

# **Change Communication Impact to the Commitment of the Employees**

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<p><b>Abstract</b></p> <p>The objective for this study is to find out how the change in the business model and the communication during that change has impacted to the commitment of the employees in the Company. The Company is functioning in ICT (Information and Communication Technology) field and specializes to produce Services and Devices for both commercial and consumer customers. In the study, the commitment of the employees is measured through semi-structured interviews conducted to a selected group of employees in the target organization.</p> <p>The theoretical framework contains Internal Communication Matrix, Employee Commitment to Change (C2C), Three-Component Model and Trust, Manager-Employee relationship, Role autonomy, Turnover Intentions and Learning. In addition, Employee Communication Model (SECM) and Five Message Components are discussed.</p> <p>The commitment of the employees is measured with inductive qualitative research method through the semi-structured interviews to the selected group of employees in the target organization. The researcher made also observations about the change communication.</p> <p>The results indicate that the employees are satisfied with the level of communication during the change and they are committed to the organization. The improvement are described to be in understanding the impact of the change to the role of the employees, in the amount of communication and also in the possibilities to learn and develop in the role in the future.</p>	
<p><b>Key words</b> Change Management, Change Communications, Employee Commitment, Qualitative Research, Business Model Change, Case Study</p>	

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## Terminology

<b>ICM</b>	International Communication Matrix
<b>ICC</b>	Internal Corporate Communications
<b>C2C</b>	Commitment to Change
<b>AC</b>	Affective Commitment
<b>CC</b>	Continuance Commitment
<b>NC</b>	Normative Commitment
<b>AC2C</b>	Affective Commitment to Change
<b>CC2C</b>	Continuance Commitment to Change
<b>NC2C</b>	Normative Commitment to Change
<b>SECM</b>	Strategic Employee Communication Model

# 1 Introduction

The reason for this study is to find out how the change in the business model impacts employee commitment inside a multinational organization. Through this study, the researcher is aspiring to offer to the organization information on how to improve the change communications in the future and give details on the current situation and status of the communication.

The inspiration for this study has been gained from witnessing the change inside of the sponsor organization. The change has been initiated to adjust better to the overall company strategy that was reformed in the year 2013. Based on the overall strategy change, also the sponsor organization started the transformation and launched a project to introduce the new business model during the year 2014.

The aim of the study is to understand better how one organization inside a multinational company reflects this change from the employee perspective and also to ensure that the feedback from the employees is delivered to the management of the organization to initiate possible future improvements if needed. The qualitative interviews for the study were conducted four weeks after a major milestone in the organization's business model change was reached and the new setup was launched in a larger scale.

The company is dependent on its employees but at the same time, change is necessary for companies to keep up in the competition. This is why it is important to ensure that the employees are feeling positive about the change initiatives. The changes are made to maintain the company competitiveness in the market environment but it is important to ensure that the employees will stay committed to the company during and after the change and do not disengage from the goals of the change initiative.

There are several studies conducted on employee commitment and the factors impacting to commitment. For example, the study conducted by Avey et al. (2008, 64) suggests that positive emotions and positive psychological capital of the employees are important when the organization is undergoing a change process. These positive resources can counter the normal negative reactions like cynicism and deviance usually caused by a change. Through this study, the current situation within the subject team can be evaluated and the possible follow-up actions can also be determined if those are needed.

## 1.1 Sponsor Company

The sponsor company for the study is a global Information and Communication Technology (ICT) company, specialized to provide services and devices for both consumers and commercial customers. In this study, the company is called ‘Company’ to comply with the company rules and to respect the privacy of the company. The focus of the company is to create a family of devices and services for individuals and businesses that will empower customers around the globe at home, at work and outside of home, for the activities they value most (Company Shareholder Letter 2013).

Company was founded in 1975. The company has been able to deliver market leading products in its field and to provide the top of class IT software from the foundation throughout the decades. Currently, the company is undergoing a transformation due the changes in the business and the development of the ICT field offering. These changes are requiring the company to undergo a change in its overall business model and in the products and services it provides.

The transformation and the change in the strategy started in 2013. The shift was to focus to Devices and Services instead of packaged software. The reason for the strategy change is to set up the company for long-term profit grow and to adjust to the changes in the business.

In year 2013, the company acquired a large mobile devices unit from another company to focus even more on devices by also manufacturing its own mobile devices. The current strategy is ‘Cloud first, Mobile first’. Mobility means experiences covering wide scale of devices that have been manufactured by the company itself or by other manufacturers. The key for the company is that the software offered for Mobility Experience is built by them. With Cloud the company is concentrating on providing infrastructure to connect the devices and to support the services that are used through the devices.

The current Mission of the company is to enable the businesses and people to realize their full potential. The company is delivering this mission by creating the technology and ensuring that it can be accessed by everyone. The company is a market leader in accessibility innovation and building products that are safer and easier to use (Company Mission Statement. 2015).

## 1.2 The Organization History

The target organization for the study within the sponsor company was founded in 2005 to support the customer and partner focus within the company. The aim of the organization has always been to improve the experience from the customer and partner point of view. The organization gathers feedback via a specific internal portal and the cases submitted by the internal stakeholders to the portal. The feedback received through this portal is addressed with other organizations in the company and fixed if the fix is feasible and supports the business strategy. The mission of the organization is currently “*We advocate for our customers to make Company better. Every day.*”

The organization is global and has representatives almost in all countries where the company has subsidiaries. The organization is divided to three time zones - Americas, Asia-Pacific (APAC) and Europe, Middle-East and Africa (EMEA). Time zones are divided into smaller regions like for example in EMEA to Germany, France, United Kingdom, Western Europe, Middle-East and Africa (MEA) and Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The focus region for this study is Western Europe containing the following subsidiaries: Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Austria, Portugal, Belgium and Luxemburg, The Netherlands, Norway, Finland, Sweden and Denmark and Iceland. The subsidiary (office) locations are showed in the world map below (Figure 1) and marked as red dots.

Office Locations



Figure 1: Office locations for Organization in a map. (Company Internal SharePoint Site, 2015)

During the last six years, the organization has been going through a rapid development to adjust to the changes with the company overall strategy. Six years ago the organization received over 80 percent of the cases from the first tier customer service centres. The aim for the organization was to transition away from this to support more the internal stakeholders inside of the subsidiaries and empower the first tier support centres to answer the questions and address the issues they receive by themselves. This was achieved in two years: after the transition period, over 90 percent of the cases for the organization have been submitted by the internal stakeholders outside of the first tier support.

Another recent change for the organization strategy has been to ensure that the organization is involved with the right issues that have the biggest impact for the customers and partners. The organization positions itself as an exceptional escalation channel that is utilized only when the other appropriate channels are not working.

The change was made to ensure that the employees within the organization would be able to focus their time towards more complex cases that could not be resolved by any other support options. In addition, if the stakeholders within the company would be able to route the simple queries directly to the correct contact option and the end customers would be getting faster and more precise resolutions. This change was also successful and the complexity of the cases has increased. The organization also introduced a model in which the cases that should be routed to a different support group are routed back into a correct support in the dispatching (first) phase and the submitter is educated on how to connect with the correct support path in the future.

To make the organization more efficient regarding systemic issues that are appearing across the regions, a systemic issue approach was also added into the organization. Before the change, the areas handled separately similar cases which lead to duplication of efforts. This change was aimed to address how the organization handles the issues that are having the same root cause and separate similar issues appearing across one area in different subsidiaries or in different time zones. The change enhances the resolution speed and the efficiency of the organization. The systemic issues also need a good amount of evidence to be fixed fully and through this program, the needed evidence is gained.

In Figure 2, the transformation process for the last fiscal year has been demonstrated as a transformation circle. In Company, the fiscal year begins every July and lasts until the end of



June. In the calendar year 2013, in the beginning of the Fiscal Year, the whole company went through a company reorganization and the strategy of the overall company was refined. This caused a need for all business units and organizations within the Company to reconsider how they are contributing to the business of the company and how they can adjust to the change better and how they can support the overall change processes.

In order to support the company better with the repetitive escalations, the organization created a new team that was branded as 'OneTeam'. OneTeam took over the repetitive escalation handling centrally. This team was introduced right after the company re-organization in the beginning of the fiscal year. OneTeam is not focusing into one specific country but to the whole time zone. The aim of this change was to make the organization more efficient and to speed up the resolution time for the issues. The results were positive and the change decreased the resolution time of the cases.

It is worth mentioning that during the introduction of the OneTeam, there was also some concerns raised around centralizing the case handling by the employees of the organization. Some of the local employees also moved into the centralized team and this caused confusion and some change resistance. There was no specific study or a survey done during this time on the change process.

In the beginning of calendar year 2014, the planning for the next fiscal year started and this is when the first decisions around the new business model were made. The employees of the organization were informed about the new business model in August 2014. The new business model is bringing more centralized teams into the organization.

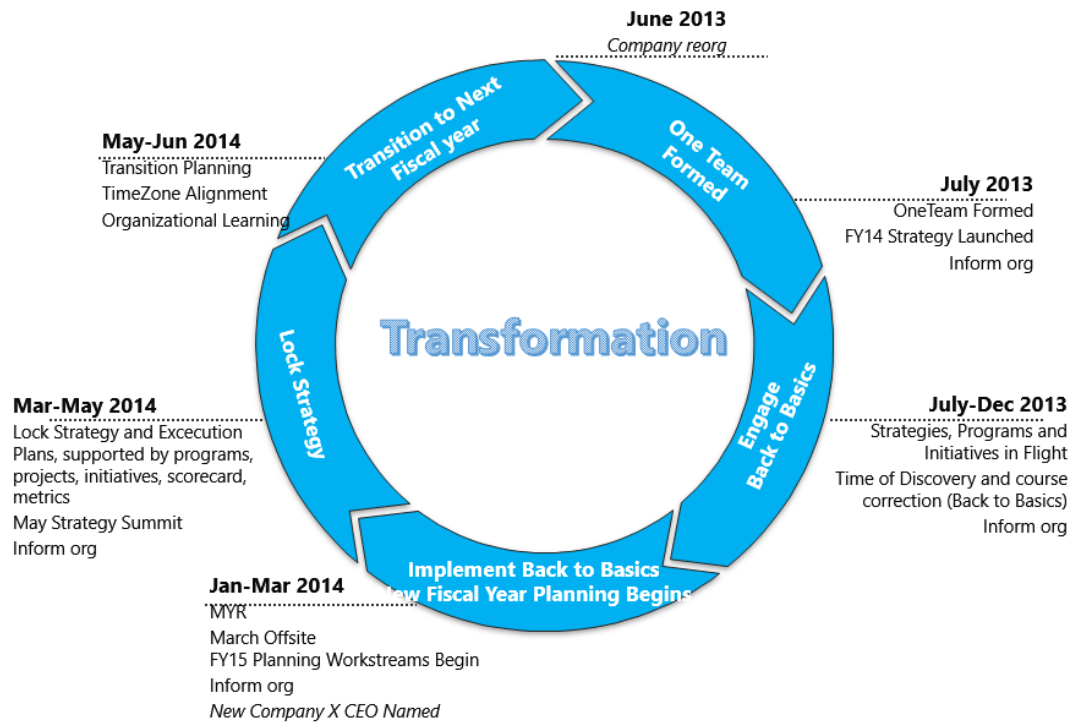


Figure 2: Organization Transformation from Fiscal Year 13 to Fiscal Year 15. (Company Internal SharePoint Site. 2015)

### Organization's Employees and Their Role

The employees of the organization are located within a specific country and depending on their role, either working with the cases coming from the specific country, in an area level or in a global level. There is no official standardized definition for a term knowledge worker but for example Peter Drucker (in Brinkley et al. 2009, 20) explains that a knowledge worker as a person who does abstract tasks, applies knowledge flexibly, has work autonomy and is constantly innovating and learning new. The assessment if the worker is knowledge worker is done based on quality of output. Knowledge workers are seen as organisational assets. Based on this description, all employees within the organization are knowledge workers.

The work contains parts that can be handled from anywhere and parts that require local face-to-face interaction. The work that can be done from any location is the core task of the organization: handling and resolving product, service or process issues which impact Organization X's customers. The business engagement requires face-to-face meetings and discussions with different stakeholders in the local country. This task can be partly done remotely, but the local presence is needed as well. There are as well some projects on-going that require participation from the employees, but this work can also be conducted remotely. The company supports

remote work and flexibility in the work and provides services and products to support mobility and remote work.

### **1.3 The Current Change**

The current change is a continuation for the organization evolution towards a global organization. The leadership team of the organization discovered during the company transformation towards Services and Devices Company that the current model the organization is working with is not the best approach to support the transformation. The employees in the organization located in the subsidiaries across the world were generalists who needed to be able to resolve and understand a wide range of issues related to a large amount of products and services. Due to this, the employees were only able to gather a shallow depth of information about each issue they handled and this made it more challenging to identify the root cause of the issue and fix it fully.

#### **New Business Model**

The change in the organization business model was to form Global Focus Teams that are specializing in a certain service or product. The global focus teams are handling all the cases for their area of expertise and the aim is to make the participants experts within the focus teams to drive faster resolution of the issues and faster identification and fix for the root causes of the issues. When a smaller group within the organization is concentrating in a specific product or service, the information is easier to be combined and shared within the team and also the insights and themes behind the issues are easier to be identified and resolved by closing the loop with the relevant business groups.

When the local aspect is removed and the local employees do not handle all cases themselves as they formerly did, there is more time available for the local teams. If the employees are not part of the global focus team, they need to utilize the time that is made available from handling all the cases that were coming from a specific subsidiary. In the business model change, the time that is freed up is used to concentrate more on the cases which are not going to the global focus teams and also to the trainings and the business engagement in the subsidiary in which the team is located in. The local teams are also supporting the focus teams when there is an urgent case coming in and the local engagement is needed. The Focus Teams are asked to share the business insights with the local team to support their engagement activities. The new business model is also explained in the Figure 3 below.

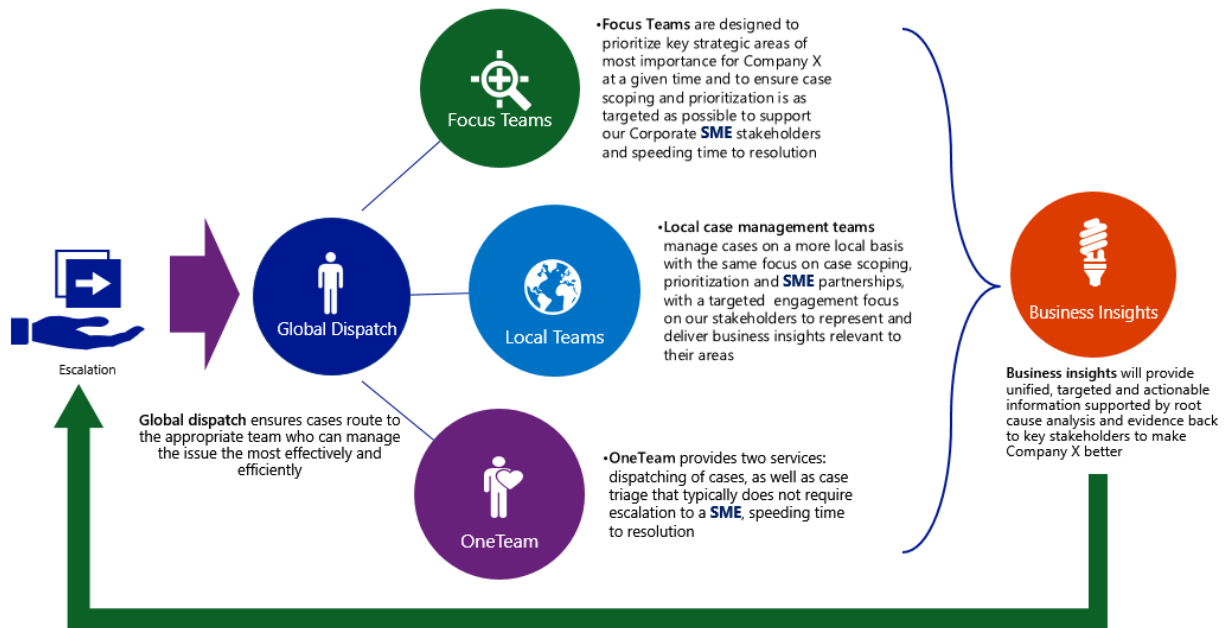


Figure 3: New Business Model Workflow. (Company SharePoint Site. 2015.)

For the employees the impact of the new business model is that they need to either move to the focus teams or stay within the local team. The organization did not gain more headcount for the change. This means that some of the team members in each area needs to move to the focus team to get the new process started.

### The Communication around the Change in the Organization

The change communication about the business model change was started in Autumn 2014 by the Global Leadership of the organization. The decision was made to communicate the change to the employees in the early stages to ensure that the employees would feel engaged from the beginning and could give their feedback and have an opportunity to impact to the change. The change work streams were started right after the business model change was announced. The representatives from each area were also added to the work streams to ensure that the change would have views from the areas taken into consideration in the new processes.

During the work stream lifecycle, the feedback was also gathered from the local teams and the subject was brought up in the conference calls for the whole organization hosted by the Senior Leadership and in the email communications sent by the Senior Leadership. Also the team

leads in the areas kept the topic in the team meeting agenda and in the agenda of the one-to-one discussions with the team members. The new business model documentation was also posted to the internal SharePoint Site of the organization to ensure that the employees would be able to browse the information at any stage of the change.

The communication included the information that the change is a journey and has been honest about that not all aspects and decisions and scenarios have been covered yet and the organization is aiming to learn as the change goes forward. The adjustments to the new process will be done when necessary.

#### **1.4 Research Problem, Goals and Objectives**

This study is motivated by the importance of understanding the impact of the business model change for the employees in the organization and to have more information on how the change communication is received by the employees. The core priority of the organization is the employees. The research problem was discovered while having some discussions with the management of the organization around the change. The business model change impacts to the whole organization and is the biggest change in overall organization history. The change communication strategy was to inform the employees in really early stage of the change to keep them motivated and ensure the feedback flow from the employees during the change.

The objective of this study is to understand how the selected strategy has been working and to discover the concerns that the employees have during the change and to investigate what are the aspects of the change processes that might not have been communicated clearly enough. The aim is to ensure that these possible issues are addressed before the organization gets fully adapted into the change to avoid possible employee disengagement. The employee commitment is used in this study as a measure for finding out how successful the change communication has been so far.

The study focuses only on the change communication and the employee motivation in the current change. The research is done at a specific point within the change time-line to get more information about the need of the communication improvements for the later stages of the change process. The qualitative survey is done a month after the major milestone in the change is achieved. The relationship in a time scale between the change process and the study is explained in Figure 4.

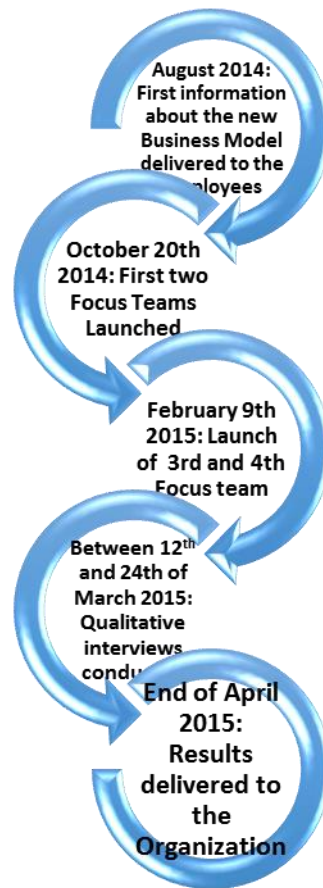


Figure 4: The Business Model Launch and the Study Timeline. (Turtinen, R. 2015)

There are several ways to gather employee feedback within the company, but there has not yet been a research especially around the business model change that would gather anonymous feedback from employees. The timing of the qualitative interviews was carefully selected to be in the middle of the main change to get the clear feedback from the team around the change communication and their commitment towards the change in the middle of the transformation.

The main research question of the study is:

How the business model change communication impacts to the commitment of the employees?

The sub questions are:

What is the feedback from the employees on the quality and timing of the communication about the change?

How the change impacts to the commitment of the employees?

How the employees feel about the future of the organization and their own position?

How to improve the change communications in the future?

The international context of the study is that the organizational structure is based on the virtual, international teams. The team managers are located in different countries within Western Europe and the local teams consists from one to three employees per country. The aim through the business model change is also to streamline the processes so that the part of objectives of the organization can be achieved by the centralized teams that are not tied into a specific geographical location. The local teams are providing support for the centralized teams and educating and discussing with the local stakeholders within the subsidiaries.

### **1.5 Structure of this Study**

The first section of the study concentrates in outlining the study objectives and the sponsor company and the organization background. The literature review is the second part of the study and it introduces the theories that are used to outline the questions in the qualitative survey that is conducted to draw the outcomes of the study and the suggestions for the sponsor company.

In chapter three, the research methodology is explained. The chapter explains also how the qualitative survey for this study was done and goes through the epistemology, ontology and the validity and reliability of the study. Chapter 4 includes the results of the study and in chapter 5 the recommendations for the sponsor company are explained. Chapter 6 includes the conclusions from the study, the suggestions of the further research and discusses about the business value of the study.

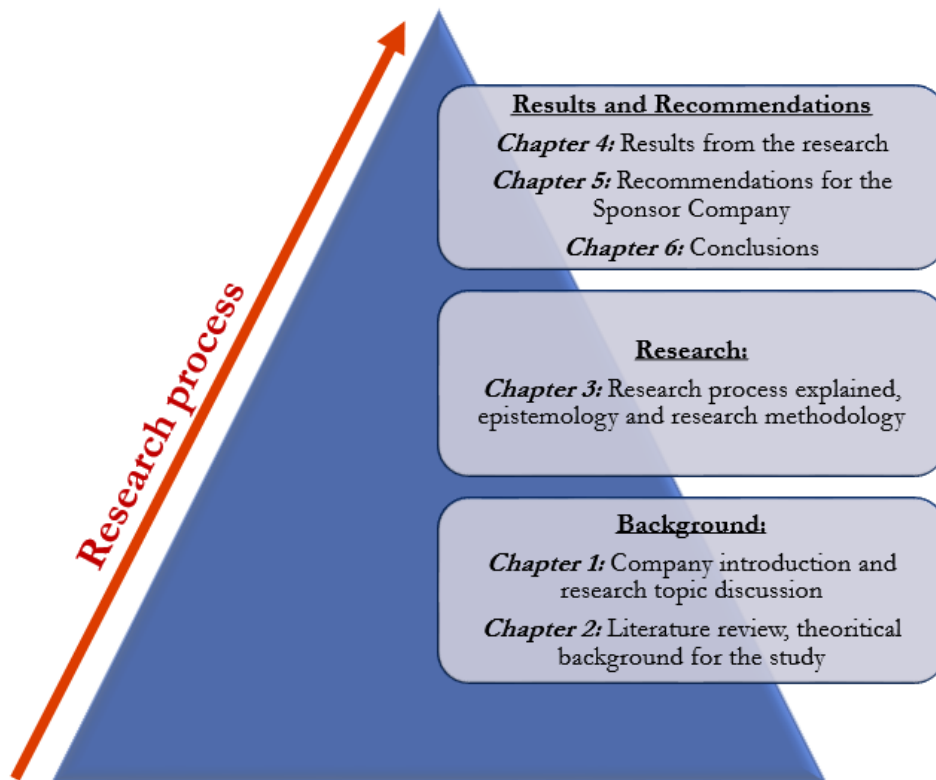


Figure 5: Research Process. (Turtinen, R. 2015)



## 2 Literature Review

In this chapter of literature review we will discuss the internal communication theory, the employee commitment and concentrate on the theory about the employee commitment during a change. The literature review will help the researcher to identify theories and ideas to test with the data in later chapters (Saunders et al. 2007, 57). In this study, the aim is to tie the management communication, the employee commitment and the change processes together to have a solid theoretical background for the research and the analysis of the results of the semi-structured interviews in the sponsor company.

There are many studies conducted about the internal communication and also around the employee commitment to the change. The researchers have started to be more interested in the employee commitment and the change and how the employee attitude can impact into the success of the change initiatives and the productivity of the organizations.

In this study, we have selected the Internal Communication Matrix (ICM) by Welch and Jackson (2007) to define the stakeholders and clarify the relationship between the internal communication and the employee commitment building. The main focus in ICM is in the Internal Corporate Communication (ICC) that contributes to the trust relationship between the management and the other internal stakeholders in the organization. According to many researchers, trust is identified to be one of the key components in the positive deployment of the change initiatives in the organizations (Lines et al. 2005; Douglas et al. 2006; Welch & Jackson, 2007; Mishra et al. 2014).

The employee commitment to change (C2C) is also one of the key theories in addition to the three-component model by Meyer et al. (2007) and the continuation of the model by Parish et al. (2008) that combines the three-component model with the commitment to change (C2C). We focus more on four different aspects: 1) Trust and manager-employee relationship 2) Role autonomy 3) Turnover intentions and 4) Learning in the change process.

When looking into the communication framework in change, we will concentrate on the Strategic Employee Communication Model (SECM) by Barrett (2002) and when reviewing the possibilities for the effective change messaging, we will go through the Five Message Components by Armenakis et al. (2009).

## 2.1 Internal Communication Definition

The first indications about the internal communication are from 1834. Then an advice was made by a German national economist, Friedrich List, to the German factory owners to set up a newspaper for their employees. After that, a big part of the internal communication has been based on internal print publications like the company papers before the dot.com boom and the social media in the decade of the new millennium that has changed the internal communication methods. (Ruck & Yaxley, 2013, 3-10.)

During the internal communication history, according to research done by Welch, a greater understanding about the employee engagement has been achieved (Ruck, & Yaxley, 2013, 10). The employees, the internal communication and the management of knowledge has become crucial for the organizational growth and the survival of the companies (Kitchen & Daly, 2002, 47).

Several researchers have debated the internal communications and the real definition of it. One of the questions is whether the internal communications and the corporate communications are synonyms and if the definition is identical for both. To understand this there is a need to critically review the definitions and identify the internal communications stakeholders. The stakeholders can be identified by utilizing Internal Communication Matrix by Welch & Jackson that is described in more detail later in this study. (Welch & Jackson, 2007, 180.)

Other closely related definitions and synonyms to the internal communications are: the employee engagement (Kahn, 1990; Shuck & Wollard, 2010) and the employee communications (Crossan, 1987), to name two. The wide range of synonyms makes it difficult to give a clear definition for the internal communication.

In addition, according to Cheney and Christensen (in Welch & Jackson, 2007, 180) there are blurred boundaries between the external and internal communications. This is caused because there is always a chance for a message that is first internal to leak to the media and become external. This is also one of the consequences of the era of social media (Rodriguez, 2014, 11).

One of the most leading definitions for the internal communication is done by Frank and Brownell (1989, 5-6):

*"The communications transactions between individuals and/or groups at various levels and in different areas of specialization that are intended to design and redesign organizations, to implement designs, and to co-ordinate day-to-day activities."*

### **Internal Communication Matrix**

International Communication Matrix (ICM) has been developed by Welch & Jackson in 2007 to define the stakeholders in the internal communication and the communication flow between the different stakeholder groups within the company.

In table 1, there are four dimensions for the internal communication defined: level, direction, participants and content. These dimensions differentiate depending on which stakeholder group is engaged. The internal line management communication is conducted throughout the whole organization and in all levels (the senior managers' report to the chief executive officer) and relates to the day-to-day management that includes for example the target setting discussions and the financial management. The internal team peer level is a team task discussions and similar communications are happening in a team setting with a peer-to-peer setup. The project level internal communication occurs between the colleagues that are working in same projects. (Welch & Jackson, 2007, 185.)

Dimension	Level	Direction	Participants	Content
1. Internal line management communication	Line managers/supervisors	Predominantly two-way	Line managers-employees	Employees' roles Personal impact, e.g. appraisal discussions, team briefings
2. Internal team peer communication	Team colleagues	Two-way	Employee-employee	Team information, e.g. team task discussions
3. Internal project peer communication	Project group colleagues	Two-way	Employee-employee	Project information, e.g. project issues
4. Internal corporate communication	Strategic managers/top management	Predominantly one-way	Strategic managers-all employees	Organisational/corporate issues, e.g. goals, objectives, new developments, activities and achievements

Table 1: Internal Communication Matrix. (Welch & Jackson, 2007, 185)

## Internal Corporate Communication

Internal Corporate Communications (ICC) is the 4<sup>th</sup> dimension of ICM and addresses all the levels of employees within the corporation. This makes it most important part of the ICM and it is designed to build commitment and trust between the senior leadership and the internal stakeholders in the company and to ensure that the strategy of the company is clear to all of the stakeholders. The communication flow is visualized in Figure 6 below. (Welch & Jackson, 2007, 186.)

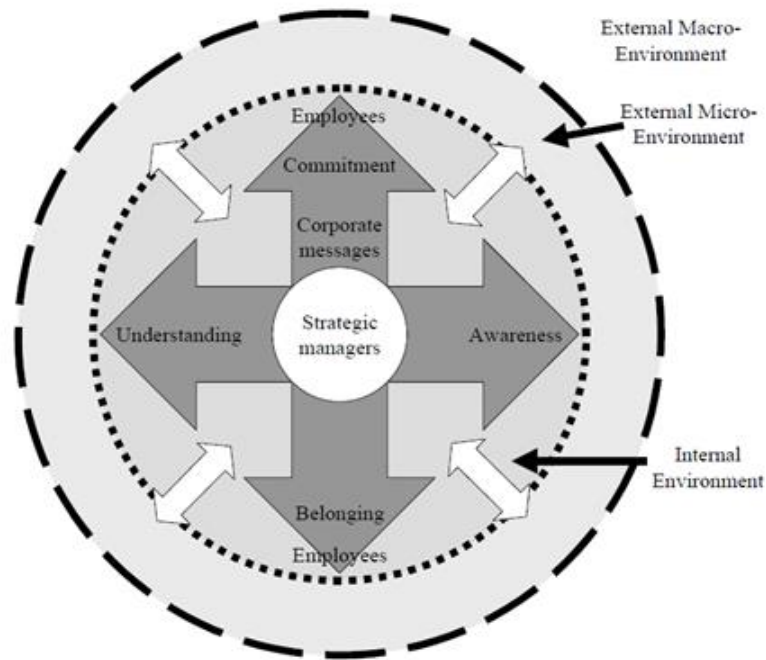


Figure 6: Internal Communication Communications. (Welch & Jackson, 2007, 186)

The excellence study researchers (in Welch & Jackson, 2007, 187) argue that the two-way symmetrical communication is ideal, but this is not possible for most of the larger organizations as the strategic leaders cannot meet all of the employees separately. This is why the one-way communication cannot be avoided. This is represented as the four one-way arrows in the figure 6.

If the organization has a symmetrical line-management and the senior managers are open to the upward critical communication, the senior management should be able to receive insights on what kind of information the employees want to know (Tourish & Robson in Welch & Jackson, 2007, 187). This would allow the two-way symmetrical communications and provide some opportunities for the dialogue. This is presented by the four double-headed arrows in the figure 6.

The goals of the internal corporate communication are the four arrow heads in the figure 6 including:

- 1) Contributing to the internal relationships characterized by employee commitment*
- 2) Promoting a positive sense of belonging in the employees*
- 3) Developing their awareness of the environmental change; and*
- 4) Developing their understanding of the need for the organization to evolve its aims in response to, or in anticipation of, the environmental change." (Welch, Jackson, 2007, 188)*

If the goals of the internal corporate communication are achieved, the organization is able to adjust better to the change through understanding the goals and the vision of the company and this creates trust in Senior Leadership and the future of the company.

### **Trust Building through Internal Communication**

According to Kets de Vries (in Douglas et al. 2006, 305), a collaborative environment includes a positive communication relationship that is built on trust, mutual respect and openness between the leaders, the subordinates and the co-workers. Dessler (1999, 59) summarizes that for the employee commitment, it is important that the companies make the employees feel like they are part of something greater. The employees should also have a shared mission and they should be given the clear guidelines on how to support this mission. This mission should be communicated to the employees effectively.

The effective internal communication enables the understanding between the ongoing changes and mirrors it to the organization's strategic direction. This ensures that the employees understand better the evolving aims of the organization and also builds the employee commitment. (Welch & Jackson, 2007, 190.) Pearson and Thomas states (in Kitchen & Daly, 2002, 49) that in the effective communications the managers should think of what the employees must know, should know and they could know. Must know is the key information needed for doing the job. Should know is the essential organizational information and could know is the office gossip that is quite unimportant.

The satisfaction level for the communication has a positive relationship with the job satisfaction and the other work outcomes and if the communication is not at a satisfactory level, the

employee turnover, and the burnout and stress levels are increased. There have been a lot of studies conducted on this subject. (Sharma & Kamalanabhan, 2012, 304.)

Internal communication is also a critical component in the relationship building with employees. (Mishra et al. 2014, 185). When working correctly, the internal corporate communication also develops a sense of belonging to the employees. According to Cornelissen (in Welch & Jackson, 2007, 189) this is described as *"a 'we' feeling allowing people to identify with their organizations."* The well-functioning internal communication also ensures that the employees and the management are aware of the company's direction and the values and can also commit to them better. Trust is one of the key characteristics of an organization where the internal communication is at a good level. This can also be seen the other way whereby trust creates a good quality communication. (Welch & Jackson, 2007, 190.)

According to Mishra et al. several scholars have pointed out that the employee engagement is positively impacted by the internal communications (Chong, 2007 Saks, 2006; Welchs & Jackson, 2007). Because of this, the functional internal communication between the employees and the managers enhances trust and leads to the better employee engagement in the company (Mishra, Boynton & Mishra 2014, 185).

Moloney pointed out (in Welch & Jackson, 2007, 189) that there is also a critical perspective playing a part in the internal communications. The internal communications can be also seen as "propaganda" where the leaders are attempting to manipulate the employees. If the internal stakeholders, like the employees, do not understand the strategic direction their organization is taking, they cannot commit to the organization and this makes it hard for them to trust in the strategy of the organization or the senior leadership team (Welch & Jackson, 2007, 190).

Spike and Lesser states (in Kitchen & Daly, 2002, 50) that the communication is seen as a key for the successful change because it is the main tool for announcing, explaining or preparing the people for a change. The communication also prepares the employees for the negative and positive effects of the change.

## **2.2 Employee Commitment to Change and 3-Component Model**

According to researchers and studies (Dessler, 1999, 58; Bar-Haim, 2007, 213; Yeh & Hong, 2012, 55) the committed employees have better attendance records, they work harder and

have better performance results when comparing to the employees with a weak commitment. The commitment is needed especially in the change to ensure that the change will succeed. According to Beer and Nohria (in Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005, 162) 70 percent of all change initiatives lead to a failure and the biggest reason for this is the resistance of change (Deloitte & Touche in Hakola & Nikolaou, 2005, 162).

### **Commitment to Change (C2C)**

Hercovitch and Meyer (in Parish et al. 2007, 34) describe C2C as "*a force (mind-set) that minds an individual to a course of action deemed necessary for the successful implementation of a change initiative*". There should be always a positive, proactive intend towards the change in commitment to change (C2C) (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005, 162).

Because the change is so constant in the organizations these days, the managers need to consider how the change is impacting to the employees and how to obtain the commitment to change (C2C) and what kind of efforts are needed to help the employee C2C. There is a bigger need for the Senior Leadership to understand the drivers of C2C and how it is critically impacting to success of the implementation of strategic initiatives. (Parish et al. 2007, 33.)

Noble and Mokwa (in Parish et al. 2007, 33) have also researched three dimensions of the commitment: 1) organizational, 2) role and 3) strategy and described the organization commitment as "*the extent to which a person identifies with and works toward organization-related goals and values*". The organizational changes create uncertainty and cause some intense emotional reactions in the employees. These reactions have an impact to the relationship of the management and the employees and this is why the trust relationship should be enhanced in the organizational change. (Neves & Caetano, 2009, 628.)

There are not many prior studies about the relationship between trust and the commitment to change (C2C) before the study done by Neves & Caetano (2009, 624). They suggests that the trust in the supervisor creates the connection between the work outcomes and the employees' reactions to the change.

According to Daby et al. (in Neves & Caetano, 2009, 624) the change always initiates also a period of instability and causes the employees to re-examine their role in the organization.

Iacovini et al. have researched (in Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005, 162) that the employee attitudes towards the change have an impact to their productivity, morale and turnover intentions.

The frequency of the organizational changes has grown and this is causing a need for the organizations to develop new strategies to ensure that the employees do not lose their commitment and that they stay within the organization (Neves & Caetano, 2009, 624). The major organizational changes are important when aiming to develop a trusting relationship between the employees and the organization's leaders. The outcome of the change is important but so are the intentions of the leaders when they are promoting change. (Neves & Caetano, 2009, 627.)

### **3-component Model and Commitment to Organizational Change**

Herscovitch and Meyer have introduced (in Parish et al. 2007, 33) the three-component model of commitment. The three components are: 1) affective, 2) normative and 3) continuance commitment.

Affective commitment (AC) describes the employee's emotional attachment and involvement in the organization. Continuance commitment (CC) means that the employee stays in the company because they cannot bear the cost of change and this is why they need to stay in their current workplace. Normative commitment (NC) is based on the employee's feeling of obligation to stay in the company. (Welch & Jackson, 2007, 188, Parish et al. 2007, 34.)

Based on the three-component model of Meyer and Allen, Herscovitch and Meyer (in Parish et al. 2007, 34) Parish, Cadwallader and Busch introduced three-component model of the commitment to the organizational change. The model consists of affective commitment to change (AC2C) that comes from the employees' desire to support a change, continuance commitment to change (CC2C) is built from the recognition that there are costs associated if the employee resists the change and normative commitment to change (NC2C) comes from the employees' feeling of needing to be supportive based on the obligation.

The results of the research done by Parish et al. (2007) and Neves & Caetano (2009) around the commitment to change in the change process are listed below. From these results four different themes are drawn:

1) Trust / Employee – manager relationship



- 2) Role autonomy
- 3) Turnover intentions
- 4) Learning

The results are compared to the other available literature for each topic.

### **Trust / Employee – Manager Relationship**

Trust towards the leaders is becoming more important with the globalization and the higher pace of the change. During the change, the employees re-assess the relevant information and estimate again their trust in the management (Lines et al. 2005, 222). Morgan and Zeffane (in Lines et al. 2005, 222) see the organizational change as a critical event that might either create trust or destroy the trust relationship. According to Mayfield and Mayfield (in Parish et al. 2007, 45) a high level of employee loyalty is linked approx. 11 per cent increase in the productivity. Based on the research done by Shah (2010, 232) one of the contributors of the successful change initiative is a fair and respectful treatment of the employees.

The results of the research done by Tonga (2014, 77) also indicates that the important factors for increasing the commitment are the relationship between the management and a single employee and the information that the employees are provided with. The best method for the communication that creates more trust and commitment is a face-to-face communication that includes the shared vision and is delivered to the employees from the several levels of the management. According to the research done by Walker et al. (2007, 770) the communication from multiple sources around the change helps the employees to cope better with the change.

Hanpachern et al. (in Miller et al. 2006, 4) claims that there is a correlation between the employees' relationship with the management and their readiness for change. This is also proved by the research done by Miller et al. (2006, 12). The results from the research suggests that the employee-management relationship is a critical attribute in the readiness for change. The good management in the change includes open, clear and consistent communication that builds faith and trust and enhances the employees' ability to accept the change.

According to Morgan and Hunt (in Parish et al. 2007, 36) trust and commitment brings outcomes like acquiescence and co-operation. Hartline et al. (in Parish et al. 2007, 36) states that the commitment makes the employees to work with more effort to achieve the goals. Rosseau and Tijoriwala (in Parish et al. 2007, 36) also remark that the employee trust in their management builds credibility and acceptance in an organizational change.

Neves & Caetano (2009, 629) suggests also that trust in the supervisor has a significant relationship to the employees' commitment to the change and the work outcomes. The high affectionate commitment to the change positively correlates with the trust in the supervisor. Also the results of the study conducted by Parish et al. (2007) supports this. The employee-manager relationship was positively related to AC2C and NC2C - but showed a negative relation to CC2C. The job motivation had a significant relation to AC2C but not as significant relation to other dimensions of the commitment.

In addition, the results of the research done by Neves & Caetano (2009, 636) shows that especially the affective commitment to the change is a key variable when estimating the employees' attitudes and the intended behaviors in a change initiative. The affective commitment was positively related to the trust in the supervisor as well.

Neves & Caetano (2009, 637) also summarized from their research that the employees' perceptions of the major organizational changes influences to the social relationships and especially the trust in the supervisor and this is why a good management in the organizational change is essential for maintaining the positive work relationships. Based on the research conducted by Parish et al. (2007, 43) AC2C and NC2C and also CC2C are positively related to fit with vision where the employees are informed how the change fits with the overall company vision.

The non-manager perspectives should also be considered because according to Conner and Patterson (in Parish et al. 2007, 38) lack of the employee commitment is linked to the failed change projects. Parish et al. (2007, 38) also draw a hypothesis that AC2C and NC2C have a positive impact to the implementation success and this has a positive relation to the improved performance.

### **Job Autonomy**

The definition for the job autonomy is according to Dodd and Ganster (in Park et al. 2012, 305) "*the degree to which employees are provided with the freedom and discretion to determine how to conduct their job.*" The results from the survey conducted by Park et al. (2012, 313) suggests that the job autonomy improves the employees' organizational commitment and also their well-being in the organization.

According to other study done by Park & Searcy (2011, 313) the job autonomy is particularly important for the employees in a quality competitive organization. A quality competing organization means that an organization is competing against its competitors with a quality of the products and services, not by the price or by other factors. The sponsor company for this research is a quality competing organization, concentrating on the services and devices. The results from research done by Park and Searcy (2011, 313) claims that the organizations that are competing with the quality should give their employees more job autonomy to improve the employee outcomes.

The study done by Park and Searcy (2011, 312) also confirms that if the employees have enough autonomy in their work, their mental well-being and the organizational commitment is improved. In addition, the job autonomy is linked more strongly to the employees' satisfaction and performance if the position is including more complex and various tasks. Park and Searcy (2011, 313) also recommend based on their research that the companies in a quality-competitive field should also offer more job autonomy to their employees to attract and keep the best staff and also to improve the employee outcomes and commitment.

Also the findings from a research conducted by Ghitulescu (2012, 231) shows the importance of the work context in a change. The findings suggests that the adaptivity and proactivity are increased when the employee has more autonomy on their work and the information and resources around the change initiative are well accessed by the employee.

Noble and Mokwa describes (in Parish et al. 2007, 37) the term role autonomy as an employee freedom to make decisions about the job and adjust the behaviors accordingly. Dodd and Ganster (in Parish et al. 2007, 37) claims that the greater employee autonomy causes positive impact to C2C. This means that role autonomy increases the affective commitment to the change (AC2C) but lowers the normative and continuance commitment for change (NC2C and CC2C). The result of research done by Parish et al. (2007, 44) supports partly these conclusions. The employees with enough role autonomy have more freedom to select the job for themselves and they are less concerned around losing the position because of the financial issues. The role autonomy has a positive relation to AC2C and a negative relation for CC2C. There was no relation between the normative commitment for the change and the role autonomy. The role autonomy did not impact the employees' obligation to stay within the company.

## Turnover Intentions

In a change initiative the companies should invest and investigate the impact of the change to the individual employees and ensure that the consequences are managed (Morrell et al. 2004, 163). Basically, the companies need to be prepared that some of the employees leave during the change process. This turnover is categorized by Morrell et al. (2004, 171) to two categories: the base level *unavoidable* turnover that will rise when the level of the change increases. There is also the *avoidable* turnover that the companies could reduce by intervention.

According to a study done by Cunningham (in Neves & Caetano, 2009, 629) the continuance commitment to the change is positively related to the turnover intentions but the affective and normative commitments are negatively related to the turnover intentions. This is also supported by the social exchange theory by Blau (in Neves & Caetano, 2009, 629) which suggests that the employees who have an affective commitment have higher trust towards their supervisors and the company goals and these employees want the change to be a success. This would also make them more committed to stay in the company during the change. If the employees are within the company because of their continuance commitment, their trust to the management is lower and the turnover is higher during the change.

The significant change is always impacting to the engagement level within the organization and there is a dip in the engagement level during a major change initiative. If the organization is able to have solid change management processes, one of the goals of them are to either eliminate the dip or manage the dip during the change. The turnover rate among the high-potential employees is one of the measures to verify the status of the employee engagement within the organization. (Messinger & Havelly, 2013, 20.)

Involving the employees in the change process can enhance their perception of fairness and reduce the withdrawal from the change. This is one of the tools that the management can use to make the change successful and to mitigate the intentions to quit. (Fugate et al. 2010, 20.) If the employees feel that they are not treated fairly during the change or if they see that their colleagues not treated fairly during the change initiative, they feel more emotionally exhausted. Emotional exhaustion during the change leads to greater turnover results. (Bernerth et al. 2011, 348.) This is why the employees should be involved in the change and also the communication should be solid and the treatment of the employees should be fair to avoid a larger turnover during the change.

## Learning

The change process includes learning. According to Lehesvirta (in Parish et al. 2007, 38) learning is leading to the change of behaviors through the information interpretation. The employees are more likely to learn from the change process if they commit to the change.

The change resistance is common for the externally imposed change. Therefore, it is important that the change process also includes a learning experience for the employees and supports the individual learning in the change. This makes the change processes more sustainable and also links the individual into the change process. (O'Hara, 1996.)

The change is always initiating learning within the organization, both in the individual employee level and also the organizational learning is happening. According to Abrahamson (in Teare & Monk, 2002, 335) the best way to learn in the change is something called 'dynamic stability' in which the organization borrows and adapts, captures the learnings, manages the change internally and encourages a generalist, an open minded approach to the change. This means that the organization in the change should actually take the change as a part of their normal lifecycle instead of doing the big change projects at once. The Dynamics Instability process is explained in Figure 6.

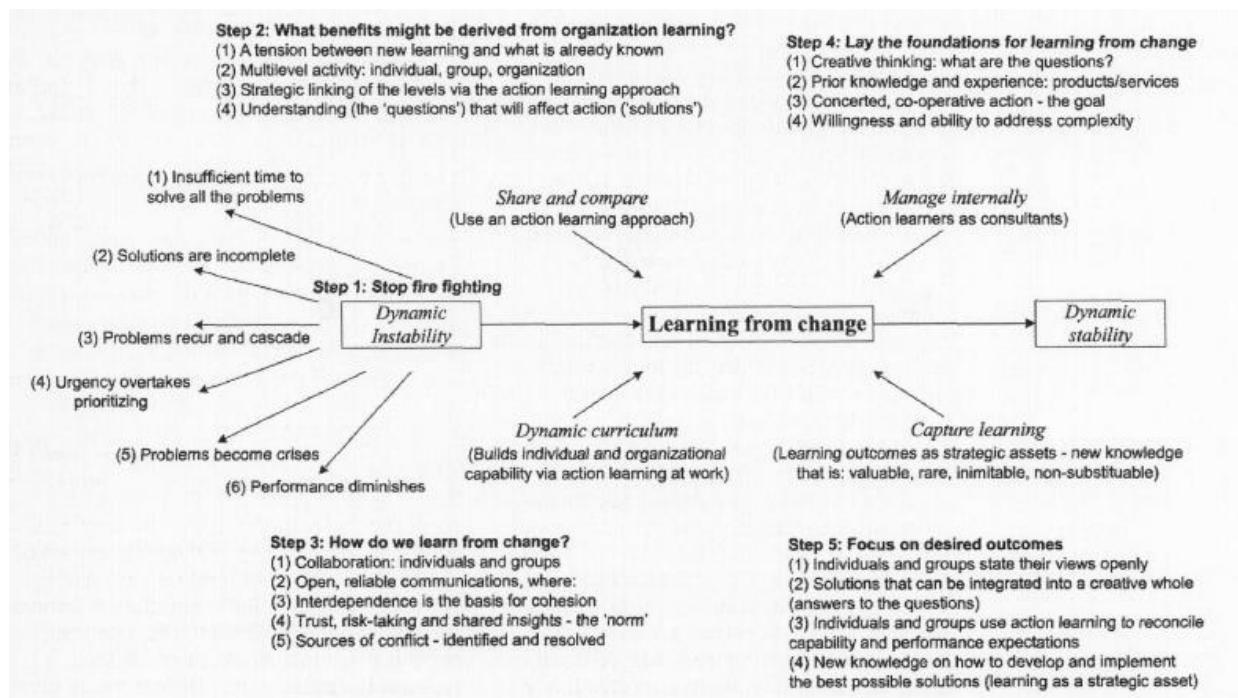


Figure 7: Learning from Change. (Teare & Monk, 2002, 335)

Parish et al. (2007, 45) presents as a finding that AC2C has a direct impact to the individual learning, improved performance and the overall implementation success. NC2C has some influence but it is not as large as AC2C. In addition, AC2C impacts to the perceptions of the implementation success that causes the employees to also share this positive view with the external parties like for example the customers and other stakeholders outside of the organization.

The improved performance, the individual learning and the implementation success has a positive relation to AC2C. NC2C has a significant relation only to the individual learning. The results gathered highlights the importance of AC2C and shows similar results as the prior research. (Parish et al. 2007, 44.)

### **2.3 Internal Communication Strategy in Change**

The employees, the knowledge management and the internal communication are identified instrumental to the organizational survival and growth in a current management literature. Drucker claims (in Kitchen, Daly, 2002, 47) that *"the knowledge worker is the single greatest asset"*. (Kitchen, Daly, 2002, 47.) Burnes states (in Kitchen, Daly, 2002, 52) that *"communication is a way of avoiding the uncertainty that change can promote."*

According to Gildeous (in Kitchen, Daly, 2002, 48) there are some internal and external factors that contribute to the initiation of the change programs in the organizations. The external factors are for example the new technology, the changes in the marketplace changing the customer expectations, the competitor activities, the quality and standards, the government legislation and the prevailing political values and the economic cycles. The internal factors are relating to the management philosophy, the organizational structure, the culture and the systems of internal power and control.

To manage people successfully, the communication is the key and it links the knowledge and the communication and the company profit together, ultimately it's also impacting to the company existence (Kitchen, Daly, 2002, 47). The company should have a clear and easy to understand vision statement to succeed in the change communication. The vision should also be clear and realistic with some actionable objectives to all stakeholder groups, especially for the employees. (Jick, Collins and Porras in Barrett, 2002, 225.)

Kotter states (in Kitchen, Daly, 2002, 49) that the employee communication around why the change is needed and how the change will be achieved is critical and can make the change management successful. Also Parish et al. (2007, 45) states that according to their research, *Fit With Vision* is important in the change initiatives. *Fit with Vision* means based on their research that the employees feel that the change initiative is according and in harmony with the strategic goals of the company and the organization. Based on this, the leaders should ensure that the employees see and understand how the change impacts to the larger vision of the company and how it helps the organization towards its goals. This is why an open and clear communication about why the change is done should be part of the implementation plan.

The resolution could be only a simple 'from/to' chart to visualize where the leadership team wants the organization to evolve in the change (Barrett, 2002, 226). The Strategic Employee Communication Model (SECM) can be used during a major change to ensure that the management understands how strategic role the communication plays in the success of the change. The model has been drafted from the best practices from the successful companies. (Barrett, 2002, 220.)

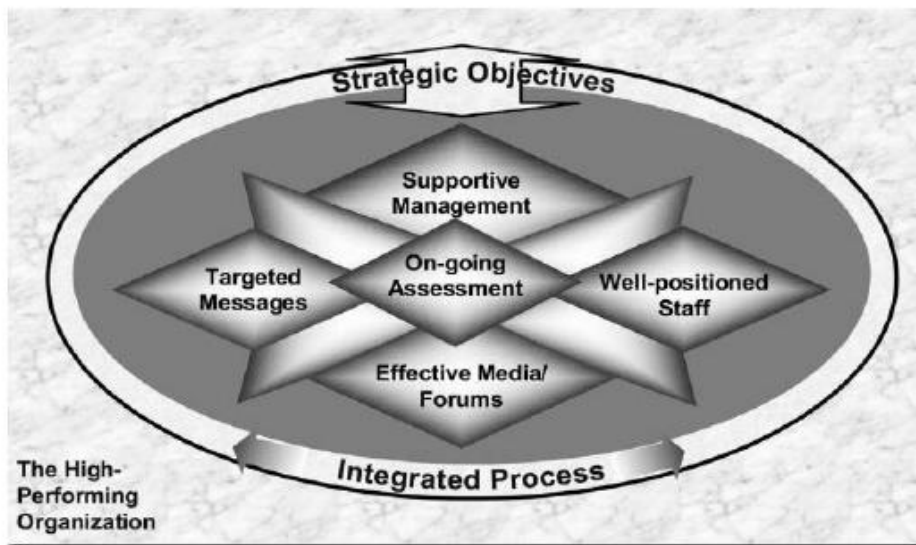


Figure 8: Strategic Employee Communication Model. (Barrett, 2002, 221)

The model is linking to all the major components of the employee communications to each other and to the company's strategy and operations. This way the parts are break down into recognizable and manageable pieces. The model also shows that all parts are interdependent as they should be when the employee communication is positioned strategically. (Barrett, 2002, 221)

## 2.4 How to Message Effectively In Change

Heller points out (in Kitchen, Daly, 2002, 49) that *"remedies won't work, unless the re-engineers can re-engineer the most crucial element of all: themselves."* The change is not just a change in the people behavior but in also in how they think. This is the link between the internal communication and the change management. The people are responsible of making the proposed change to happen. (Kitchen, Daly, 2002, 49.)

One of the key points for the organization to consider in a successful change implementation is to take the employees' psychological processes into account in the change strategy as well. (Elias, 2009, 38). According to the research conducted by Linke & Zerfass (2011, 344) the management should be able to deliver the messaging of the change through many communication channels like the staff meetings, the Intranet sites and even in the company parties. This increases the awareness, understanding and the acceptance of the change.

The different type of personalities react to a change in a different way. Some of the employees see the change as an opportunity to develop themselves and have more possibilities for their personal growth within the organization. Some employees dread the change because it is seen as an extra effort and the change also impacts to their motive on why they want to work in that company and in that position. This is a challenging situation for the managers because they need to ensure that all employees are feeling positive and support the change. (Elias, 2009, 48.)

In the period of uncertainty, the members of the organization are looking to each other for clues to understand the meaning of the events. The social exchange is ongoing around the aim of the change and not just the ones who are actively involved in a change are communicating of the change. (Berneth, 2004, 40.)

The Five Message Components communication-model that has been first suggested by Armenakis et al. (in Bernerth, 2004, 41) aims to give a tool for the organization to ensure that the change results are evolving to be permanent and accepted within the organization and the change is seen positive for the whole organization and all stakeholders.



<i>Message</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Question It Looks to Answer</i>
Self-efficacy	Confidence in individual and group's ability to make the change succeed	Can we do this? Will this work?
Principal support	Key organizational leaders support this particular change	Is management walking the talk? Do organizational leaders believe in this change?
Discrepancy	A gap between the current state and an ideal state	Why change?
Appropriateness	The correct reaction to fix the gap identified by discrepancy	Why this change?
Personal valence	Clarifies the intrinsic and extrinsic benefits of the change	What's in it for me?

Table 2: The Five Message Components to Help Create Readiness for Change. (Bernerth, 2004, 42)

Bernerth (2004, 42) claims that the five message components will have a key impact to the ultimate success or failure of the change initiative through the impact to the employees' intentions, attitudes and beliefs. The five message components should be considered by the leadership before the change so that the change process is smoother and received better by the employees.

The five message components are:

1. ***Self-efficacy*** – the employees' own judgments of their ability to perform certain tasks. There is also a collective efficacy that relates to the whole work group perception of how they can perform the tasks. In change the key around the self-efficacy is that the team or the individual should feel that they can actually to do the changing tasks. If the employees' own feeling during the change is that they will be incapable to adjust and do the new assignments, this will cause serious issues for the whole change initiative.
2. ***Principal support*** – The commitment from the formal and informal organizational leaders for successful implementation of the change. This also refers back to the trust-relationship between the manager and the employee. The employees monitor and discuss within the workgroup and seek for confirmation that also the leaders and colleagues are supportive for the change. If they feel that the respected the co-workers or the managers are not behind the change, there will be more resistance from them as well.

3. ***Discrepancy and appropriateness*** - Through the discrepancy message, the leaders are showing the need of the change. If the organization utilizes change agents in the change, the main message through the change agents is to show how the change improves the ways things are done comparing to the old processes. The appropriateness is achieved when the vision of the change is shared and demonstrated correctly. If the issues with the current setup are not shared, it is harder for the members of the organization to see what good the change will bring.
4. ***Personal Valence*** - This is the personal benefit and impact to their well-being that the employees achieve from the change. If the employees do not see any benefit for themselves from the change and even some harmful consequences from the change, they won't be positive or supportive towards it. If the change seems to offer an opportunity, the change is supported by the employees. (Bernerth, 2004, 41-46.)

## **2.5 Conceptual Framework**

In this section the theoretical framework and the main concepts discussed in the literature review are drawn together to achieve an understanding how the literature links into the objective and research questions in this study. The information is also provided on why the specific themes and questions were selected to the semi-structured interviews and how the different themes for questions link to the literature.

In the literature review, the generic information about the internal communication and the internal communication framework (Welch & Jackson, 2007) were discussed. For the research part, this will serve as a background framework and help explain more how the internal communication has been done and how effective it is within the organization before the change and during the change as well. In the open-ended questions, there is one section for internal communication generic theme.

The second theme and framework is 3-component model for the change. In the questionnaire, there will be four different open ended questions through which the aim is to understand if trust and manager/employee relationship, role autonomy, turnover intentions and learning are in this specific organization in such level that the employees feel positive about the change and are in the right zone currently. This theme will focus more on the generic feelings and attitudes of the employees that can be viewed as an outcome from the current change communications.

The third theme will be based on the Strategic Employee Communication model and the Five Message Components. With this theme, the aim is to get a deeper understanding of the messaging itself during the change and how this impacts to the employees. All the questions in this theme will be framed so that the interviewees should also think about the change communications. This will help to explain if the change communication has been successful by this point and if the messaging has been able to make the employees commit to the organization more comprehensibly during this change. Based on all these themes, the aim is to gather the relevant information for the organization's leadership about the possible gaps in the communication and understand how to develop the change communications further and avoid the employee disengagement.

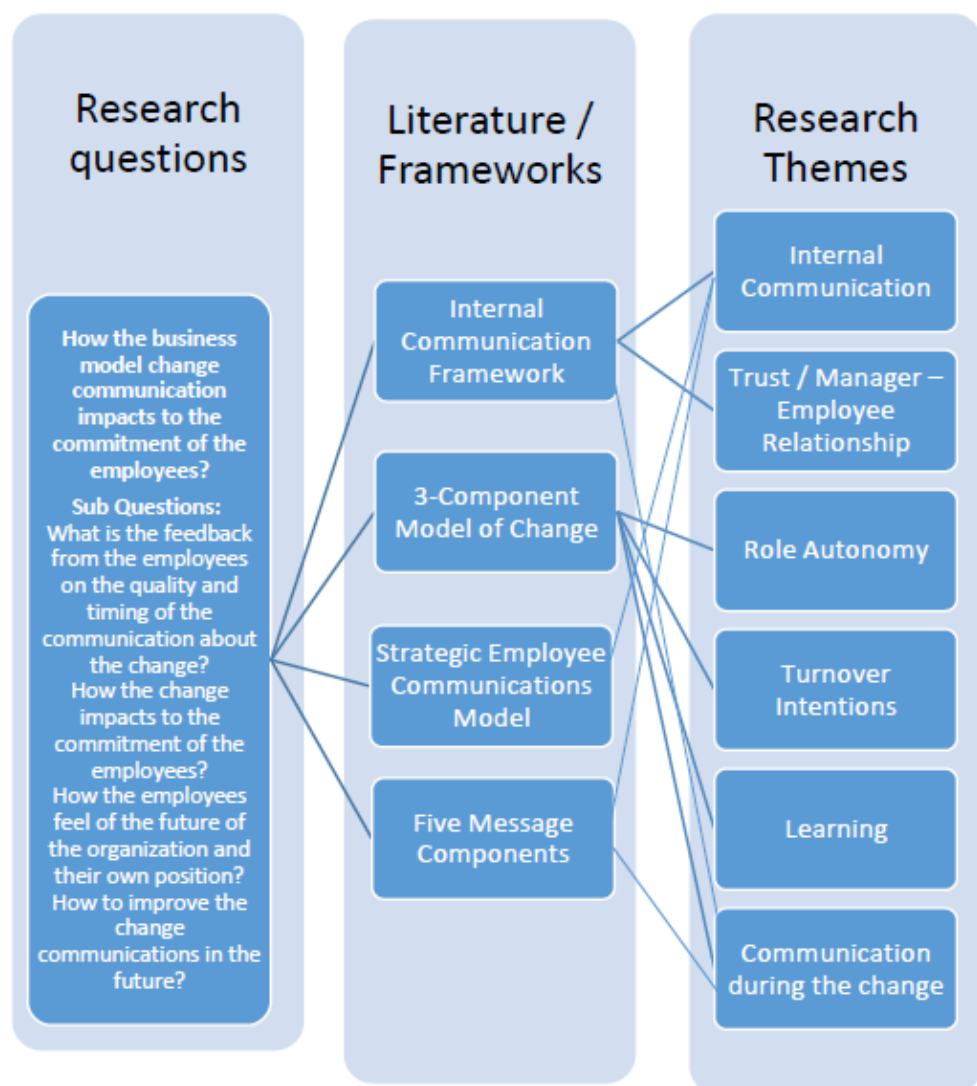


Figure 9: Conceptual Framework. (Turtinen, R. 2015)

### **3 Research Methodology**

This chapter describes the research methodology for this study. First, the research philosophy and approach are described and in the later chapters, the reliability and validity, the research process, the data collection method, confidentiality and the interview questions are presented.

Sincovics et al. (2005, 11) suggests five research purposes for which the qualitative research is really useful: 1) understanding the meaning of events 2) understanding the particular context 3) identifying the unanticipated phenomena 4) understanding the processes by which the events and actions take place and 5) developing causal explanations. In this study, the qualitative research was selected because the sponsor company needs to understand how the change in the process will impact to the actions taken by the employees and the possible outcomes of the process change. The qualitative research offers more information and opinions from the employees than a normal survey would have provided.

#### **3.1 Ontology and Epistemology**

Ontology is the nature of reality and epistemology is the relationship between the researcher and the reality (Carson et al., 2001). For the research philosophy in ontology the researcher has selected Subjectivism in this study. The reason for this selection is that this field of study is subjective and the interviewees will attach their own meanings to the answers they will give out. There is no objective truth that could be found out via the study. The answers are being created from the perceptions and actions of the social actors. (Saunders et al. 2007, 108.)

In Epistemology, the selected research philosophy is interpretivism because the researcher needs to adopt an empathetic stance and understand the world from the point of view of the interviewees. In interpretivism, term 'social actor' is important. The researcher does not have to separate from the phenomenon and social actors and can interpret the situation from inside of the organization. It is also argued that interpretivism suits best to the business situations because the situations are unique and complex in nature. It might be impossible to generalize the business situations because they are caused by a particular set of individuals and circumstances. (Saunders et al. 2007, 106.)

For the research approach the researcher has selected an inductive approach. In the inductive approach, the researcher collects the data and develops the theory based on the data collection (Saunders et al. 2009, 124). The inductive approach to the qualitative analysis is a systemic procedure to analyze the data and the analysis is guided by specific objectives. This approach gives the researcher a possibility to avoid restraints that are common for structured methodologies. (Thomas 2003, 2.)

In the inductive approach, the researcher investigates the data to identify the patterns and to develop a theory that can explain the patterns. The researcher moves from a specific set of experiences to a more general set of propositions. This is described also in the Figure 9 below. (Blackstone 2015.)

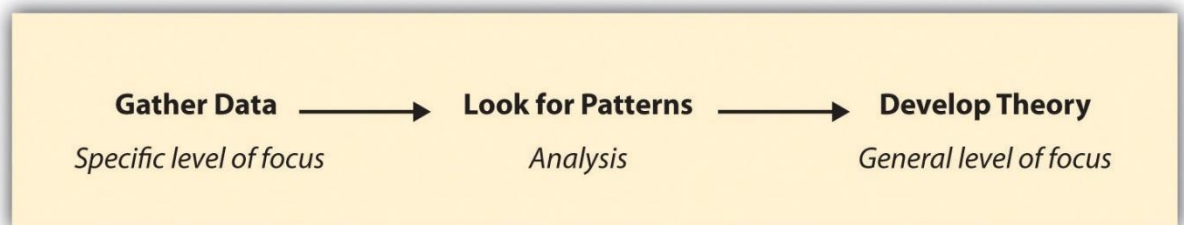


Figure 10: Inductive Research. (Blackstone 2015)

The research strategy is a single case study and it is aiming to analyze the event in a specific time period of the change initiative in the organization. The case study is a flexible research design that as an empirical inquiry investigates a contemporary phenomenon in which the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clear and the evidence is collected with the multiple methods (Yin 2009, 23). In this case, the change project within the organization is the contemporary phenomenon and the context is not fully clear because there are several factors impacting to the outcome of the change. The research is also investigating a certain time period within the change process, not the whole change. The evidence is collected by a qualitative research and the observations by the researcher.

### 3.2 Axiology

Axiology studies the judgements about the value and in the research philosophy, it concentrates in the values of the researcher. The values of the researcher are impacting to the re-

search process and if the values are not discussed, the creditability of the research is impacted. (Saunders et al. 2007, 110.)

In this study, I need to take into consideration my own values because I'm part of the work group that is the target audience of the study. My own values are impacting on all the steps of the study and to the outcome of the study. Part of the research is also done based on my own values and the observations inside of the organization. To avoid creditability loss and to stay as objective and ethical as possible, I have not asked to have more information about the change project than what my colleagues in the same information level have received. I don't have any visibility of any extra materials of the change process.

### **3.3 Research Process**

The research interviews were conducted between 12<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of March 2015. The research interviews were aimed to be done after the launch of the second part of the change where the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> focus teams were just been launched. The first two focus teams were introduced 20<sup>th</sup> of October 2014. The impact of the first focus teams was not as significant as the launch of two following focus teams in the beginning of the year 2015. The reason for the timing was that after the launches were finalized, the employees would have a better understanding what the changes would mean for them but the change would not yet been fully integrated into the organization. At this stage, the information gathered would also give the more possibilities to measure the success of the launch and the change communication.

The difficulty in the data collection phase for the research was that the employees are located physically into different countries and this made it impossible to conduct the interviews face-to-face. The organization is using Instant Communicator in the day-to-day work so Instant Communicator was selected as an interview method instead of the face-to-face meetings to conduct the interviews. This is not optimal for qualitative research because conducting the interview through voice only makes it impossible to monitor the interviewee's non-verbal communication and their facial expressions.

The semi-structured interview has both structured and unstructured elements of interviewing. There is a fixed set of sequential questions that is used as an interview guide but depending on situation, additional questions might be added to have a possibility to have a deeper exploration of issues brought up by the interviewee so that the interview resembles managed conver-

sation. Online interviews are classified either synchronous or asynchronous depending if they happen in the real time or not. According to Mann and Steward (in Cachia & Millward, 2011, 269) synchronous interviewing is done through the conferencing software in a chat room-like setting. This method resembles a lot the traditional face-to-face interview. (Cachia & Millward, 2011, 269.) The Instant Communicator interviews in this research were conducted in a synchronous way.

The sampling method was a voluntary response sample. This method means that the researcher appeals to people to participate the survey and the participation is voluntary. Voluntary sampling is always causing bias because it only includes respondents who choose to volunteer. Random sample would include the respondents whether or not they choose to volunteer. The downside of voluntary response sampling is that it is more likely that in this method, the sample includes an oversample of people who feel strongly about the topic and an under-sample of respondents who are not interested of the topic of the survey. (Smith, 2012.)

Within the organization, from the different teams in EMEA, the Western Europe team was selected based on the fact that the researcher is working in that team. In the team, there are 24 members including two higher level employees who look after the whole area and two team managers. Due the difference in the information level around the change, the employees who are managing the whole area and the team managers were left out from the survey target group.

The question if the members would want to join to the interviews, was sent as an email with a voting option for the participation. The email also included a short description of the research and some information about the subject of the interview and also information about the confidentiality of the interview. 14 team members accepted the interview and two wanted not to participate to the survey but promised to act as a stand-in if needed. Four team members did not answer to the email voting. There was no reminder sent out because 14 team members would make a sufficient sample, 70 % of the target group.

The interviews were conducted by Instant Communicator calls and the duration of the interview varied between 14 and 31 minutes. In the beginning of the interview, the researcher explained the reason for the interview, the interview process and information when the results would be available. In addition, in the beginning of the interview, the confidentiality of the interview was also explained again to the interviewee.

The interviews were recorded with the Instant Communicator call recorder. All interviews were done in English and after the interview, the interviews were transcribed. The researcher is working daily with all of the respondents, so the atmosphere of the interviews was relaxed and there was a possibility to go straight to the interview subject without a longer introduction.

### **3.4 Research Method, Confidentiality and Data Collection**

The interviews were conducted as semi-structured interviews. The interview method allows the interviewer to be prepared before time and also allows the interviewee to have a freedom to express their views in their own terms and also gives a possibility for two-way communication. The interview method can provide comparable and reliable qualitative data. The negative sides of using this interview style are that the interview questions needs to be carefully planned to avoid leading the interviewee and the data analysis can be difficult and lead constructing too much. The interview process is also time consuming and requires lot of resources. The confidentiality of the interviews needs also to be confirmed and ensured during the research process. (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006.)

#### **Confidentiality**

The confidentiality and anonymity are important in the semi-structured interviews. Because the research process includes recordings, there is a need to ensure to the participants that can rely that the data collected will be safe and the information that will be supplied will remain anonymous. It is also polite to offer to provide the participants a summary of the results. (Clifford et al. 2010, 111.)

In the interviews for this study, the researcher told the same information around the confidentiality to the interviewees in the beginning of the interview. The information told was following:

*My name is Riitu (as you know). This interview is about the current change that is ongoing in our organization and especially about the communication side of it. I will ask some questions around it from you. This is part of my MBA training and thesis. The interview will be recorded. I will transcribe the recording and delete the tape. The recording is not shared with anyone else than myself and the transcripts will be shared with my thesis inspectors in the university and deleted after that. In the final version there are no information shared that you could be*



*recognized from. I'm also interviewing approx. 15 other team members. I will also share the thesis and results with our team.*

In addition, this information was also already provided in the email invitation for the interviews. The aim of this communication was to ensure that the respondents could rely that the information that they provide for this research will stay anonymous and also confirm that the responses would reflect their opinions freely.

### **Data Collection**

In analyzing Qualitative data the importance is in finding the patterns. Usually the analysis is done by coding and qualitative researchers might use hand handwritten note cards or some text modification programs to discover the patterns. There are also some programs that can help by reducing the data into meaningful but manageable chapters. (Suter, 2012, 346.)

In this study, the data was coded using NVivo program. The transcripts were imported to the program and coded first into the nodes per question because despite of the semi-structured interview method, the questions remained same throughout all interviews. The question nodes were coded into the themes and the memos created per the theme. The two attributes assigned were *focus team* or *local team* to separate the analysis depending towards which team the answer was directed to.

The answers for each questions were then divided into three category: 1) Positive 2) Neutral and 3) Negative. The analysis was written based on the categories for each question in the theme.

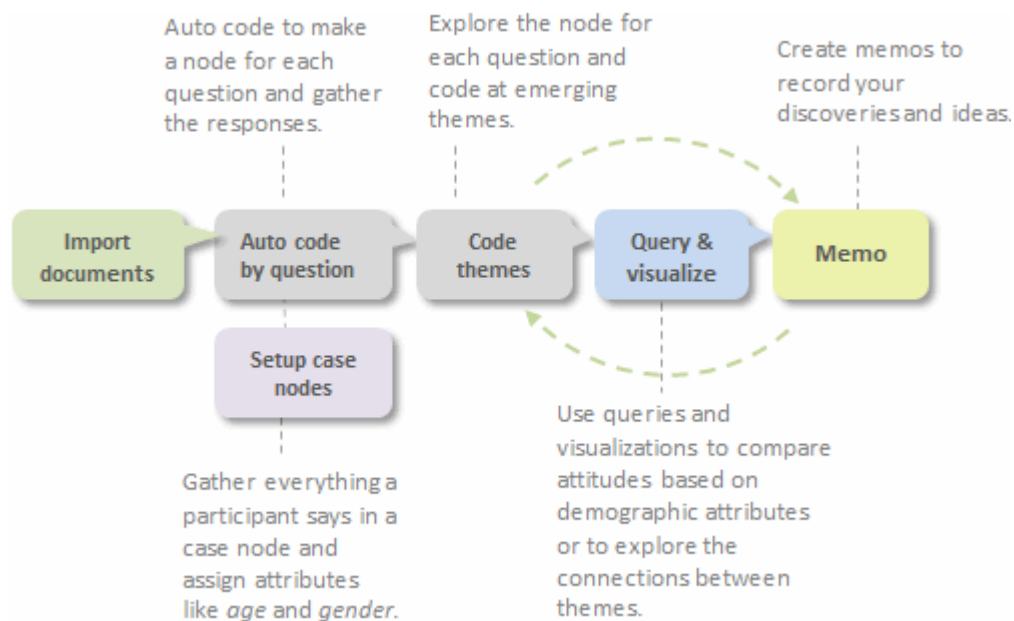


Figure 11: NVivo Data Analysis Process. (NVivo Manual, 2015)

### 3.5 Research Questions

The themes for the questions were based on the theoretical framework, the research questions and the objective of the study. In each theme, there is one main question and several probing questions. The interview method gives the interviewer a possibility to add or modify the probing questions. In the interviews, there was not many changes done into the main and probing questions and most of the probing questions were also asked from the respondent. The main difference between the question draft and the actual interviews were that some of the probing questions were combined during the interview process. In addition, the first probing question in theme 2: Communication during the Change, was needed to be explained a bit more in detail because the question itself was quite long and the trust aspect was hard for the respondents to understand in the context.

Below in Table 3, seven highlighted questions are the main questions of the theme and the rest are probing questions.

THEME	QUESTIONS	OBJECTIVE
Internal Communication	1) <b>Generally, how do you think the communication in the organization is handled?</b> a) Give examples of the communications?	To understand how the employee feels generally about the communication in the organization.

	b) Do you receive enough information on our goals as an organization?	
<b>Communication During the Change</b>	2) <b>Do you think you know enough about the change itself?</b> a) Based on the change communications, do you trust that the direction and the change for our organization is right when comparing it to our goal as an organization?  b) Is there some feedback on the information flow from Senior Leadership during this change?  c) Overall, how do you see any signs that the change has been successful yet?	To understand if the change communication has been successful and well internalized by the employees.
<b>Trust / Manager -Employee relationship</b>	3) <b>How your manager has been informing you around this change?</b> a) Do you have any improvement ideas for the communication through managers?	To see how the manager-employee relationship is and to see if the employee trusts the direction the organization is taking.
<b>Role Autonomy</b>	4) <b>How do you see your possibilities to impact your day-to-day work and has it changed lately?</b>  a) If yes, could you describe the change?	To understand how the employee sees his own position and the role autonomy within the change.
<b>Turnover Intentions</b>	5) <b>How do you see your future in the company?</b> a) What is your next step in your career or have you thought about it?	To better understand if the employee is happy about the change and sees themselves and their own role after the change in the organization.
<b>Learning</b>	6) <b>During this change, do you think you have learnt a lot of new?</b>  a) Does this change require lot of learning from you and have you received enough info about it?	To see how much organization and the employees are focusing in the learning aspects of the change.
<b>Future of the organization</b>	7) <b>How do you see the future of the organization?</b>	To find out if the employees are trusting to the company direction in general.

Table 3: The Question Themes. (Turtinen, R. 2015).

## 4 Presentation of the Findings

In this chapter, the findings are summarized. First, the analysis of the questions and the answers is presented and after that, the observations by the researcher around the communication during the change by the direct management and the Senior Leadership and the project leads is presented. In the next chapter, the main question analysis is provided and linked to the objective of the study and to the theoretical framework.

The information on how many years each respondent has been working in the company, how old they are and if they are working in the focus team or in the local team could not be added to the analysis. The reason for leaving this information out is that there is a chance to recognize the respondent from this data. To ensure the privacy of the employees, the geographical information is not added in the comments.

The objective of the study is to give feedback and improvement ideas for the future change communication of the organization and link this with the level of the employee commitment to provide some information on the current status and the success of the change efforts so far from the employee perspective.

The main research question of the study is to find out how the business model communication impacts upon the commitment of the employees. The sub-questions for the study are:

- 1) To receive feedback on the quality and timing of the change communication
- 2) Investigate how the change impacts on the commitment of the employees
- 3) Find out how the employees feel about the future of the organization and their own position within the sponsor company
- 4) Research how to improve the communications in the future

Based on the theoretical framework, the themes were created. Below, in the table 4, the main question and the sub questions and the themes are categorized with the relevant theory from the theoretical framework. The questions were formed so that the main question and the objective is visible in all questions.

Question	Theories	Themes
<i>Objective: How the business model communication impacts to the commitment of the employees?</i>	<i>All theories</i>	<i>All themes</i>
<b>How to improve the communications in the future?</b>	Internal Communication Strategy in Change / How to Message Effectively in the Change	Internal Communication Future of the organization
<b>Feedback on the quality and timing of the change communication</b>	Internal Communication Framework / How to Message Effectively in the Change	Communication During the Change
<b>How the change impacts to the commitment of the employees?</b>	Employee Commitment to Change	Trust / Manager – Employee Relationship Role Autonomy
<b>How the employees feel about the future of the organization and their own position within the sponsor company?</b>	Employee Commitment to Change	Turnover Intentions Learning

Table 4: Objective, Questions, Theories and Themes. (Turtinen, R. 2015)

#### 4.1 Communication Improvements for the Future

For the communication improvements theme, the corresponding themes in the interviews were the status of the communication in general and the future of the organization. The generic communication feedback and the future of the organization are linked because through the communication, the employees are forming their view of the future of the organization.

##### **Question 1) Generally, how do you think the communication in the organization is handled? 1a) Give examples of the communications?**

Several respondents mention that there is an information overload of the communications coming from the organization and one of the respondents uses word 'chaotic' when describing the current communication flow. There are several methods used for the communication and the communication preference varies by each respondent. Some of the respondents prefer calls and some would like to receive the communication via email or through a private social network.

The limitations for internalizing the information, browsing through all available communications and monitoring all information channels is mentioned to be the lack of time: "I think there is a lot of information in a sense of pushing quite a lot of information into your direction and it's up to you to digest and read all the information that is available. I think we do not have enough time to read everything that's available." and "The main issue I find is the lack of time that some of our team peers have, including me, from the workload, to take a look around all communications sent especially via private social network (Yammer)."

In the current communication, the respondents would like to see more information on why a certain decision or change has been made: "Sometimes I have feeling that quite impactful decisions are taken somewhere without having really thought of consequences or having thought it completely through." and "If there's there are specific changes made in the tools or processes and so on, it might not always be as clear as why the change occurred."

In addition, the current communication flow would need to be simplified according to one of the respondents: "I think sometimes it would actually make my work easier if the communication was simplified a bit more." There is also a suggestion to flag different kind of communications before sending it out to make the follow-up easier for the respondent: "Perhaps if we had different ways to flag different types of communication like if it was for awareness only or for immediate attention or if it's a big impact to our role that we need to be aware of, that might be useful."

### **Question 1b) Do you receive enough information on our goals as an organization?**

Most of the respondents feel that the goals are well informed to them. If they feel uncertain of some communication coming from the higher level, they are going to their direct manager to get a clarification. One of the main concerns around the goal communication is that some of the respondents feel that the communication of the goals is not always landing well with respect to their day-to-day work and is too difficult to apply it to the practice and understand what steps to take to make the goal tangible in their work. Some of the examples of the responses on this are: "I think we are well aware of our mission and strategy and our goals on a really high level but I think we would need more information of the practical application and the requirements from us to achieve those goals." and "The goals are clear but maybe what is not that clear is how to get to these goals because there's so many initiatives ongoing and we are learning as we go."

The current goals of the organization through the change are also viewed as a positive development by several respondents. The understanding on why the transformation has been done and why the new business model has been launched are helping the respondents to trust to the direction of the organization. Some of the quotes around this are: "We are more aligned now

than we have been for a long time. I think that the goal and what we are trying to achieve is good." and "I think the management has been very clear in telling us the reasons behind the new business model. They have given us the framework to work out of."

### **Question 7) How do you see the future of the organization?**

Overall, the respondents see that the business model change is just a first step towards globalization of the organization and they are expecting to see more focus teams and a centralized approach in the future. They feel strongly that local teams are still needed but not in as large scale as the teams have used to function in the past. The respondents are expecting headcount reduction and more streamlined processes in the future. The positive expectations are about the agility of the organization, enhanced by the better business intelligence and the deeper relationships with the subject matter experts. The possibilities are seen also in the co-operation with other business groups.

The local teams are expected to lose the head-count, possibly in having only one local team member in each subsidiary. The headcount is expected to be transferred to the centralized teams: "I see that OneTeam will be extending their scope so there will be more and more scenarios they will pick up. From the volume perspective, there will be much more volume going to the central team. That means that there will be further headcount that will be allocated for them. I think those headcounts will be taken from the local teams so I see that local teams will be pushed down a little bit now meaning they will handle less cases. I also think that maybe we will cut down some engagement activities and some reporting activities and all other ad hoc work from the local level. "

On the other hand, the respondents see the possibilities for the focus teams and in growing the expertise about the scenarios the focus teams are handling. This supports the agility of the organization and also streamlines the organization better with the key areas of the overall company: "I think we will see that the volume continues to be even higher for the focus teams. Those are the key bets for the Company. I think we will continue to see more members included into the focus teams and those members will become more and more specialized."

One of the respondents is expecting more alignment with the business groups in the future and wants to know more when and how this will be done. The alignment is viewed to be an important factor for the future of the organization: "We need to align with other business groups. We need to discuss with other business groups around what is their need and what we can supply for them. We need to make an agreement on how we want to go on and what additional value we can deliver to change their way of selling, processes or the problems. That must be the key for the future." Also another respondent is high-

lighting that the possibilities could be in the pre-sales space: "I think we can have an important role in the pre-sales space if we know how to sell our value."

## **4.2 Feedback of the Quality and Timing of the Change Communication**

The theme for the feedback of the quality and timing in the change communications was the 2<sup>nd</sup> set of questions. Through the questions the aim was to achieve an overview if the goals of the change initiative and especially the quality of the communication has been in a good level during the change.

### **Question 2) Do you think you know enough about the change itself?**

The respondents felt mostly well informed about the current change. The change steps were clear and the information that we are not ready yet and do not have all the answers at this point because the change is seen as a journey, was clear to the respondents. The trust towards the leadership of the organization was shown in the responses: "We have new processes and we are still evaluating those processes, and I think that transformation is occurring and we need a little bit of time to see what is coming from these changes and for sure the leadership team will communicate that on the right time." Also, some team members felt that the change was not fully clear for the leadership team either. For example, one of the comment included: "I think it's communicated but I think there are way too many things left out on the decision and on the communication just because they don't know themselves." One of the respondents formed this the following way: "But the end results is not really clear and I don't really have a feeling that this is something they want to communicate about so it's still a little bit of guessing which I don't think it's good in a sense people start to imagining things and making up their own opinions."

There were some concerns around the gaps in the communication. The concerns from the local team members around the knowledge of the change were mostly focused into the shift of the workload. The role and work of the focus team were clear for them but what the local team members would be doing in the future, was seen as a concern and as a gap in the communication. The local team members felt that they are lacking the clear instructions and goals. The gap was especially in the information on what they should achieve and do with the time that is now freed up and the respondents felt that the change communications are not bringing the clarity they would need to continue working normally.

For the caseload shift, there was also a feedback around the clarity and transparency of the communication coming from the new focus teams. The local team member wanted to know more of the processes and triages and the overall process a case goes through when it is han-



dled by the focus team. There is not enough information shared on how the focus team triages and handles the case differently and what steps they take. According to some of the answers, this kind of transparency would bring extra value for the local team members.

The focus team members brought up the issue with the workload. The priorities were not at this stage clearly formed and this caused them to try to balance between the local team responsibilities, the local stakeholder contacts and the focus team work. The focus team members were also asking for clarification on the roles and responsibilities and more information about how to divide the work between the local responsibilities and the focus team work.

There were also some questions on how the change has been communicated to the external stakeholders in the company, if it has been communicated, and could we enhance the communication towards the local stakeholders so they could better understand how we change. Also, one of the reasons for the change was to align better with the change in the overall company strategy. There were also some questions if the team has received enough information around the alignment of the organization and other business groups: "I only thought if it's really aligned with all other goals and plans with other business groups and product groups so in that factor if they are really aligned but I don't have information on that.. I hope so." This can be taken as a suggestion for the future communications.

**Question 2a) based on the change communications, do you trust that the direction and the change for our organization is right when comparing it to our goal as an organization?**

This question was a bit unclear for the respondents and in many occasions, the interviewer needed to elaborate and re-phrase the question. The question was often shortened so that the part around comparing to the goals of the organization was removed.

The direction and the goal of the organization that is going to be achieved through this change was clear to most of the respondents. The direction the organization is taking with this change was described with phrases: 'being logical', 'streamlined with the entire company', 'completely aligned with the goals', 'making the organization better placed than ever' and 'offers possibilities for higher impact'.

The concerns that were raised around the direction and the new goals are about the speed of the change. For example, one of the comments states: "What we are doing right now is right but we need to speed it up". The agility and speed of the organization as a goal is also a concern in the context of the change. "I think the most important thing is to get it in the end simple. Like now we are

building complexity because we discover sub scenarios and issues but in the end hopefully we will get back to a simple process again." And also "we are facilitating things, we are creating more layers in the process. And more processes coming new stuff is not facilitating this direction and decision making." When asking a clarifying question around this answer if the change makes us slower, the answer is: "Which goes a bit against the strategy of the company as whole in terms of being agile and being customer oriented. Customer oriented also means we need to be faster in resolving and fixing stuff."

The goal and the impact of the change is also causing concerns about the impact towards the local stakeholders. The new direction is also seen as a threat for the stability of the team. One of the comment around this states: "The people still should be able also to handle the local work and they should still be able to handle the engagement even though they are in focus team." In some of the answers, the team members feel that they should have heard more about the change possibility before the change was actually launched, and a brainstorming session would have been good as the change decision might not have taken into consideration how the new process is impacting in the local level for the day-to-day work of the employees. "I think if we would have gotten the opportunity beforehand to think together with them I think it would be much better prepared than what we are doing right now".

Also, one the answers is highlighting the issue that was also brought up in the change communication topic by another employee. There is a need to tie together the processes so that the organization would have a closer relationship with the other organizations and understanding of their views as soon as possible. "I think we should try to better understand the views of the product group and the other persons and those type of people as well. I don't think we are there yet."

### **Question 2b) is there some feedback on the information flow from the Senior Leadership during this change?**

Overall, the feedback about the Senior Leadership communication during the change is positive. The communication style and the communication methods are liked by most of the respondents. One of the answers gives especially positive feedback on the selected method: "the top management relies on the technique to place the most important info several times. So they are not outdated in reminding and having it in our mind in various emails and communications forms, its woven in actual topic involved in every team meeting so it's about reputation and I think they chose this approach". Although, another answer highlights that sometimes the communication is overall too positive and the aspects that are difficult for the organization are not covered well enough by the Senior Leadership.

The possibility to discuss directly with the Senior Leadership through a smaller group discussion is mentioned in several answers as a positive opportunity. Senior Leadership communication is also described with sentences: 'covering different aspects of the organization' and 'explained it really clearly so we as local members can understand it'.

The feedback about what the interviewees would like to see more from the Senior Leadership is focused to the change and the impact of the change towards the respondent's own position in the organization after the change. Several answers highlight that would be good to have a clear roadmap of the change project visible to the whole community: "Maybe they should have provided some kind of a change framework".

The concern around the changing roles and the respondent's own position in the organization is also coming through in the Senior Leadership change communication answers: "would be great to have something written down, you know just to really see black and white: this is it and this is what our tasks are now.." and "Right now I think we are still in a bit of a limbo we want to do everything with same amount of resources but we need to make some difficult and tough decisions where we really want to prioritize our resources and I don't feel that communication or even the decision itself has been communicated out yet. ".

There is also feedback around the Senior Leadership communication in the beginning of change: "In the beginning, it was a bit unclear what this is and how it would actually work. In the beginning when this came up I think they could have tried to communicate it a bit clearer to calm people down". The same respondents states that the later follow-up change communication has been clearer. Also, sometimes, the communication is in too specialized level and hard to be understood by the newer employees: "They know everything so sometimes they are assuming we have information that we don't".

#### **Question 2d) Overall, do you see any signs that the change has been successful yet?**

The success of the change is according to the respondents already seen in the satisfaction level of the local stakeholders who submit the cases into the system. For example, some of the answers highlight that the satisfaction of the submitters has increased since launch of the new model: "Our local submitters are in general very satisfied with the outcome of the work from the focus teams. They are really satisfied and I think there is also a trust that also somebody who they actually never met and who they don't know that they still are capable of handling their cases." and "The biggest selling point to our to field is to be having experts handling cases and that will enable them to get resolved or escalated faster and also resolved faster I do see that happening..". One of the respondents informs that the new business model is not yet fully internalized by the local stakeholders in the subsidiary: "Of course people don't

like so much of the change when things were good as they were in the past" but in general, the responses around the success from the local perspective are positive.

Few of the respondents think that it is too early to tell if the change has been successful, despite of the positive indicators. They want to await at least to the next fiscal year before being able to determine the success of the new model.

For the local team, the change has provided a lot of freedom to use their time into the tasks they were not able to focus before. The local team members can concentrate on deep dives in the specific topics, to the business engagement and other activities in the local subsidiary that they were unable to focus at larger scale before due the lack of time. Also, the local teams are expecting to have more business insights from the focus teams for their engagement activities before being fully able to utilize the new business model in the subsidiaries.

The respondents who are currently being working in the focus teams also see the success of the new setup. The focus team member respondents see that by focusing to a specific topic they gain following advantages: 'deeper insight in information we receive', 'you learn and evolve in that topic', 'add value to what we are doing', 'establish better relationships' and 'more efficiency'.

The concerns raised around the success of the new business model highlight that not all the aspects are yet fully finalized in the new model, for example: "I do see a lot of benefits from the new system and the new strategy we are going for and I'm pretty sure it can be successful. There are just at the moment way too many things that are not clear and that are not defined and that are going wrong and we are seeing that we were completely inefficient and that all needs to be worked out. I think that with the new system and the model it is logical that not everything is figured out beforehand."

The workload issue for the focus team members is also raised in several comments: "The core members of the largest focus teams have workload issues. I see that they have hard time to plan development time because something is more important every time they try to reserve some time for development and self-development time." and "In terms of workload I have seen a huge improvement but I see that for my peers added to the focus teams are quite loaded so I think there is still some work ahead to balance the different workloads in if in the local teams and the focus teams better."

### 4.3 The Impact of Change to the Commitment of the Employees

The questions about the impact of the change to the commitment of the employees are in the themes around trust and the manager-employee relationship and also in the role autonomy theme. Based on the theory, role autonomy, positive relationship with the manager and trust have a significant impact to the commitment level of the employees.

#### **Question 3) how your manager has been informing you around this change**

All the answers are positive around the level, frequency and quality of the direct manager communication. The discussion about the change with the direct manager is described to be open, honest, clear and transparent. Some of the quotes of the communication quality through direct manager are for example: "The manager is available for questions and deep-dives and knows what they say and what they are talking about, so they are kind of trusted advisors of the changes and really tries to share insights and personal opinions regarding the short term, mid-term and long term direction." , "I think they have been informing us very well as much as they can and as soon as they can." and "I consider the communication I have with my manager being very good. I think it's that kind of person who doesn't feel shy to share anything with the team."

The respondents especially highlight that the one-to-one discussions with the direct manager are adding value to the understanding of the impact of the change for them in an individual level. The respondents feel that they can ask even the difficult questions around the change from their direct manager: "I feel that if I had any questions around it that were burning I could absolutely contact the manager." and "I think we have a manager who is really open for dialogue."

The direct managers are taking time to explain the changes for the respondents also in the individual level if the communication received from the global level is not clear enough. One of the respondents hopes that there won't be any changes for the communication level with the direct manager because there is currently nothing to be improved: "Nothing to really point out or improve. I'm just hoping that it at least continues in a way it's going."

#### **Question 3a) do you have any improvement ideas for the communication through managers?**

The direct managers are seen being really supportive and interested in the work of the respondents throughout the answers. One of the improvement ideas is linked to the overall organization change process and the respondent hopes that the manager could help in getting the roles and responsibilities of the team members in the new setup clarified: "I think there's also

a role for my line manager to play in driving the clarity about the roles of the focus team members and the local team members. The discussion has been ongoing since we launched the business model."

The respondents realize that the direct managers might be in the same situation as they are and they might not have all the answers available on the new business model: "I don't see them as being very involved in the actual project itself and they are a kind of same place as us so they are looking to see the results too."

There are only few clear improvement ideas shared on the direct manager communications. One of the respondents hopes more joint team meetings with the whole team and especially more co-operation and a good practice sharing between the local teams. The focus teams have their own sync calls and the local team is not yet as aligned.

**Question 4) how do you see your possibilities to impact to your day-to-day work and has it changed lately? 4a) Could you describe the change?**

There is a difference when comparing the results from the question around the day-to-day work impact possibilities between the team members who are working in a local team and the ones who are part of the focus teams. The local team members are more positive around their possibilities to impact to their work in a day-to-day basis.

The local team members feel that they have a possibility to have an impact to the business through their work and they have more autonomy to decide how they work than they had before. The extra time they have available is used for the engagement, the stakeholder meetings, some trainings and different projects. The work itself has transformed a lot after the launch of the focus teams and they feel empowered to decide how to utilize their time to make the impact within the subsidiaries.

The quotes from the local team answers are for example: "For me, it didn't change rapidly because of the focus teams because I have the same opportunity even with less cases. There are still opportunities to have an impact and I would not say that it did decrease." and "I really see that I get less cases at the moment. So of course this is then a structural change and the time of the year so its combination but I am able to finally take the self-development days and I'm able to do the trainings just occasionally and spend more time with the local submitters. In addition, I have more time to participate in the stakeholder meetings and to the trainings for the new hires and so on. So at the moment this very convenient because I can use the time I get to convert it to impact for revenue."

The focus team members are commenting that they don't have as much autonomy currently to impact on how their workday is arranged. They understand that the change is being formed and some of the reasons for the lack of time and the larger workload is caused because of the transition period. Some of the quotations from the answers are: "It's a new process that still needs to fold in place. I think that we need to have more control over our job/workload and have more power to push back. I think that's one of the things I am trying to learn and fully figure out what can and what can't be done." and "I think into a certain extend I can impact to it. I can go back to my manager and I can suggest making certain modifications to the daily work so I feel fairly empowered."

Despite the focus team members are having more workload, they still feel empowered to decide on how they split the workday for certain tasks. They also comment that this is a great opportunity for them to be able to develop their skills in a certain product or service and become an expert. The workload seems to be an issue at this point but the possibility to grow in the role is seen as a positive side. They also feel empowered to ask for support from their direct manager if the workload causes issues, but because they feel that being part of the focus team is bringing lots of interesting new challenges, they might not ask for support if the workload is temporarily higher.

#### **4.4 The Future of the Organization and the Employees**

The themes for the future of the organization and the employee's own position within it were the turnover intentions and learning. The turnover intentions shows how committed the employees feel on the change and how they are currently feeling about their own position within the organization. The learning theme gives more information on how the employees see the learning being a part of their future as the change always requires learning.

#### **Question 5) How do you see your future in the company? 5a) What is your next step in your career or have you thought about it?**

Almost all respondents felt that their future in the company is positive and they are seeing many career opportunities within the organization or outside of the organization but within the company. There were several reasons and justifications why the career prospects were seen inside of the organization and several paths mentioned as a possible next career step.

The opportunities inside of the organization for the local team members were mostly around moving to the focus team. Many of the respondents who currently work in the local team would like to investigate an opportunity to move to the focus team in some point: "I'm really

fond of Product A and the Cloud and I'm trying to learn about this as much as I can now and maybe as a next step something in that direction with the Cloud and the focus teams." and "Well I would like to join to focus team to be an expert."

The other opportunities within the organization were seen more limited. The respondents mentioned possibilities in the area level and also in the program management inside of the organization but also mentioned that there is not so many positions available in the area level and if the position is available in the global level, it is out of reach because of the need for relocation. The reasons for thinking of the possibilities outside of the organization were justified by a need to change at some point to a different role because of the career development: "I love the organization right now but one day I think I will move more to a role that really has the direct interactions with customers and partners."

The focus team members saw the recent business model change as a career step and were satisfied with the change and the opportunity the change has brought to them. The quotes from the focus team work were for example: "Since I was included in a focus team I stopped looking for jobs outside the organization. As such it has changed that I now see I have a long career prospects within the organization." and "Now I'm comfortable on what I'm doing and I don't see a need to do step out and do something else at the moment but if there's a chance why not."

#### **Question 6) During this change, do you think you have learnt a lot of new?**

In the learning aspect of the change, there is also fragmentation in the responses depending if the team member is a part of the local team or the focus team. Some of the local team members are feeling left out in a certain level from the learning possibilities and options during this change and they commented that there has not been yet many learning opportunities for them: "No learning opportunities at all at the moment. I think it's a feeling that is shared with quite many local team members: what is our added value and what we will be trained to and what we have to do. There is a lot of uncertainty about that and if there's something that is not clear not communicated."

There are also some learning possibilities seen from the local team member perspective. The change in the role is seen as an opportunity to learn new, but there is not yet enough tools and training opportunities provided by the organization to achieve these goals: "If you are a local team member you will become an expert in presenting and processes and explaining in really being the face of organization." and "I suppose I'm thinking my role differently now. It's not just about the case management but I'm also thinking more about how I can make more of an impact within the subsidiary and how I can also make so much more of an impact in my role because the role has shifted quite a radically for me because I'm not part of the focus team."



For the focus team members, the business model has been viewed to offer many learning opportunities. There are some concerns around the workload and the lack of time for learning for the focus team members: "At the same time I would like to dive deeper into it and at this moment I don't have a feeling I can."

The change is inspiring the focus team members to learn more of their future field of expertise and this is also showing in their answers around learning possibilities: "It's definitely pushing me more into finding out more about how the entire Product A works and all different aspects.", "The focus team members have the ability and also have the time and the cases to dig deeper into only one area of knowledge so they have the opportunity to not only have some superficial knowledge but they really can go deep there." and "There is also a big need for me to learn because I'm moving from a generalist to a specialist. I need to understand much deeper all the processes and the features around a certain offering."

**Question 6a) Does this change require lot of learning from you and have you received enough info about it?**

The respondents highlight that the learning is one part of the organization culture. The change does require learning, but because the organization is working in a field where knowledge is one of the main resources for the organization, the employees feel that they are learning constantly and they are required to learn all the time. The organization offers a good background for the learning opportunities according to the respondents: "I know that our organization is one of the organizations that really tries to pull it together like our global knowledge management OneNote and our employees are very hard working to get the right information."

In addition, the overall company is providing a lot of resources and learning opportunities for the employees. The respondents mention many possibilities to find information and get trained inside of the company. The concern raised is that there isn't tailored trainings for the local teams that would help them to adjust to the change in their role and the respondents would appreciate these: "I would be appreciate more information and the insights how we can learn more." and "Sometimes it is hard to set up a development plan because no-one tells you if you should first study for example the onboarding for Office 365 or if you should start with a basic licensing information."

#### **4.5 Observations on the Communication during the Change**

The researcher has made some observations during the change about the communication flow from the direct management, the Senior Leadership, the project work stream leads and the

global program managers during the change process. The researcher is a part of the team and in the same information level as the respondents joining to the interviews. The researcher is a focus team member within one of the focus teams that started in the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase.

### **Senior Leadership Communication**

The Senior Leadership communication has been done through the Senior Leadership emails for the whole team, Quarterly Business Update (QBU) calls (global business update call, every 3<sup>rd</sup> month) and area specific calls (per area, monthly). In addition, the Senior Leadership is also having targeted discussion sessions with a group of the employees from each time zone approx. once a month. The sessions are not directly about the change but the employees can suggest a change and ask questions during these meetings.

The Senior Leadership has been keeping the business model change in their agenda and the topic is covered several times in the calls and in the email communication. The message is repeated and every time there has been a bigger change or a milestone in the project, the Senior Leadership has sent an email around it and brought the change up in the calls. The issue with this selected communication method is that the employees do not always have time to read the emails. The calls are conducted once a month in the area level and every 3<sup>rd</sup> month in the global level. The recordings are available for the employees who are unable to join. It is the participant's own responsibility to be focusing into the messages in the calls, but the workload might make it challenging: some of the members are working during the calls and paying half of the attention to the messages because they prioritize the cases they are handling.

When comparing the Senior Leadership communication to the theoretical framework, there are some correlation with the Senior Leadership communication and the suggestions in the framework. For example, one of the key points for the organization to consider in a successful change implementation is to take the employees' psychological processes into account in the change strategy as well. (Elias, 2009, 38). The Senior Leadership has constantly emphasized that the change is a journey for the organization and we are learning as we go and doing adjustments when necessary, during the journey. Through this messaging, the employees can adjust to the uncertainty caused by the change and remain confident about the change – if the aspects they have concerns with is not covered, they can impact to the change through the feedback if necessary.

## **Direct Management Communication**

The direct managers are communicating weekly with the employees through one-to-one discussions and through the workgroup calls, in the smaller groups and also in the joint calls with the whole workgroup in the target area of the study, Western Europe. The direct managers sends out emails as well and the internal social network (Yammer) is also utilized as a communication method.

The direct managers are through their communication clarifying the change as much as they can and also collecting the feedback from the team. The time in the calls is limited and the questions and the open discussion around the change with the workgroup is not always optimal. The reason for this is also the workload. Not all the team members can give their full attention to the calls because their workload is currently so high that the normal work hours are stretched. Overall, the direct manager communication is honest, clear and they are doing their best to ensure that the feedback of the workgroup members is taken into consideration in the overall change project.

## **The Communication through the Work Stream Leads and Global Program Managers**

The work stream leads are the global resources who are working directly with the change project. They are mostly communicating via email and are joining to the global / area calls as well when necessary to cover the change as a topic in more detail. In the beginning of the change, also an internal social network site for the change was founded, but this communication channel has not been utilized much after the launch.

The work stream lead communication is not always consistent. The team members are not certain who are the work stream leads currently and this information is not so easy to find from the internal SharePoint site. Especially in the beginning of the project, the communication would have been good to be received consistently, but in the normal employee level the communications of the change were coming in only rarely by email. This caused more concerns for the employees because of the lack of transparency.

The Global Program Managers are leading the focus teams. This communication has been sent by email. The focus team updates have been clear especially in the beginning of the launch of the each focus team. To make it easier for the employees to monitor all the different stages of the project, it would have been beneficial to add these communications to the internal SharePoint site, to an easy location, for the employees to return as the emails are easy to be

misplaced and deleted. In addition, this communication would have good to be centralized to come through one main contact to ensure consistency.

#### **4.6 Summary: Business Model Change and Employee Commitment**

For the general communication in the organization, the respondents use the term '*communication overload*' in almost all of the answers. The main takeaway from the overall communication feedback for the leadership team could be to consider to add more information on why some changes in the processes and practices were done, into the communication and think some good ways on how to resolve the information overload issues. One of the suggestions in the answers was to add a flagging method into the communication so that the employees could understand better when to prioritize the messaging.

Dessler (1999, 59) argued that the employees should be informed around the mission of the organization and given clear guidelines on how they can support the mission. According to the answers received, there is still room for improvements with the mission sharing, especially around the goals of the organization. Some of the employees are not certain why some decisions are done and also the goals are viewed not easy enough to be applied to the practice in their day-to-day work.

According to the respondents the change communication has been clear and informative. The beginning of the change has been not as optimal, but now when the change is in the last phase, the communications have improved. The local team members are still uncertain on how their work is transforming. Some aimed communication for the local team members would be needed soon to avoid extra confusion. In addition, there is room for improvement in the co-operation of the local teams and the focus teams. The feedback is that there's duplication of efforts and this should be investigated more deeply.

Overall, the respondents appreciate the communication coming from their direct manager and also from the Senior Leadership. They describe the communication being honest and clear. According to Lines et al. (2005, 222) in a change, the employees are re-evaluating their trust to the management. The results from the answers indicate that the employees within the target group are trusting the decisions and direction the organization is taking. They are feeling confident that the direction is right for the organization and the change is needed.

The employees also are quite positive about their job autonomy, although there are some differences depending on which team the respondent is working in. In the local team, the respondents are feeling that they have a lot of flexibility to determine how they utilize their time. In the focus teams, the respondents describe their work day to be hectic and have less autonomy than the local team members due to the workload. Overall, the job autonomy is still seen as a positive side of the work by the respondents. In the theoretical framework, for example the research done by Park and Searcy (2011, 312) confirmed that if the employees have enough autonomy in their work, their mental well-being and the organizational commitment is improved. Based on the responses, this also applies in the target team of this study.

The turnover in a change initiative is categorized by Morrell et al. (2004, 171) to two categories: the base level *unavoidable* turnover that will rise when the level of the change increases. There is also the *avoidable* turnover that the companies could reduce by intervention. Based on the results from the survey in this study, all the respondents except one are seeing their future in the company and have considered the next step inside of the organization or in some other position within the Company. This indicates that the turnover caused by the change is minimal at this stage in the target team.

O'Hara (1996) stated that it is important that the change process also includes a learning experience for the employees and supports the individual learning in the change. The results from the interviews in this survey confirm that the learning experience is a part of this change as well, but mostly for the focus team members. Some of the local team members are seeing learning opportunities in the change for them as well, but these aspects are not as clear as for the focus team members. This is something that the organization should be focusing in. It is important that all employees who are impacted by the change are feeling that they can learn from the change to ensure the success of the change initiative.

The five message components –model by Bernerth (2004, 41-46) is a good framework for the internal change communication. In this change, some parts of the messaging model are clear and some of the parts could be improved.

1. **Self-efficacy** – *the employees' own judgments of their ability to perform certain tasks.*

In this change: The focus of the change communication and the process changes communication has been on the employees who are moving to the focus teams. Self-efficacy is an issue for the local team members because they are giving feedback that

the communication does not include enough information how they can make the impact in the change and what is their role in the future.

2. **Principal support** – *The commitment from the formal and informal organizational leaders for successful implementation of the change.*

In this change: The leaders and also the informal leaders seem to be consistent in their change messaging because almost all the respondents are behind the change and think that the change is needed and good for the organization. This indicates that the principal support in this change is working.

3. **Discrepancy and appropriateness** - *Through the discrepancy message, the leaders are showing the need of the change.*

In this change: The vision of the change is clear for all the respondents. There is some feedback provided in the answers on how the change and the goals of the organization are impacting to the day-to-day work of the employees and how the employees could achieve the goals. This is not fully clear to the employees at this stage.

4. **Personal Valence** - *This is the personal benefit and impact to their well-being that the employees achieve from the change.*

In this change: The possibilities to get further in the career by joining to the focus teams and becoming an expert are positive possibilities for the respondents. The concern in the personal valence –message is that most of the respondents are expecting head-count cuts from the future of the organization. This might impact to the motivation and the support of the change efforts.

The results from a survey Company carries out every year to measure the work satisfaction are just being published. One of the questions asked in the survey is "What are the top two words you would use to describe your day to day work environment?" Below in Figure 12, is a word cloud from the organization member's answers in this year. The same words, 'challenging' and 'busy' are the main words used 2<sup>nd</sup> time in a row in the survey. These themes are also visible in the answers provided by the respondents in the qualitative research conducted for this study.



Figure 12: Organization's Internal Survey Results. (2015)

## 5 Recommendations and Conclusions

In this chapter, the recommendations for the Sponsor Company are given based on the previous chapter results. Also the implementation possibilities of the recommendations is discussed under each theme. In the end of the chapter, the implementation possibilities are summarized for each category.

### 5.1 Recommendations and Implementation Suggestions

Below, the recommendations for the Sponsor Company are grouped by the themes. There are some suggestions for each theme, but most for the internal communication in the change.

#### **Internal Communication**

The respondents stated that there's a communication overload in the organization. This should be addressed for example by grouping certain communications together, streamlining the communication so that the same type of communications are coming in one email and the email is flagged depending on what kind of information it contains.

The feedback also contained concerns on why certain change or process improvement is done in the organization. An improvement would be to add more information on why a certain change has been done. This would make it easier for the employees in the organization to stand behind the change and act accordingly. This should be always in the beginning of the communication.

The implementation of the improvements could be to discuss and add certain policies to the internal communication like for example for the process change communication should always include reasons why the change is done. Other possibility is to identify the correct routes for the communication and develop a flagging system for different types of communication.

#### **Communication during the Change**

There are several points that could be taken into consideration in the communication during this change that could improve the employee commitment. According to the respondents, the goals of the organization are not always clear for them. The recommendation for the management is to get a better overview for especially the local teams on what is expected from



them, how they can make impact after this change and how they should utilize the time that is freed up by the change better.

The co-operation with the business groups and the product groups and other internal stakeholder groups is another improvement idea for the change communication. There might be already plans on how to deepen the co-operation and use the results coming from the business model change, but these should also be communicated clearly to the employees.

In addition, some of the respondents summarized that they feel the new business model bringing more complexity to the processes and this is not aligned with the company overall goals to be agile and fast-paced. The complexity issues should be investigated more and the processes should be improved based on the feedback. This might be linked with the lack of information for the local teams around what processes the focus teams are following. In order to clarify this, more transparency should be created between the focus teams and the local teams to avoid misunderstandings.

A clear roadmap and the framework of the change should be shared with the organization members. This might be already done for the project, but not shared with the wider audience. If this could be shared with the organization members, this would support the transparency of the organization.

The implementation for some part of the feedback is straight-forward because the feedback seems to be more of an information gap between the local team members and some internal stakeholder who is owning the process feedback applies to. Especially the feedback about the goals and how these goals can be achieved in the local level, might be just a small change to the communication. This can be asked to be considered by the leadership team and inform the teams after more tangible ways to achieve goals have been identified and linked together.

The co-operation with the other stakeholder groups is something that is probably already been planned for the next fiscal year because the transformation is continuing. This might be harder to be owned because there's elements of the focus team co-operation and also higher level management should have these discussions with other groups and message efficiently about this back to the employees. This should be also part of the communication as early stage as possible – so this is also a suggestion for the leadership team to discuss and inform the employees when possible.

If the roadmap and the framework of the change are not something that are already ready for change, the implementation of this feedback might be too late for this change. For the future, the recommendation is to have a clear time line of the steps of the change, the critical points and the next steps as a roadmap for the wider audience in the organization. In this change the difficulty might have been that there are so many stakeholders who are messaging about the change and who cover only one aspect of the change, so more streamlined process of the change communication would be beneficial in the future change projects to avoid confusion or possible information overload.

### **Trust / Manager-Employee Relationship**

The direct manager communication was one of the most positive themes in the research. The respondents would appreciate more information on the roles and responsibilities for the local team and the focus team members. Currently, some of the respondents are seeing some duplication of efforts. In addition, the workload issues are something that the direct managers could impact directly. The local team members are feeling a bit left out from the change currently. One of the suggestions is to create similar syncs for the local team members as the focus team members are having to share best practices and discuss their role in general.

The workload issue needs to be addressed by the direct managers. The reason for the issue is the new process but the direct managers are most aware of the workload distribution between the team members. In addition, the direct managers can also work with the local and focus teams members to help to create more fluent model of the co-operation. Also, the implementation of the local team sync calls should go through the local managers. In here, an important point is that the focus team members should not be included to avoid workload issues caused by more sync calls.

### **Role Autonomy**

In the role autonomy, the feedback received is that the success measures for the business model change are not shared clearly and this is also making it hard for the respondents to understand what they are required to do in the future. It would be good if the management of the organization could share these success measures with the employees as soon as possible so that they can understand their position in the organization better. The measurements should be tangible and applicable also to the local level.

The other issue that is causing confusion for the respondents is the workload. The current workload for some team members is causing them not being able to reflect and develop themselves in the work.

The success measures for the local teams should be shared by the management as soon as possible to avoid extra confusion. The respondents are still awaiting head-count cuts so this should be clarified again with a possible long-term plan of the self-development for the team members.

### **Turnover Intentions**

The respondents are quite satisfied for their position in the organization and for the work they are doing. Every respondent had some ideas on what they would like to do next in their career and most local team members saw a career path to develop themselves and join to the focus team as a next step. Some feedback received was around other options within the organization. The respondents did not see a lot of opportunities outside of the focus teams in the organization.

The development needed to avoid turnover and to keep the talent within the organization is to develop a career paths inside of the organization with clear steps on how to get into the next level and towards the role the employee is aiming to achieve inside of the organization. The new setup with the local and focus teams is seen as a possibility, but it is not clear what kind of trainings and development is needed to move from the local team to the focus team. This kind of activities should be considered in the next fiscal year within a suitable workgroup.

### **Learning**

Also in the learning theme, one of the issues is the workload distribution. Some of the respondents do not have time to have self-development days or reflect on what they are doing in detail so the learning for them is not in an optimal level comparing to what they are expected to achieve in their role.

Other team members have more time for learning activities and self-development. The local team members would like to have clear table of trainings that they could do to meet the new targets and success measures. Because the success measures and targets are not clear for them, it is not easy to continue the learning in the work. The company is offering a lot of resources

and trainings for self-development, but it is hard to filter suitable possibilities without clear directions and guidelines.

The other learning improvement possibility is to develop a career path from the local team to the focus team. In the past, when the employees were all generalists, the gap in knowledge between employees was not high. With the new setup, when the local team members stop handling certain type of cases, the gap in knowledge in those products and services is rising. The gap might be so large in a year that developing towards a focus team will become impossible or cause different knowledge levels in the focus teams. This is not optimal for the employees and for their development.

The transfer and learning plan from the local team to the focus team should be created as soon as possible. Also, different kind of possibilities to ensure that the employees are not losing valuable information and knowledge should be considered like for example by adding a buddy system between a focus team member and the local team member who aims to get into a specific focus team. Also a possibility is to get an optional invitation to the focus team sync calls for the local team members, for example once in half year. The trainings and other education possibilities should be listed somewhere logically as there's an overload for information available and starting is hard for the employees when they try to select suitable training and self-development options.

Below, the themes and improvement areas and recommendations for the improvement area, are summarized. This table includes both results from the qualitative research and from the observations.

Theme	Improvement Area	Recommendations
<p><b>Internal Communication</b></p>	<p><b>Information overload</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider to add themes into the communications, for example for Immediate Attention, For Information Only etc.</li> <li>• If possible, group more communication together to avoid too many emails from the different stakeholders about the same subject</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Clarification on why the change is done</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add the information on why the change was done in the beginning of the emails that containing a process change</li> </ul>

<b>Communication during the Change</b>	<b>Goals of the Organization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The goals of the organization should be linked to the work of the employees</li> <li>• The goals should include 1) What is expected from the local teams, 2) How they can impact after the change and 3) How they should utilize the time freed up</li> </ul>
	<b>Co-operation with the external stakeholder groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The plan about a deeper co-operation with the business groups and the product groups could be shared with the teams.</li> </ul>
	<b>Complexity of the New Processes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The complexity feedback should be investigated and fixed to avoid adding too many layers and new obstacles that might hinder the agility of the organization</li> </ul>
	<b>Framework / Roadmap of the Change Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If available, share the roadmap and the framework of the change project with the team to ensure further understanding and the transparency of the change</li> </ul>
<b>Trust / Manager-Employee Relationship</b>	<b>Local Team Role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a clear role matrix between the local team role and the focus team role and the clear success measures per role</li> <li>• Discuss with the local team members if a separate good practice sync call would be needed by the local teams</li> </ul>
	<b>Workload</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate more possibilities on more even workload distribution in the area</li> </ul>
<b>Role Autonomy</b>	<b>Success Measures of the Local Team Role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This links to the goals as an organization, creation of the clear success measures and impact indicators for the local team members would be needed to avoid confusion</li> </ul>
	<b>Reflecting Time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The focus teams do not have enough time to reflect and learn in their work currently, more time management and prioritization possibilities would be needed to be added and discussed with the team members</li> </ul>
<b>Turnover Intentions</b>	<b>Career Paths Inside of the Organization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More information to be provided on different possibilities and what is required to move into a different role in the organization</li> </ul>
	<b>Career Paths toward the Focus Teams</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More information to be provided what kind of process and what kind of learning is required for a local team member to move to a focus team</li> </ul>
<b>Learning</b>	<b>Learning Path for Local Team Role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information and a possible training list for the local team members that they can follow to meet the changing requirements in the local role</li> </ul>
	<b>Learning Path towards the Focus Teams</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information and possible training list of the trainings the local team member can join in if they would like to achieve a role in the focus team later</li> </ul>

## **5.2 Result Quality Assessment**

In this chapter, we will go through the validity, reliability and the role of the researcher throughout the research process.

### **Validity**

Saunders et al. (2007, 150) summarizes that validity is about if the findings and if they are really about what they reflect. They also summarize several threats to the validity of the research. In this study, the generalizability is limited. The research is done for a specific group within the organization. It is not yet certain if the same results can be extended to the other teams within the organization. The target team was selected because the contacts inside of the sponsor company wanted to have results from this specific team and because the researcher is part of this team. If there is later a need within the organization to research if the results are fully applicable for the other teams, there should be a survey or a similar qualitative research conducted to the other teams.

### **Reliability**

According to Saunders et al. (2007, 149) reliability means the data collection techniques and analysis that can bring out consistent findings. There are four threats to the reliability: subject or participant error, subject or participant bias, observer error and observer bias. These threats does not apply to the qualitative surveys conducted for this study. The results from the research are also showing correlation to the theories summarized in the theoretical framework and the qualitative survey answers are supporting the findings and recommendations for the sponsor company.

### **Role of the Researcher**

In this study, the researcher is a part of the organization and the team that participated in the qualitative survey. The background in the organization made it easier to obtain the possibility to conduct the qualitative interviews and the trust relationship was already built with the team members through working together before this study. I, as a researcher, got more information on the status of the change communication and more information about what impacts to the commitment of the employees through the theory. This helps me forward with the projects within the organization and in the next fiscal year I will be joining into a team that focuses to improve the workplace satisfaction within the target organization. Through this participation,

the aim is to utilize the results, recommendations and the theoretical background that was achieved through this study and follow up the suggestions from this research that get into implementation phase.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

This study is done for an organization that is part of a large multinational Information and Technology Company. The company has changed the strategy and their service offering during last years and is now concentrating now to provide services and devices. Based on the change in the business strategy, the overall company is going through a transformation. To support this transformation, also the organization this study is focusing on, is going through a change process to support the new company strategy better.

The topic for the research in this study was discovered by witnessing the change process inside of the organization and from the discussions with the management. Despite the feedback was gathered by several methods during the change initiative, it did not focus to the change communication but more to the process changes. The objective for this study was to pinpoint the possible improvement areas in the communication and reflect the impact of the change to the commitment of the employees in a specific time scale in the change initiative. The feedback and improvement ideas that are discovered through this study can be utilized in the future change communications or in the later stages of the change to improve the employee commitment.

The research method selected was a qualitative semi-structured interview and the research approach was an inductive approach where the data was gathered first and then the patterns were discovered and from the patterns, the conclusions and recommendations were drawn. The results from the interviews were applicable to the theoretical framework and gave ideas for improvement for the target organization. The main findings were that the employees are really satisfied with the communication from their direct managers and feel that the Senior Leadership communication is consistent but are concerned on their own role within the organization and are not fully aware on the goals of the organization, especially how to land the goals into their day-to-day work.

## **5.4 Suggestions for Further Research**

There are many interesting opportunities to research in the change communications and there is already quite a lot research conducted in this field. One of the recommendations for the further studies in this field would be to investigate more about the employee attitude towards the change and the possibilities to impact to the positive workplace culture that would remove the barriers and fears related to change initiatives.

In the organization that this study was conducted for, the follow up research could be to conduct a survey for other areas to find out if the findings are consistent and the issues experienced by this change similar. There is also a possibility to follow up the success of the recommendations if they get implemented, with the same audience.

### **Reflections of Learning**

This subject is something I feel quite passionate about so it was quite easy to go through a lot of related literature. There's plenty of information available from the psychological side of the change processes, the business literature about the change and also about employee commitment. It was a bit hard to decide which books would be used as a reference.

The interviews were really easy to be arranged as the interviewees are my colleagues and I have been working with most of them for several years already. The coding and analyzing the results as a qualitative research took the longest part of the whole thesis process.

I can utilize the learnings I have gained from this thesis in the future. Despite it is impossible to follow up in this thesis on which recommendations from this study will be applied to practice in the Company, I will continue working with the employee satisfaction with a related project in the next fiscal year and can utilize all the information gained through this thesis in that project.

## **5.5 Assessment of the Business Value**

Because the target organization is changing fast also in the future, there will be focus teams on-boarding and off-boarding multiple times in the coming fiscal years as priorities and volumes are shifting. The findings and the recommendations will be shared also with the Global Program Manager who is in charge of the next change to help the organization to form a plan



for improvements in the communication in upcoming changes. Some of the suggestions and the generic concerns that are impacting directly to the commitment of the employees will be also discussed and used in the work place improvement project in which the researcher is participating in.

In addition, the results and the improvement suggestions will be shared with the EMEA Time Zone lead, organizational global lead, the communications lead for the organization as well as the project lead responsible for the new business model. Some of the suggestions can be already implemented in the near future like for example streamlining the overall communication with adding 'why the change has been done' into the communication and clarifying the role of the local team. The findings are supported by the other feedback received from employees during this change.

According to the feedback received from the organization, the recommendations through this study are helping to find out how to make the communication in the organization to be clearer in the future and to support the change to land fully with the employees.

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