitative and qualitative methods.

To be able to measure the satisfaction of the personnel it is important to get as many employee's opinion as possible, that is why I published my questionnaire for everybody in the intranet of the Ministry.

At first I thought that valuable and meaningful answers weight more than the number of answers. I weighted up if I should send the questionnaire for specific persons by e-mail or to publish it in the intranet and hopefully gain lots of answers. The specific persons who I wanted to send the questionnaire would have been persons who are interested in communication and who would have had enough to say about the subject. There would have been three persons from each departments and one from each unit,

altogether 12 persons. These persons were selected together with Development Specialist Ulla Kaleva.

In the end I chose to publish the questionnaire in the intranet because it was more meaningful to have the possibility to get answers from the entire personnel. First the questionnaire was published in early June 2012 and it gained 12 answers. I had hoped for more answers because I was quite sure that most people had not yet started their summer holidays. This was too low number so I published the questionnaire again after the summer holidays in September 2012.

The questionnaire was available in the intranet for two weeks, both in June and in September. It is not necessary to have an answer time longer than one or two weeks unless there is a specific reason for it (Yhteiskuntatieteellinen tietoaarkisto 2011). People are likely to answer as soon as they see the questionnaire on the first days of publication. When time goes by and new announcements come visible to the intranet, the questionnaire will not be on the front page anymore and hence people are less likely to answer to it.

This time I got 15 answers more, altogether 27 answers out of 145 employees, that is 19 % of the entire personnel. Luckily many people also answered to the open questions and I got some valuable information.

The questionnaire itself is a survey questionnaire. The questions have readymade answer options but also open questions for more specific answers. With the questions I tried to measure the quality of communication and find the reasons and improvement suggestions for possible communication problems. There are also some readymade hypotheses of the possible problems and I try to find out if they are accurate or not.

The questionnaire had also a covering letter telling what the questionnaire is and its structure, why the questionnaire is made and who have made it. A covering letter is very important for the success of the research and also for the re-use of the data (Yhteiskuntatieteellinen tietoaarkisto 2011).

4.3 Questionnaire

Together with Ulla Kaleva we thought about the suitable background questions and decided to leave respondent's age out of the questions since it was not really important for the answers. From the beginning I thought that it would be meaningful to find out which are the specific departments and units where there are communication problems but we agreed that it is not correct to release the names of the departments or units. I got more ideas for the questions from the thesis supervisor.

When making the questions I tried to think that there are problems in the communication and what would then be the reasons behind the problems. I also left open questions for people to answer if there was something behind that didn't even cross my mind.

The data was collected with webropol survey programme and the questionnaire consisted of 27 questions. There were two background questions, eight scale questions, six tick box questions and eleven open questions. The background questions were respondent's department or unit and the sex of the respondent. Other themes of the questionnaire were quality of internal communication in the Ministry, communication channels of the Ministry, communication inside respondent's department or unit, communication between departments and units and the effects of insufficient communication. The open questions were always related to the previous scale or tick box question.

Completely open questions are a risk because people don't necessarily have the patience to answer for them. Completely open questions should be used only if there is a good reason for it. (Yhteiskuntatieteellinen tietoaarkisto 2010.) The language of the questionnaire is naturally Finnish since it is the most used language of the Ministry. I made the questionnaire independently based on the ideas of Ulla Kaleva, thesis supervisor Merja Drake and myself. The questionnaire was approved by Development Specialist Ulla Kaleva from the Administration Unit.

You can find the questionnaire from the attachments.

5 The results

This chapter will open up the results of the questionnaire. Like mentioned before in the previous chapter, there were 27 questions in the questionnaire and they covered the subjects of background questions, internal communication of the Ministry, communication channels of the Ministry, communication inside a department or unit, communication between departments and units and the effects of insufficient communication.

5.1 The background questions

Questions number 1 and 2 were reserved for the background questions. The background information consisted of the department or unit where the respondent was working and the sex of the respondent.

The answers consisted of;

- 4 from the Media and Communications Unit
- 3 from the Defence Policy Department
- 9 from the Administration Policy Department
- 7 from the Resource Policy Department
- 3 from the Administration Unit
- 1 from the Secretariat of the Security and Defence Committee

Unfortunately there were no answers from the Auditing Unit and from the Legal Unit. There were 14 answers from women and 13 answers from men.

5.2 The dissatisfaction of internal communication

Question number 3 *How do you think that the internal communication and the flow of information in the Ministry of Defence works?* measures the satisfaction of internal communication in general in the Ministry.

The respondents were asked to give a general grade and first impression of communication in general, containing also communication inside their own department or unit and communication between departments and units. The scale was from 1-5, 1 being *poorly*, 2 being *satisfactorily*, 3 being *quite good*, 4 being *good* and 5 being *excellent*.

9 people answered 2=*satisfactorily* and 14 answered 3=*quite good*. Only 5 people answered 4=*good* or 5=*excellent*. These numbers shows that employees are somewhat satisfied with the overall internal communication.

5.3 The reasons for dissatisfactory internal communication

Questions number 4 *If the internal communication is sometimes poor quality, what could be the reasons for that?* and 5 *Other reasons, what?* try to find the reasons for dissatisfactory internal communication. In question number 4, I have made seven hypotheses of what could be the reason for poor quality internal communication and I ask the grade for each reason. Question number 5 is an open question asking for the respondents own reasons for poor quality internal communication.

The respondents could grade the following reasons: *communication channels, personal chemistry, too much work and too busy, communication is not part of one's duties, unskillfulness to communicate, there are no guidelines for communication and do not know what channels to use for communication.*

The respondents could give a following description for each reason: *not at all a reason, little bit a reason, somewhat a reason, a lot a reason, very much a reason.*

Too much work and too busy seems to be significantly a reason since 8 answered that it is somewhat a reason and 12 answered it is very much a reason. Also *unskillfulness to communicate* is a significant reason since 11 says it is somewhat a reason, 9 says it is a lot of a reason and 3 says it is very much a reason. Also *personal chemistry* seems to be a major reason since 12 thinks it is somewhat a reason, 6 thinks it is a lot of a reason and 1 thinks it is very much a reason. Also *communication is not part of one's duties* is a major

reason, 11 answered it is somewhat a reason, 9 answered it is a lot a reason and 3 answered it is very much a reason.

Communication channels did not seem to be a significant reason; 6 answered it is not at all a reason and 11 answered it is a little bit a reason.

There are no guidelines for communication seemed to be a little bit a reason since 9 answered it is a little bit a reason and 8 answered that it is somewhat a reason. Also *do not know what channels to use for communication* got 11 answers for a little bit a reason and 9 answers for somewhat a reason.

Question number 5 *Other reasons, what?* was an open question asking for respondents' own experiences for poor quality internal communication. It gathered the following reasons and opinions.

One reason for poor quality communication seems to be the fact that the Ministry is a hierarchy. "The Ministry is a hierarchy and information moves from manager to manager".

Two respondents answered that the work culture is old and does not support sharing of information, though the work culture has begun to change.

"The work culture of the ministry is such that knowledge is not naturally shared, but it is wanted to keep of one's own",

"The old work culture has not supported sharing of information and openness.

Keeping the information of one's own has been a power means. Slowly this has been improved and a new work culture is beginning to form".

One respondent showed an important barrier for effective communication, excessive use of e-mail, which I also thought was important to tell here. "The main reason for message overload is the excessive use of e-mail without critique. Most employees probably think that an attachment, whatever it is a document, memorandum or something else, should be sent to a large group just for information. Everyone has so

much material in their e-mail that it is impossible to go them all through properly. One will just read the most relevant e-mails for one's current tasks. To avoid this message overload it would be important to focus on the essential. It would be more meaningful to send a short brief rather than a long document. The receiver can then ask more information if necessary and will remember that this sort of matter is under way in that department or unit".

One respondent said that one major reason in a way of effective internal communication is the amount of other work tasks. "Most employees have lots of routines and other relevant work. When there are lots of routines, one will not always think how important it is to inform others about unfinished work or to enquire comments".

The chiefs seem to be the ones responsible for internal communication and that seems to sometimes lower the quality of internal communication. "The chiefs of units and heads of departments have the responsibility of internal communication. Do they have enough time to inform their subordinates and do they know who really need the information?"

Three respondents answered that not everybody want to inform others about everything, or that it is not recognised that one should inform others. "One will not necessarily want to inform others about unfinished matters", or "It is not recognised that the matter has more broad significance in the ministry".

The fear of making a mistake can also be a reason when leaving something unsaid. "Sometimes it is safer not to comment on a matter than, despite the lack of time, give a spontaneous first impression from an expert. An opinion from an expert can be a valuable addition to a matter but one can be scared of making misconduct. When not reacting to a matter, one does not have to answer for one's hasty comments".

5.4 The communication channels

Questions number 6, 7, 8 and 9 were about communication channels used in the Ministry. The questions were about the most used communication channels in the Ministry, how do they work and other possible communication channels that were not mentioned earlier. Lync instant messenger was not included in the survey since it was not in use at that time.

Question number 6 was *What communication channels do you use the most?* Pick 1-3 of your most used channels.

The options were *e-mail, telephone, the intranet, face-to-face talking, meetings* and *coffee breaks*. The most used channel was clearly *e-mail*, all the respondents using it the most. The second most used channel was *face-to-face talking* being the choice of 19 respondents. *Telephone* was the choice of 13 respondents, *intranet* was the choice of 11 respondents and *meetings* was the choice of 8. *Coffee breaks* was only 1 respondents choice.

Question number 7 asked for other communication channels that were not mentioned before and it got one answer which is the management groups.

Question number 8 was *How well these communication channels work in the Ministry?*

The respondents could grade the following channels: *e-mail, telephone, intranet, face-to-face talking, meetings* and *coffee breaks*. The descriptions for the grade were: *very badly, quite badly, satisfactorily, good* and *very good*.

21 answered that e-mail is working good and 4 answered that it is working satisfactorily. It seems that e-mail is widely used and that there are almost no complaints about it.

18 answered that telephone is working good. Telephone was also quite widely used and it seems to be working as a communication tool, though 2 answered that it is working quite badly and 6 that it is working satisfactorily.

The intranet seems to be working good as well. 13 answered that it is working good and 5 answered that it is working very good. 7 answered that it is working satisfactorily.

Face-to-face talking was used quite much in the Ministry, 6 says it is working very good, 9 says it is working good and 11 says that it is working satisfactorily.

Meetings seem to divide the opinions somewhat; 14 thought that meetings are working good, 1 thought it is working very good but 9 answered that meetings are working satisfactorily and 3 says they are working quite badly.

Coffee breaks were not so popular communication tool but it seems to work somewhat good since 16 thinks it is working good and 8 thinks it is working satisfactorily.

Question number 9 asked: *Is there any other communication channels in the Ministry and what grade would you give to them?*

Questions number 7 and 9 were open questions about other communication channels in the Ministry that were not mentioned earlier. These questions gathered opinions from two respondents. Management groups were mentioned as an important tool of communication. Also it was criticised what is not a good tool for internal communication.

“Management groups are an important tool for movement of information. Especially it is necessary to support that heads of departments and chiefs of units would inform forward their own departments or units in their own meetings”.

“The information sessions held two times a year by the Minister and social media are not proper channels for internal communication”.

5.5 Internal communication inside a department or unit

Questions number 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 covers the topic of internal communication inside one's department or unit. The questions ask a grade for the internal communication in one's department or unit, why that grade is given, communication channels that are used inside one's department or unit and how to improve internal communication in one's departments or unit.

Question number 10 was *What grade would you give for your own department's or unit's internal communication?*

Like the work related well-being questionnaire from 2011 also suggested, employees were quite happy about internal communication inside their own department or unit. The grades were *very bad, bad, satisfactory, good* and *very good*. 17 gave the grade good, 3 gave very good. 5 gave the grade satisfactory and 2 gave the grade bad.

Question number 11 *Why?* related to question number 10 *What grade would you give for your own department's or unit's internal communication?* and it was an open question asking the reasons for the grade that respondents had just given for their department's or unit's internal communication. The answers divided to both negative reasons where there are something to improve, and to positive reasons where there are something to learn from.

Here are quotations of the negative reasons and the themes that they cover;

“Because information moves here at manager level the officials do not necessarily get the information that they need. Managers are too busy to share information with their departments or units”,

“Information does not move downwards from the managers and lot of information is not shared. Also information needed for decision making is withheld. Open conversation is missing”,

“Newest employees have not yet learned to share the information with the right people”,

“Others share information better than the rest. It is considered that one’s own work or matters does not interest or belong to others, when in reality many tasks are linked to each other. Sharing information is considered as a threat to one’s position”,

The negative reasons clearly covered the subjects of information not moving downwards from the manager level, information is withheld for some reasons and open conversation is missing.

And here are quotations of the positive reasons and themes that they cover;

“We have a unit meeting every week where information is shared with everyone. We also share information by e-mail to more people than it is even necessary. The working culture of the unit supports open sharing of information and cooperation”,

“Open atmosphere”,

“We have started to pay more attention to the matter and the situation has improved some”,

“Small unit where the information moves”,

“The internal communication of the department has improved lately because of e.g. centralising the handling of post. Also unit- and department meetings work better in the improved operations model. Unit meetings with smaller group are good for discussing something more specifically and department meetings are better for broader subjects”,

“It is easy to approach people and someone has always time to give advice”,

“Physical closeness of offices in the same corridor. Unaffected and open interaction with personnel of the unit”,

“Unaffected atmosphere professionally as well as interpersonal relations are very important element for my unit’s/department’s communication. Also high-grade and enthusiastic work culture. This way communication happens very informally, spontaneously and giving an additional value for everyone”,

“A lot of natural and unofficial face-to-face communication at coffee and lunch breaks. We also have sufficient amount of internal meetings with the unit”,

Positive subjects are work culture that supports open sharing of information, open and unaffected atmosphere, paying attention to internal communication and making efforts to improve it. Also physical closeness of offices matters.

Question number 12 asked *How much are the following communication channels used in your own unit’s or department’s internal communication?*

The respondents could grade the following communication channels: *e-mail, telephone, intranet, face-to-face talking, meetings and coffee breaks*. The grades that can be given for the communication channels are *very little, little, some, quite much* and *very much*.

The most used ones are e-mail and face-to-face talking. They both gathered 13 *very much* answers, 11 *quite much* answers and 3 *some* answers. Also meetings were among the most used ones with 5 *very much* answers, 15 *quite much* answers and 6 *some* answers.

Coffee breaks were also quite popular with 4 *very much* answers, 10 *quite much* answers, and 7 *some* answers. Telephone was not that much used, it gathered 1 *very much* answer, 3 *quite much* answers and 13 *some* answers. The intranet was clearly not very popular in unit’s or department’s internal communication. It got 2 *very much* answers, 4 *quite much* answers and 4 *some* answers.

I wanted to clarify with a question 13 *Other communication channels that are used inside your own department or unit and how much are they used?*

This open question gathered the following communication channels: common e-mail, meetings between the head of the department and chiefs of the units, meetings that are held every week with the unit, a Friday letter from the chief of the unit which gathers the past and upcoming duties and a strategy seminar held by the unit.

Question number 14 was *How do you think your own unit's or department's internal communication could be improved?*

I made six hypotheses of the improvements that could be made and the respondent could choose the best alternatives in his or her opinion. The hypotheses were: *to put some persons in charge of communication, guidelines for communication, more weekly meetings, more e-mail, more announcements to the intranet and to set a unit's or department's own page to the intranet.*

Clearly the most popular improvement would be to set guidelines for communication; this was the opinion of 15 respondents. The next suitable improvement would be to put some persons in charge for communication in 8 people's opinion.

More announcements to intranet and to set a unit's or department's own page to intranet got both 5 respondents' support. More weekly meetings got 4 votes and more e-mail got only 2 votes.

Question number 15 *Other ways to improve your own department's/unit's internal communication?* was an open question asking for the respondents' own views about improving their department's or unit's internal communication.

The responsibility of internal communication was a topic also in the open questions; "To name a head of the information department to the Media and Communications Unit. He/she would answer for the daily communication and divide duties inside the unit",

“Improving the work culture into more open direction. Managers should be in charge of sharing the information with their subordinates”,

“Everyone are responsible for sharing information and learning open teamwork”.

One theme was getting sufficient amount of information and sharing of information;

“For an ordinary official it is essential that he/she gets sufficient amount of information relating to his/her work. Other information is irrelevant. In my own department the situation is good, I don’t see anything specific to improve. We don’t need more weekly meetings etc. Also there is no need for more bureaucracy because of communication”,

“Organisational reform is not yet finished so any of the mentioned is not a direct solution for this changing situation. Work culture is the core of communication and that departs from everyone’s own desk; if the matter might interest someone should I share it forward, despite the haste...”

“The head of the department or unit should highlight the importance of sharing information. All the current matters should be gone through with everyone in the unit meetings”,

“Weekly meetings and mutual communication”,

“Meetings related to current matters whenever it is necessary”,

“Communication and sharing information is the core of a matter”.

Common practices and working manners is one improvement idea;

“One good improvement would be so called “good practices” that could be discussed together. For example we have a project in our unit that relates to work culture and work manners and also effects to communication and to meeting practices positively”.

Also these opinions arose from the topic;

“I strongly think that every person’s personality has a strong significance in communication”,

“Communication is a matter which importance everyone knows. Its meaning and good communication practices are something that everyone has to assimilate themselves. In

any case it does not improve communication that “guidelines are made”, “persons are set in charge of communication”, “another portal or web pages are set”.

5.6 Communication between departments or units

Questions from 16 to 24 were about communication between departments or units. Questions number 16, 17, 18 handled the quality of communication between departments or units in general and the possible reasons for problems in the communication.

Questions number 19, 20, 21 handled the departments and units with what the communication seems to be most pleasant and effortless. They also ask for the reasons for that and the communication channels used with those departments.

Questions number 22, 23, 24 handled those departments with what the communications seems to be somewhat difficult, the reasons for this and the communication channels used with these departments.

5.6.1 Information movement between departments and units

I wanted to clarify with a question 16 what the informants think about the information flow between departments and units. *How do you think that information moves between departments and units? Generally informed matters and co-operation situations between departments and units.*

In this question the respondent could choose his/her opinion from *poorly, quite poorly, satisfactorily, good or very good.*

There seems to be some dissatisfaction with communication between departments and units since 6 answered quite poorly and 14 answered satisfactorily. 6 answered good and only 1 answered very good.

I also wanted to know what kind of problems there might be in the flow of information with the question 17. *What could be the reasons for possible problems in communication between departments and units?*

In this question I made 7 hypotheses of the possible problems and respondents could give their opinion about the matters. The hypotheses were: *communication channels, personal chemistry, too much work and too busy, communication is not part of one's duties, don't know how to communicate, there are no guidelines for communication and do not know what channels to use for communication.* The answer options were: *not at all a reason, a little bit a reason, somewhat a reason, a lot of a reason and very much a reason.*

The biggest reason for communication problems between departments and units according to this question seems to be “do not know how to communicate”. 3 answered that it is very much a reason, 10 answered it is a lot of a reason, 8 answered it is somewhat a reason.

The second biggest reason is “too much work and too busy”. 1 answered it is very much a reason, 10 answered it is a lot of a reason and 10 answered it is somewhat a reason.

“Communication is not part of one's duties” is somewhat a reason and 1 answered it is very much a reason, 7 answered it is a lot of a reason, 6 answered it is somewhat a reason. “Personal chemistry” is also somewhat a reason for communication problems between departments and units since 1 answered it is very much a reason, 5 answered it is a lot of a reason and 14 answered it is somewhat a reason. Also “there are no guidelines for communication” is somewhat a reason since 1 answered it is very much a reason, 5 answered it is a lot of a reason and 10 answered it is somewhat a reason.

“Communication channels” were a little bit a reason, 3 answered it was a lot of a reason, 9 answered it is somewhat a reason. Also “do not know what channels to use for communication” was a little bit a reason. 1 answered it is a lot of a reason, 10 answered it is somewhat a reason.

Question number 18 asked: *Other reasons and what grade would you give to them?*

This was an open question and it gathered the following answers;

“Work culture does not support sharing of information”,

“The difference of work cultures between units. Not everyone understands that they are doing a common work. The grade for working culture 7”,

“The information is wanted to keep of one’s own”,

“Knowledge is power so information is withheld”,

“Inconsideration, everyone can’t think that information is important for different target groups”.

5.6.2 Good communication between departments and units

I wanted to clarify what kind of differences or similarities in communication there are between departments or units with question 19 *With which departments or units communication works most fluently in your opinion? General mutual communication and communication in co-operation situations.*

Unfortunately I can not reveal this question’s results because it would be unfair to the departments and units. Albeit the answers support the results of the reverse question number 22.

Question number 20 *Why communication seems to work better with these departments and units?* was an open question. It seemed that respondents didn’t have so many specific reasons for the feeling of good communication. The reason was more that they just happen to have the most of co-operation with these departments and units and that is why the communication works the best way with them. Here are some of the answers:

“Maybe it is the nature of the work; mostly with these units I have mutual things to take care of”,

“With those it works best whom I am the most in contact with”,

“It is not possible to answer to this question. With these I do the most of co-operation”.

Also the fact that the people who you communicate with are known to you seems to help the communication process;

“Because we used to be part of this department the matters are such that they still concern us”,

“Because of the people I have worked with. I think that communication works with any department/unit/person as long as there is willingness to it”,

“We used to be part of this department and I know the persons. In addition the Administration Unit uses the intranet a lot and we have lots of matters together and a few meetings where is a person from each department present. Cooperation works”,

“Personnel from Media and Communications Unit are communication specialists. With Administration Policy Unit and Resource Policy Unit we have a lot of co-operation. Knowing people”.

Also these interesting opinions arose;

“The department informs actively and the persons are such, that they keep their colleagues updated”,

“The importance of communication is understood and communication is taken part of the preparation of matters early enough”,

“A mutual e-mail works very good”,

“It is impossible to pick up any department or unit in a positive or negative light”.

The fluency of the communication and the use of different channels were asked for with the question 21. *What communication channels do you mainly use with those departments and units with what the communication works most fluently?*

In this question I gathered the following communication channels: *e-mail, telephone, intranet, face-to-face talking, meetings, coffee breaks* and *other, what* option. The respondent could pick 1-3 communication channels.

E-mail was clearly the most used, 26 respondents thinking this way. The next most used channel is face-to-face talking with 20 choices. Telephone got 16 choices. Meetings got only 5 choices and intranet got 4. Nobody voted for coffee breaks or the other, what option.

5.6.3 Poor communication with departments and units

I wanted to find out if there is something to improve the communication and why. Questions 22 *In your opinion with which departments and units there is something to improve with communication?* 23 *Why there would be something to improve?* and 24 *What communication channels do you mainly use with those departments or units with what there would be something to improve with the communication?* were measuring these things.

Unfortunately I can not reveal the results of the question 22 because it would be unfair to different departments and units. Like mentioned before, the results supports the reverse question number 19.

Question 23 was an open question. The most of the answers suggested that there should be more cooperation and communication, information should be available early enough and there should be more informing about current matters.

“There is lot to improve as a whole. There should be more cooperation and communication”,

“It would be good to get information early enough about things that are under preparation. So that you don’t have to read about them from the newspaper the first time you hear about them”,

“These units have central and common matters under their responsibility but it is difficult to get information about the matters or then the information comes mainly as an action request”,

“There should be more informing”,

“It feels like these departments don’t really inform about their matters e.g. in Oiva”,

“Cooperation should be continuous and more anticipatory”.

Also these answers arose:

“Maybe the common e-mail should be used more flexibly, so that the official has the time needed for taking care of the task and the time doesn’t go to bureaucratic handling of the e-mail...”

“They are functioning too independently”.

In the question 24 I listed the same communication channels as in question 21. The communication channels are *e-mail, telephone, intranet, face-to-face talking, meetings, coffee breaks* and *other, what* option. Again the respondent could choose 1-3 communication channels.

E-mail was mainly used 21 respondents thinking so. Telephone was the next most used communication channel with 14 votes. The third place divided to face-to-face talking and meetings, both having 7 votes. Clearly the intranet and coffee breaks were the least popular ones. Other, what got 2 votes but the respondents did not tell what the communication channel was.

5.7 Insufficient communication

Questions number 25 *Does possible insufficient or poor quality communication disturbs your work?* and 26 *How poor quality or insufficient communication disturbs your work?* were about poor and insufficient communication and how it disturbs working.

Respondents could choose from *not at all, a little bit, somewhat, much* and *very much*.

Poor quality communication disturbs somewhat working, 1 thought it disturbs very much, 2 thought it disturbs much, 13 thought it disturbs somewhat. From the respondents 9 thought it disturbs a little bit and 2 thought it does not disturb at all.

Question number 26 was an open question and all the answers concerned about getting information. Here are the quotations from the answers.

“The information needed is not available or then there is too much information about matters that are not needed”,

“There is no time to prepare matters that are under my responsibility because I hear about the matters in the last minute”,

“Sometimes I hear about things that are related to my work too late”,

“Getting current information would increase impressiveness because then matters that are under preparation could be linked together and this would make the whole operations of the ministry more consistent”,

“It is difficult to get things done in time when communication does not work”,

“The question is especially getting the information for the need of communication, though this has improved significantly in recent years”,

“Sometimes there are no information about current matters when there should be”,

“Shortcomings in internal communication and in the flow of information weaken the trust for organisation’s ability to function; if I missed this matter, will the next and the next after that go past? In practise the insufficient information flow causes too much so called ad hoc situations, though these situations will always come even if the information moves fluently”,

“There are too urgent commissions when people don’t realize to inform and ask about matters in time”,

“I am not always aware about all the matters that influence my tasks and then it gets difficult to control the whole”,

“The preparation process of the matters and documents that I am responsible for is too heavy. There is a risk that the content does not take all the point of views into consideration”,

“The preparation of matters suffers somewhat if information doesn’t move. In this case it is a waste of time to look for alternative methods”.

Question number 27 *Thank you for your time! Other comments about internal communication inside the ministry* was an open question which gathered the following few answers:

“The ministry needs a development program for internal communication which would make the personnel responsible for communication and it would take care that the communication channels are functioning”,

“I think that the internal communication is working well enough. For increasing communication there is no need to create new and difficult operations models. Communication channels exist already. And it shouldn’t even be the aim that everybody would be updated about all the matters all the time”,

“This is a field of know-how that should be improved everywhere in the organisation. And everyone should be responsible for clear communication of their own matters”,

“In its entirety it is relatively good!”

6 What the results tell

In this chapter I will go through the results of the questionnaire more deeply and try to find similarities from the answers of the questionnaire. The similarities then are most likely real problems or observations because they recur. The similarities of the answers can be typical features for public administration, or they can be real problems, whether there is something to improve or not.

Like mentioned before, I got 27 answers out of 145 employees. Employees from the Administration Policy Department and from Resource Policy Departments gave most of the answers, Media and Communications Unit, Defence Policy Department and Administration Unit gave all almost the same amount of answers. There were only two answers from the Secretariat of the Security and Defence Committee and no answers from the Auditing Unit or from the Legal Unit. Even though the number of replies from different units and departments differ much and even though the answering percentage is not very high, the themes of the answers are very similar and reflect a certain view of opinions. Therefore I think that the survey gave good answers and important aspects to think about.

6.1 Satisfaction of internal communication

Like the work-related wellbeing questionnaire suggested, the level of satisfaction of overall internal communication of the Ministry is quite good. Most of the respondents gave the grade *quite good* for internal communication. The grade for internal communication in the respondents' own department or unit was good.

Like the work-related wellbeing questionnaire also suggested, the level of satisfaction of information movement between departments and units is somewhat unsatisfactory. Most of the respondents thought that information is moving satisfactorily, and six thought that it is moving quite poorly.

6.2 How insufficient communication affects work

The answers revealed that poor quality internal communication disturbs somewhat working. The respondents answered in the open question that the information needed is not available or then there is too much information. The respondents said that they hear about matters in the last minute or too late and therefore it is difficult to get things done in time. Sometimes the respondents were not aware of the information that affects their work. Also the respondents said that the trust for the organisation may weaken when there are recurrent flaws in the internal communication.

6.3 Communication is everybody's duty

According to the answers of the questionnaire employees of the Ministry seems to think that communication is the duty of the chiefs of units and heads of departments. Which is true in that way that they have management group meetings and they should inform their departments and units about current matters. It was said in the answers that the heads of departments and chiefs of departments don't necessarily inform about all the matters, or that they are too busy to inform.

Ministry of Defence (2010, 2) also says that communication and management are combined together and they can't be separated from each other. Modern leading is more and more about communication and this affects both to external and internal communication.

However like Juholin (2008, 25) says communication and informing should be the duties of everyone. Communication is part of professional and business skills for modern intellectual workers regardless of their status. The work cannot be done without communication skills, which means the ability to talk clearly, listen, give feedback and write clearly. Intellectual worker of today should be an active and intelligent employee who communicates in his/her work community and networks. (Juholin 2008, 25.)

I agree that communication is the duty of everyone, the only thing that differs is your status and the different communication duties that it requires. Communication should be maybe taken more seriously in the Ministry and it should be accepted to take time for it.

According to the answers it seems to be that some employees of the Ministry don't inform their matters to others. The respondents' suggested that maybe it is not recognised that the matter has broader significance in the Ministry, even though many tasks and matters are linked to each other. It is also thought that one's own matters and tasks are not others business, or that the matters don't interest others. This is the wrong way to think because it could make other people's work easier if they knew about current matters and unfinished tasks of the Ministry.

Like Juholin says in chapter 3.2 The Objectives and functions of organisational communication, the purpose of communication is to support the operations of the community and be part of making results (Juholin 2009, 42). Also it was said before that the Prime Minister's Office (2010, 21) states that with internal communication it is made sure that the personnel knows the objectives of the operations and the essential information that is needed to do the work.

It seems that the internal communication is not filling its duties in the Ministry since many of the respondents think that important information is missing and it makes working more difficult.

One respondent said that the Ministry also suffers from information overload in the form of excess e-mail. If the information sharing would improve it should be also taken into account that information overload wouldn't occur. The respondent suggested that people should send short briefs about current matters rather than long e-mails with attachments. Then the receiver of the brief would know where the matter is taken care of, and could return to the matter if needed.

It was also said that others share information and communicate better than others. In the questionnaire, the biggest reason for insufficient internal communication in the whole Ministry was the reason, *don't know how to communicate*. Maybe the Ministry would need more guidelines for communication and some common instructions? It was suggested in the answers that the head of department or chief of unit should emphasize the importance of communication and sharing of information to the employees. These matters could be discussed together in the department or unit and maybe some good tips and ideas could be found, which would suit for the department or unit in question.

Everyone should first of all understand the importance of communication and take the responsibility of personal communication and information sharing. Probably these matters are just not clear to everyone and some training or discussion would help. Also the heads of departments and chiefs of units should take communication as an important task, if they already haven't, because they have the access to management group meetings and important information is shared through those.

6.4 Hurry and routines

The second biggest reason for insufficient communication in the whole Ministry was the reason of having too much work and being too busy. If the person is too busy to inform others or forward relevant information it can affect, slow down or even stop other people's work. It was said in the answers that there is so much routine work that sometimes it doesn't even come to mind that it would be important to inform about some matter. It was also said that the chiefs are too busy to share information.

Therefore the answers revealed that being too busy and having too much work affects communication. Especially it affects when a person should inform about current matters or matters that are under preparation to other units or departments. The value of communication is not seen when a person is only thinking about the results of his/her own work although communication is a way to improve the common work and the mutual goal of the Ministry.

Communication should be considered as an important routine work as well. It is important for other people's work and for the operations of the Ministry. Time should be given also for communication duties despite the hurry.

Juholin (2008, 34) says that in the other side of being creative are the demands of being effective and gaining results. It is emphasised that we should be cost efficient which is measured with the time we use for the work and with other resources; time is money. Less and less time is given for creativity and to the time that it requires. There seems to be too little time also for learning and adapting new information. (Juholin 2008, 34.)

I experienced during the work placement period in the Ministry that in my unit there was time and space also for my own thoughts. The superior had given everybody the chance to go for a walk, to the gym or do other own routines if it made the work day more pleasant and if it was not busy otherwise. I think that this kind of allowed freedom gives space also for communication and to the fact that even a thought about informing a matter would come to mind.

Juholin (2008, 34) also says that many people feel guilty after spending free time in the office, walking in the town, going to a book store or talking to a colleague. Yet it is known that creativity comes in surprising situations without trying; when running, in the sauna, when cleaning or sleeping. Sometimes something has to be left undone in order to give space for something new. (Juholin 2008, 34.)

6.5 Knowing people

Also personal chemistry and knowing people came out as problems in the internal communication. Could it be that knowing people, also from outside your own department or unit, helps in communication and also in the preparation of matters?

Question number 21 asks what communication channels the respondent is mainly using with the departments and units with what the communication is working most fluently. Question number 24 is asking what communication channel the respondent is mainly using with departments and units with what the communication works poorly.

The biggest difference in the answers is that face-to-face talking is used much more with those departments and units with what the communication is working most fluently, 20 against 7 answers. Could it be that it refers to knowing people? When you know someone better you are likely to talk face-to-face with that person. And then the experience of communication is positive and fluent.

Also Juholin (2008, 79) said in chapter 3.5.1 Semi-official forums, that when people are acquainted with each other also work goes better and creativity is increased. Maybe common events could help to know people more. Or meetings that handle broader contexts could help to break the ice and remind that matters should be informed to these people. If it is not possible or meaningful to have more common events or more meetings, it could at least be stated that these are important for the work community. And in that way they are also important for the communication and for preparing different matters in the Ministry.

I think it would be also interesting to concretely follow what the other department or unit is doing, the work of a specialist or an official and to get to know your colleagues more better.

6.6 Work culture

The question of work culture came out many times from the open answers of the questionnaire. It seems that many of the employees think that the work culture of the Ministry does not support open sharing of information. It was said that knowledge is wanted to keep as one's own information and that sharing of knowledge is seen as a threat to one's position, unfinished matters are not informed and that open conversation is missing. It was also said that the old work culture did not support the sharing of information and openness, but that a new and reformed work culture is beginning to form.

Like it was said in chapter 3.1 Generally about organisational communication, the classical theories can be seen in the modern world in hierarchical structures, in bureaucracy and in military organisations (Miller 2003, 4-5, 11-13, 16-23). I think that

the old hierarchical model is present in the Ministry of Defence, like it is usually in public administration.

It came out many times in the answers that the Ministry is a hierarchy and that information moves at management level. It can be that the hierarchical structure of the Ministry, old traditions and old work culture still affects to the communication and information movement of the Ministry.

According to Juholin (2008, 48) open conversation culture and the possibility and courage to express yourself, be who you are and to be accepted as you are builds and strengthens the community. Uncertainty makes you shape your thoughts for too long until the matter is already closed (Juholin 2008, 48).

Juholin (2008, 48) says that communality is seen especially in small family and entrepreneurial companies and communities where they have managed to create the feeling of common work and clear goal where they are going. The same phenomenon can be seen anywhere, even in a unit or a team or a project of a big company (Juholin 2008, 48).

It came out from the answers that some units have unique and functioning work culture that supports open sharing of information and communication. Those respondents were happy about the communication inside own department or unit. It was said that if the work culture is good, the communication happens informally, spontaneously and bringing extra value to everyone. It was said that unaffected atmosphere both professionally and personally is an important element for the communication of a unit or a department.

This supports Juholin's theory about energizing and careless work communities that were introduced in chapter 3.3 Work community. Those respondents that described that the work culture of their unit or department was functioning well, seem to have an energizing work community.

Everybody should understand that the Ministry is reaching to a common goal and that communication helps in the process. Of course if the feeling of communal work culture is missing it will affect to the work and to the openness and the sharing of information.

6.7 Communication channels

According to the answers communication channels were not a reason for poor quality internal communication but the respondents were happy about them.

E-mail is clearly the most used communication channel of the Ministry, and the second is face-to-face talking. Third most used channels are telephone, intranet and meetings. It is interesting that face-to-face talking is much used channel but according to the questionnaire telephone and intranet seem to be working better than that.

It is also interesting that face-to-face talking is much used communication channel with those departments and units with what the communication is functioning well. But face-to-face talking is not much used channel with those departments and units with what there is something to improve with the communication.

The improvement suggestions from the respondents were a common e-mail to the use of the department or unit, weekly meetings with the unit where current matters are discussed and a Friday letter from the head of department or chief of the unit where he/she would tell about past tasks, current tasks and upcoming tasks etc. Also informing in the intranet was listed as one improvement suggestion. Management groups are an important channel but the chiefs and heads should inform more better about the matters to their units and departments. Also meetings between head of department and chiefs of units and strategy seminars were mentioned.

7 Conclusion

In this chapter I will tell my conclusion about the questionnaire and the answers of the questionnaire. I will also briefly introduce the learning outcome of this research and some new research questions.

7.1 The questionnaire

The questionnaire worked quite well because I got some valuable information and good answers, many respondent even answered to the open questions.

It might be that 27 questions were too much for the survey. People don't feel like answering to overlong questionnaires (Yhteiskuntatieteellinen tietoaarkisto 2010). However I got 27 all the way filled answer sheets therefore I cannot tell how the questionnaire felt for the respondents. I think that the questions were simple enough and it wasn't too time consuming to fill the questionnaire.

Questions in the questionnaire are in a logical order and then the questionnaire is also easier to answer to (Yhteiskuntatieteellinen tietoaarkisto 2010). The questions are in order according to themes but it would have been good to also write down the headlines of the themes to the questionnaire. I think that some of the questions might have been confusing because of the similarity to other questions but marking the themes would have helped to understand the structure of the questionnaire better.

7.2 The answers

The results of most of the scale and tick box questions showed the same direction of opinions in the answers, thus I think the answers are quite reliable. Of course it would be interesting to see would the results be the same if it would be possible to have answers from the entire personnel.

Also the answers of the open questions have clearly the same themes, which tell that there are some common problems in the communication and in the work culture. It

can be that those problems are just typical for public administration or especially for the Ministry of Defence.

7.3 The learning outcome

Personally I learned a lot more about communication in general and especially about organisational communication. I also learned that public administration can have more special communication culture than other organisations because of its hierarchical and traditional features. Also the interest groups differ from other organisations, public administration's biggest interest groups is the citizens and their opinion should be taken into consideration. Communication is also special, because the citizens have the right to be informed about public matters.

7.4 New research questions

A new research topic could be a wider comparison of communication in the public and private sectors. In the context of the Ministry of Defence a new research question could be how the new reform has been communicated to the personnel. Is it communicated well, is it communicated according to the guidelines of Prime Minister's Office? Or a new research topic could be to examine the work cultures and work communities of the Ministry more deeply and to find the reasons for good and bad work culture and work community.

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Attachments

Attachment 1. Questionnaire

Kysely puolustusministeriön sisäisestä viestinnästä

1. Osasto tai erillisyksikkö johon kuulut

Viestintäyksikkö VI

Puolustuspoliittinen osasto PO

Hallintopoliittinen osasto HO

Resurssipoliittinen osasto RO

Hallintoyksikkö HA

Tarkastusyksikkö TA

Turvallisuus- ja puolustusasiain komitean sihteeristö TPAK

Lainvalmisteluyksikkö LA

2. Sukupuoli

nainen

mies

3. Miten PLM:n sisäinen viestintä ja tiedonkulku mielestäsi toimivat

Yleisarvosana ja ensimmäinen mielikuva yleisestä viestinnästä ja kommunikaatiosta PLM:ssä, myös osastojen/erillisyksikköiden kesken sekä oman osastosi/erillisyksikkösi sisällä

1-kehnosti

2-tydyttävästi

3-melko hyvin

4-hyvin

5-erinomaisesti

4. Jos PLM:n sisäinen viestintä on joskus huonolaatuista, niin mitkä seikat saattavat olla siihen syynä? (ei ollenkaan syynä, vähän syynä, jonkin verran syynä, paljon syynä, erittäin paljon syynä)

viestintäkanavat

henkilökemiat

liikaa työtä, liian kiire

viestintä ei kuulu tehtäviin
osaamattomuus viestiä
ei ole annettu ohjeistusta viestintään
ei tiedetä mitä kautta viestiä

5. Muita syitä, mitä

6. Mitä viestintäkanavia käytät eniten

Valitse 1-3 eniten käyttämäsi

sähköposti
puhelin
Oiva
kasvotusten puhuminen
kokoukset/palaverit
kahvihuone tms. vapaa-aika

7. Muu, mikä

8. Miten seuraavat viestintäkanavat mielestäsi toimivat PLM:ssä?

(erittäin huonosti, melko huonosti, tyydyttävästi, hyvin, erittäin hyvin)

sähköposti
puhelin
Oiva
kasvotusten puhuminen
kokoukset/palaverit
kahvihuone tms. vapaa-aika

9. Tuleeko mieleesi muita viestintäkanavia ja minkä arvosanan antaisit niille?

10. Minkä arvosanan antaisit oman osastosi/erillisyksikkösi sisäiselle viestinnälle ja sen toimivuudelle?

erittäin huono
huono
tydyttävä
hyvä

erittäin hyvä

11. Miksi

12. Miten paljon seuraavia viestintäkanavia käytetään oman osastosi/erillisyksikkösi sisäiseen viestintään?

(erittäin vähän, vähän, jonkin verran, melko paljon, paljon)

sähköposti

puhelin

Oiva

kasvotusten puhuminen

kokoukset/palaverit

kahvihuone tms. vapaa-aika

13. Muita viestintäkanavia osastosi/erillisyksikkösi sisällä ja paljonko niitä käytetään

14. Miten oman osaston/erillisyksikön sisäistä viestintää voisi mielestäsi parantaa?

joitain henkilöitä vastuuseen viestinnästä

ohjausta viestintään

lisää viikkokouksia yms.

lisää sähköpostia

lisää tiedotteita Oivaan

Oivaan oma sivu omalle osastolle/erillisyksikölle

15. Muita keinoja parantaa oman osaston/erillisyksikön sisäistä viestintää

16. Miten tieto mielestäsi kulkee osastojen ja erillisyksiköiden välillä?

(tieto kulkee – huonosti, melko huonosti, tyydyttävästi, hyvin, erittäin hyvin)

17. Mikä mahdollisiin tiedonkulun ongelmiin osastojen/erillisyksiköiden välillä voisi mielestäsi olla syynä

(ei syynä, vähän syynä, jonkin verran syynä, paljon syynä, erittäin paljon syynä)

viestintäkanavat

henkilökemia
liikaa työtä, liian kiire
viestintä ei kuulu tehtäviin
osaamattomuus viestiä
ei ole annettu ohjeistusta viestintään
ei tiedetä mitä kautta viestiä

18. Muita syitä ja minkä arvosanan antaisit niille

**19. Minkä osastojen tai erillisyksiköiden kanssa viestintä toimii mielestäsi
sujuvimmin**

viestintäyksikkö VI
puolustuspoliittinen osasto PO
hallintopoliittinen osasto HO
resurssipoliittinen osasto RO
hallintoyksikkö HA
tarkastusyksikkö TA
turvallisuus- ja puolustusasiain komitean sihteeristö TPAK
lainvalmisteluyksikkö LA

20. Minkä takia viestintä tuntuu sujuvalta näiden osastojen kanssa?

**21. Mitä viestintäkanavia pääsääntöisesti käytät niiden osastojen tai
erillisyksiköiden kanssa, joiden kanssa viestintä toimii mielestäsi sujuvimmin?**

sähköposti
puhelin
Oiva
kasvotusten puhuminen
kokoukset/palaverit
kahvihuone tms. vapaa-aika
muu, mikä

Avoimet vastaukset: muu, mikä

22. Minkä osastojen tai erillisyksiköiden kanssa viestinnässä olisi mielestäsi parantamisen varaa

viestintäyksikkö VI
puolustuspoliittinen osasto PO
hallintopoliittinen osasto HO
resurssipoliittinen osasto RO
hallintoyksikkö HA
tarkastusyksikkö TA
turvallisuus- ja puolustusasiain komitean sihteeristö TPAK
lainvalmisteluyksikkö LA

23. Miksi olisi parantamisen varaa

24. Mitä viestintäkanavia pääsääntöisesti käytät niiden osastojen tai erillisyksiköiden kanssa, joiden kanssa viestinnässä olisi parantamisen varaa

sähköposti
puhelin
Oiva
kasvotusten puhuminen
kokoukset/palaverit
kahvihuone tms. vapaa-aika
muu, mikä

Avoimet vastaukset: muu, mikä

25. Häiritseekö mahdollinen puutteellinen viestintä työtäsi

(ei ollenkaan, vähän, jonkin verran, paljon, erittäin paljon)

26. Miten huono tai puutteellinen viestintä häiritsee työtäsi

27. Kiitos ajastasi! Muita kommentteja PLM:n sisäisestä viestinnästä