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Business Unit Strategy Communication

Case: Evaluating and developing strategy communication in case organization

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Business Unit Strategy Communication

Case: Evaluating and developing strategy communication
in case organization

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Business Unit Strategy Communication, Case: Evaluating and developing strategy communication in case organization

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In this Master's Thesis internal strategy communication is studied from the point of view of business unit. Theory of strategy and communication is applied into practice in the case organization to evaluate and develop strategy communication. The aim is to utilize communication to implement and execute the strategy more efficiently.

In the theoretical part of this thesis both the strategy and communication theory is presented. Strategy as a concept is so broad, that summarizing it is difficult, but the main points are that strategy includes company's long-term targets and tools to succeed in the competition and achieve the targets. Company's resources, like investments, know-how and personnel, and their utilization are part of strategy. Strategy is an umbrella term and also strategy formation process, the strategic plans themselves and the strategy execution and implementation are also part of it. Strategy has great effect on the company identity.

The simplest definition for communication is that it is sending and receiving messages. Communication is prerequisite for all activities in the organization. In this thesis internal the focus has been solely on internal organization communication and emphasis was on evaluating and developing internal strategy communication for business unit requirements. One of the focal points of interest has been roles and responsibilities of corporate strategy communication and business unit strategy communication. The approach is to understand the communication in pragmatic level and how communication could be exploited in successful strategy implementation and execution. In key roles to develop communication has been tools for communication evaluation and assessment and tools for communication planning including the stakeholder analyzes.

The empirical part of this thesis consists of developing evaluation and development of the communication practices in the case organization. The empirical part was mainly conducted with interviews targeting to develop strategy communication. The focus of the interviews was to understand current practices and processes of strategy communication, the role of superiors in the strategy communication and implementation process and to find possibilities to improve the strategy communication. The researcher worked in the case organization during the thesis project and actively involved to developing and implementing the communication improvements.

As a result the understanding about strategy communication on pragmatic level and the role of superiors in the strategy communication has been increased. Theoretical tools to evaluate and develop internal communication have applied to practice in the case organization and the numerous possibilities to utilize communication have been understood.

Keywords: Strategy, strategy communication, internal communication, communication assessment, business unit

Laura Pimiä

Tulosityksikön strategia viestintä, case: viestinnän arviointi ja kehittäminen kohdeorganisaatiossa

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Tämä ylemmän ammattikorkeakoulun opinnäytetyö käsittelee sisäistä strategiaviestintää tulosityksikön näkökulmasta soveltaen strategia- ja viestintäteoriaa käytäntöön kohdeorganisaation strategiaviestintää arvioitaessa ja kehitettäessä. Tavoitteena on hyödyntää viestintää strategian toteuttamisen tehostamiseen.

Työn teoria osiossa esitellään strategiaa ja viestintää teorian pohjalta: Strategia käsitteenä on laaja ja sen tiivistäminen lyhyesti ja kattavasti on haastavaa, mutta pääpiirteissään strategia sisältää yrityksen pitkän tähtäimen tavoitteet ja keinovalikoiman kilpailussa menestymiseen. Strategia kattaa yrityksen resurssien, mukaan lukien investointien, osaamisen ja henkilöstön, hyödyntämisen kilpailussa. Strategia-terminä kattaa alleen niin strategisten suunnitelmien tekemisen eli strategiaproessit, strategiset suunnitelmat itsessään sekä strategian toteuttamisen. Strategialla on suuri merkitys myös yrityksen identiteettiin.

Viestintä on yksinkertaisuudessaan sanominen lähettämistä ja vastaanottamista. Viestintä on edellytys kaikelle toiminnalle organisaatioissa. Viestintää on käsitelty tässä työssä vain sisäisen työyhteisön viestinnän näkökulmasta ja painopiste oli viestinnän arvioinnissa ja kehittämisessä tulosityksikön strategiaviestinnän näkökulmasta. Suuressa roolissa on ollut ymmärtää konsernin strategiaviestinnän ja tulosityksikön strategiaviestinnän merkitykset ja roolit kohdeorganisaatiossa painopisteen ollessa erityisesti viestinnän käytännön toteutuksessa ja strategian toteutuksen tukena. Viestinnän kehittämisessä keskeisessä roolissa ovat olleet viestinnän arvioinnin ja mittaamisen työkalut sekä viestinnän suunnittelun työkalut muun muassa kohdeyhmäanalyysit.

Opinnäytetyön empiria osuus koostuu viestinnän käytäntöjen arvioinnista ja kehittämisestä kohdeorganisaatiossa. Selvitys on tehty pääosin haastatteluiden avulla ja tavoitteena oli samalla kehittää organisaation strategiaviestintää. Haastatteluilla on selvitetty nykyisiä strategia viestintäkäytäntöjä ja prosesseja, esimiesten käsityksiä strategiaviestinnän toimivuudesta ja heidän roolistaan strategiaviestinnässä sekä mahdollisia osa-alueita parantaa strategiaviestintää. Tutkija työskenteli kohdeorganisaatiossa aikana ja on osallistunut aktiivisesti viestinnän kehittämiseen.

Selvityksen tuloksena ymmärrys strategiaviestinnästä käytännön tasolla ja esimiesten roolista strategiaviestinnästä tulosityksikön näkökulmasta on lisääntynyt. Sisäisen viestinnän laadun mittaamisesta ja viestinnän kehittämisen keinoista on siirretty teorioista käytännön tasolle kohdeorganisaatiossa ja viestinnän hyödyntämisen monimuotoisuus on ymmärretty.

Avainsanat: Strategia, strategiaviestintä, sisäinen viestintä, viestinnän kehittäminen, tulosityksikkö

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1 Introduction

This thesis focuses on the role of communication in a business unit strategy implementation and execution on the practical level. Even though both the strategy and communication are well studied and immense amount of strategy literature is available, the focus is mostly on strategy formation, corporate level strategy communication or external corporate communication. In general literature focusing on strategy implementation and execution is more limited than the literature focusing on importance of strategy itself or debating what strategy is. When concentrating in strategy implementation on practical level, the available studies and theory are getting more infrequent. In many occasions the strategy literature includes sentences like 'strategy execution and implementation is important' or 'strategy has to be communicated' and the importance of strategy implementation and execution is not unnoticed in the strategy theories, but the practice is not the focal point of interest. In communication theory literature the strategy communication is often related to communication to external stakeholders or communication of corporate strategy, vision and mission and as a responsibility of the corporate communication unit. This thesis will focus on the business unit strategy and communication of the business unit strategy to internal stakeholders and how the business unit should organize the communication in practice.

The focus and interest of this thesis is pragmatic: How business unit should communicate to implement and execute the strategy successfully. The approach and the ambition in this thesis from the starting point to the finish line has been to integrate the theory and practice of business unit strategy communication to everyday activities and to cover all the aspects related to business unit strategy communication through the research in the case organization. Stakeholders and the role superiors in the strategy communication were raised both from literature and study to be in the focus in this thesis.

This thesis has been compiled to be used as a referential guide for communication at least to some extent. The thesis tries to collect the communicational dimensions that should be considered in the business unit strategy communication, but also the potential tools that could be used and might be suitable for business unit strategy communication to facilitate the efficient strategy implementation. This is only an overall suggestion based on the view of the researcher and it is always important to tailor the communication for a case organization and its strategy communication needs. Communication and strategy are never 'one size fits all organization' solutions, and same applies for this thesis.

In this thesis the several different theories has been combined. This thesis will introduce strategy and communication theory and apply it to practice of strategy implementation and execution in the case study. The interest is in communication as part of implementation and

execution of the business unit strategy. The content of the strategy or evaluations of quality of the strategy have been excluded. The strategy formulation, resources and organization structure as part of strategy implementation and execution have been only briefly mentioned. The theory relating to strategy, including strategy formation and strategy process, strategy implementation and execution was still comprehensively studied to understand the theoretical framework and the aspects included to the phenomena called strategy.

Line managers and superiors role in strategy executing has been brought up (for example STRADA) because they have especially important role in executing the strategy and achieving the target, superiors were selected as the target group for the study. The main focus of the work will be on how the business unit could better support the middle management on their strategy communication. The focus will be middle management role on strategy communication.

And the actual study

The study aims to gain understanding the role of the communication as part of business unit strategy implementation and thus strategy implementation on practical level, also allowing the concrete improvements in the business unit. The purpose of the thesis is to apply the latest theories and research results from several fields to the practice and exploit them on everyday work. The theory is linked to the case organization and thus broader understanding of the strategy implementation process and internal communication in the practice was gained. Also several views and theories of communication were studied including basics of internal communication, communication as part of management, leadership and change management, but also communication theories that could be utilized to communicate the business unit strategy effectively were included in practice such as sense making, stakeholder approach and storytelling.

Because the strategy communication has an effect to the general success and the financial results of the company, it is important to evaluate how well the strategy is communicated and to find possibilities to further develop the communication (Hämäläinen & Maula 2004, 119). Evaluating the current status of the case organization's strategy communication has been important part of this thesis. As Juholin (2010) and Hämäläinen and Maula (2004, 119) have presented it is not straightforward to evaluate the effects and success of the communication. This is particularly challenging when speaking about so broad and complex topic as strategy and also because there are not clear methods or indicators how to analyze the impact of communication. Evaluation of the strategy communication is in close link with the success of strategy implementation. (Hämäläinen & Maula 2004, 119-120.)

Communication in practical level has been already briefly included in the existing strategy literature, but what kind of role communication plays in business unit strategy and how the business unit strategy communication should be arranged. The strategy literature mainly refers to corporate strategy and communication about the communication strategy, in this thesis the focus and interest is on the best practices for business unit strategy communication.

The role of the communication has been understood to be part of the strategy execution, but emphasis should be also on ensuring the true understanding about the strategy and the connections of objectives from the overall strategy (Sull, Homkes & Hull 2015). Furthermore the importance of communication in organizations is expected to increase in future and in addition the communication and interaction skills of employees are coming more important for the employers (Surakka 2012, Kauppakamarinselvitys 2012). Communication should not be responsibility of the communication experts or communication department, but the whole organization should be skilled in communication and considering the perspective of stakeholder organizations (Vos and Schoemaker (2004, 1). Because of these reasons the emphasis of communication in the strategy implementation is justified.

1.1 Background of the thesis

The working environment in the case organization has been a source of inspiration for this thesis. The underlying reasons for choosing the communication as the perspective in the strategy implementation and execution are researcher's general interest towards communication and interest to connect communication to real life topic and practice through create added value for the business unit. The researcher works in the business unit and has been involved in communication of the business unit and strategy process of the business unit. The motivation and interest of the researcher towards communication lead to idea to study further the strategy communication in the business unit in practice. The research has been in planned, implemented and executed according to researcher's initiatives in close collaboration and full support of the top management of the strategic business unit and the research has been carried out to find out how the communication could be utilized to improve strategy implementation and execution to reach the set targets. Researcher's work in the organization also creates opportunities to find potential development areas to facilitate the efficiency of the strategy implementation and consequently the success of the business unit.

The theoretical findings support the view of communication's importance to the strategy implementation and execution. For example Cummings and Daellenbach (2009) article presents the trends and main themes of strategy in 2366 articles in the journal 'Longe range planning' over its 40 years history from 1968 to 2006. Their study shows how there can be seen clear fashions of the themes of the articles. The identified areas rising during recent decades are

knowledge, learning, relationships, networks and to some extent also culture. One of the trends related to knowledge is, not only as competitive advantage, but further how the knowledge could be sponsored and enabled. It may be challenging as knowledge creation cannot be created under strict rules and suggestion is to be more of a 'strategist-as-politician' meaning that negotiations and leadership from the middle are needed. The focus has been sifted from future and goals to also considering the past processes, practices and culture and their role shaping strategy. (Cummings & Daellenbach 2009, 255.) The researcher interprets the communication as basis for knowledge creation.

Kamensky stated that the common language is the basic condition to create shared knowledge and suggests that companies should closely study how different organizations understand the strategy and also define what it does not mean. Kamensky emphasized lack of shared language as real problems to create but especially implement the strategy. (Kamensky 2010, 30.)

Strategy has also always been a mystery for the researcher, something that has been considered too difficult or something that is "not my business". The thesis project has broadened the understanding of strategy and one of the main ideas is that the theoretical strategy is neither simple nor straightforward. There are so many different ideas, definition and schools of strategy, processes of how strategy is formulated, constant discussion about what strategy is and how it should implemented. Simultaneously the second main learning is, that strategy is for everyone and present in the everyday working life, it is behind every task what we during our working hours, not only for top management and it is also 'my business'.

1.2 Research questions, objectives and limitations

The target of this thesis is gain understanding of the communication dimensions and processes behind strategy implementation and execution, to find possible improvement areas, define critical communication streams and to ensure through the defined processes, guidance and recommended practices most efficient communication processes with available resources and maximum effectiveness for future in the case organization.

The research question for this thesis is: How the strategic business unit can facilitate the strategy implementation and execution through communication in the case organization?

Following support questions have been defined to assist research and development in the case organization:

- What type of communication is included to the strategy communication?
- What is the role of communication in the business unit strategy implementation and execution?

- What are the roles of corporate strategy communication and business unit strategy communication?
- What kind of information is needed to implement and execute the strategy?
- What are the main sources of information?
- What are the main stakeholder groups for strategy communication?
- What is the role of superiors in the strategy communication?
- What are the main communication processes and who is responsible for them?
- What areas of communication require improvement?

Middle management is in key role to implement the strategy and middle management has been defined as one target group for the research to define how communication could be used to improve the strategy implementation and assists also how to facilitate them on their strategy communication. The study is carried out by interviews with the middle management.

As all research also this thesis has some limitations. The limitations of the thesis arise from the case organization including its field of business, organization structure and several other features which cannot be changed. Also topic of this thesis the organization communication is constantly changing phenomena with several processes and numerous participants create unique setting in every organization. Communications neither is neither tangible nor stable process nor is the business unit communication satisfaction unchanging or independent from other changes in the organization and due to that the results of this thesis are short-term. Also the matrix organization structure with several involved departments and locations creates challenges to define all the aspects of strategy communication related to implementation and execution. The existing roles, responsibilities and processes in the case organization has to be accepted as given and the possibility to change communication practices is limited only to the strategic business unit and communication processes initiated and conducted by it.

Organization culture has remarkable effect on communication and success of the communication through values and beliefs but the organization culture cannot be changed within the duration of this thesis nor is it not a focus of this thesis. It is also important to acknowledge that this research has been mainly accomplished within the case organization's culture and within North European culture and the results maybe not applicable in other cultures (Hofstede 1983). However it is crucially important to keep the culture differences in mind when communicating and but also in management and leadership in the organizations. Culture effects to organization in all levels. (Hofstede 1983.) Also communication is very culture related, for example visual elements have strong cultural and contextual associations which affect the understanding and interpretation (Visocky O'Grady 2008, 93.)

1.3 Theoretical framework: strategy and communication

The theoretical framework in this thesis focuses on strategy and communication. The theoretical framework is described to give basis for the research and support the understanding of both relatively enormous theoretical concepts; strategy and communication. The thesis is utilizing the strategy theory from the point of view of implementing and executing the strategy and the strategy process including strategy formation is only briefly covered to give understanding of whole strategy framework, even it is not focus of the thesis. Also several aspects of communication theory have been excluded from the thesis covering only the aspects relevant to the case organization and the subject under scope which is internal business unit strategy communication.

The different theoretical approaches for strategy have been also briefly presented in theory chapter to show how differently even basic aspects of strategy can be viewed and how the role of communication and moreover mid-management's role has been presented as well as role planning and ideas of executing. The evolution and development of strategy theory can also be seen with the different schools of strategy over time. It cannot be verified how these different perspectives and schools of strategy have effect on strategy implementation and execution in the case organization in practical level, but the researcher feels that it is irrelevant. Still it is worth of consideration to evaluate that in how many different ways the concept strategy can be understood and its effects on the strategy work in the organizations. The connotations of planning, fixed objectives and participants are changing depending on the selected points of view. Other underlying ideas for the thesis are the different development phases of strategy from rational strategy to complex and postmodern presented by Juuti and Luoma (2009) and the concept of strategy-as-practice (Whittington 1996 and others). These have influenced the thinking behind this thesis and considerations of communications even increasing important in future.

The strategy theory is presenting the basis of strategy to give as comprehensive view on the available and most recent strategy research. Some limitations were made to strategy theory and for example internationalization and innovation strategies have been excluded as they focus more on content of the strategy and the focus of this thesis in strategy implementation, neither focusing on the formation of the strategy nor the content of the strategy. Aspects related to strategy implementation and strategic management for example target setting and management support for middle managers and other tools used for strategy communication. Besides the theory of strategy the theory of organizational communication is presented. The main theme of the thesis is on strategy implementation and communication as part of it. To be able to guide the reader through with clear view on topic the main parts of strategy content, the strategy process and different strategy approaches has been briefly presented. Limi-

tations to especially strategy theory has to be made as strategy is currently so popular topic, that it is impossible to cover all the documents and publications of the topic as according to one estimate over ten thousand books and articles are published only in English language literature (Juuti&Luoma, 2009, 25).

In many organizations management and personnel consider that strategy belongs solely to the top management. Kamensky disputes this idea because the strategy implementation has been done in every day work and the key to renew the strategy is organization's willingness and skillfulness and courage to renew the strategy. (Kamensky 2010, 327-328.) In bigger organization, where it is not possible for everyone to attend the strategy planning process, the emphasis to educate and create skills and know-how of employees and superiors to be able to contribute to the strategy renewal and implementation is laid on the communication and the training (Kamensky 2010, 328). In this thesis I will be studying the possibilities to facilitate the strategy implementation through communication. Training and communication are essential in increasing the knowledge level, understanding and commitment of the personnel. However also these methods have also limitations particularly when speaking about applying the knowledge and creating new solutions - the accomplishments can be assured to a certain extent. (Kamensky 2010, 328.) The focus in this thesis will be on ensuring the first steps and sharing the knowledge.

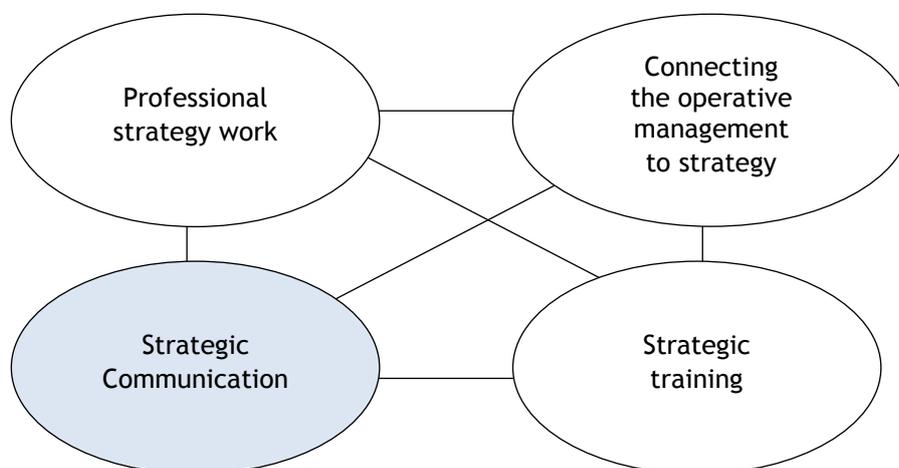


Figure 1: Organizations strategic knowhow as interaction process (Kamensky 2010, 328)

1.4 Research methodology introduction

The goal of this thesis, the selected subject and the case organization influenced and guided the selection of the research methods. The approach to this thesis is abduction where theory

and practice interact and often the reasoning starts from the phenomena, but it does not rule out the theory but the theory and the practice are supporting and even coinciding each other continuously during the project. Furthermore this is an action research as the researcher is part of the case organization. (Kananen 2013, 24, 51.) During this research process the research question has been formatted and fine-tuned through increased understanding of the theory and of the case organization's strategy processes. The theory has been studied through literature and the case organization has been studied thoroughly on current aspects relating to strategy communication including familiarizing to current the structure and hierarchy of the strategy processes, yearly strategy process, involved parties, current communication processes and responsibilities, appraisal discussion system and even participating to strategy events and trainings for superiors.

The qualitative research method was most suitable to this thesis as full understanding of the current strategy implementation and execution processes and possible improvement areas can be gained only through interviews. The interviewees have been explicitly selected and the form of interviews in semi-structured.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

The chapter 1 introduced the thesis briefly including overview of the theory in focus, the research questions and the research methods. The objectives, the limitations, the motivation and background have been explained also in the chapter 1. The chapter 2 presents the research methods in detail including the theory on communication evaluation. The research process has been also described in the chapter 2.

The theory has been divided to two main chapters as both strategy and communication are so broad concepts with almost tremendous literature and theory available about them. The chapter 3 gives an overview on strategy theory and the chapter 4 continues with the theoretical theme and guides the reader through communication theories.

The chapter 5 describes results of the study in the case study including the suggestions to improve the strategy communication in the business unit. Evaluation of the research project and conclusions of the case study are presented in the chapter 6 with ideas for further studies.

2 Research methods

The approach in this thesis is action research as the researcher works in the case organization and the target of this thesis is to develop current activities, not just analyze them. The qualitative research methods are most suitable for the context of theory and for the case organization. The research has been accomplished in the case organization by studying on the current strategy processes and the strategy communication. The study also included exploring and mapping out the strategy related materials available in the organization and participating to the strategy events, including internal trainings. The most significant part of the process has been interviews in all phases of the research.

The focus of the thesis has been all the time on the practice and actual needs in the case organization. The thesis is fully based on the actual current practices in the case organization. The aim of this thesis is not to provide only theoretical research of the strategy communication, but to utilize the existing strategy and communication research and literature to improve the strategy communication and strategy implementation in the case organization. Fitting the existing theory to the business unit strategy communication needs has required widely modification and adaptation.

The hypothesis in this is that efficient communication can positively affect strategy implementation and execution. (Hirsjärvi et al 2009, 158.) However the idea or purpose of this thesis is not to validate the hypothesis.

In general the most important aspects of the research are analyzing, interpreting and concluding the collected material and especially the interviews. It is also important to evaluate the collected materials and firstly the materials should be assessed to find out possible missing and incorrect information, secondly the material can be supplemented with for example additional interviews and third phase is to organize the materials for analyzes. (Hirsjärvi et al 2009, 222.) In this thesis the critical approach has been present and materials both theoretical and case organization related have been continuously evaluated to gain comprehensive and appropriate materials for the topic.

Several interviews have been made, first with top management to find out the perspective and the general view of importance of strategy communication in business unit and the relationship of corporate strategy communication and business unit strategy communication, the status of current communications, possibilities for improvement and also current best practices to be maintained and to be used more widely. Through further interviews the main channel used to get information were identified and also the methods that manager are using to communicate the strategy further to their subordinates.

The study included to this thesis was conducted with a series of interviews on mid-level managers in the organization. The focus of questions was on efficiency, efficacy and sufficiency of the strategy communication and to identify possible improvement points in the strategy communication to facilitate the strategy implementation. In additions questions concerning other topics related to strategy implementation were included like creating the commitment and motivation, corporate identity, role of superiors and possible information deficiencies in point of interest to receive broad view of the current status of the strategy communication, but also to verify the common understanding about the topic.

2.1 Case organization

The research has be accomplished in an international mid-size corporation including several strategic business units with matrix organization structure in which all the line functions (sales, research & development, productions) are supporting all the strategic business units to implement the business unit strategies. The focus of the theses will be on examination of one of the strategic business unit and its strategy communication to the line functions and how the communication could be improved to facilitate the successful implementation and execution of the strategy.

The case business unit has significant role in the corporate strategy and it has remarkable growth targets. All the line functions and support organizations are executing the strategies of all the business units. The case business unit is responsible for the strategy formulation, the business unit strategy process and the strategy communication consist of about 20 employees but throughout the company in different line functions close to thousand employees are participating to the work of business unit. The line functions are in key role to execute the strategy. The case organization head office in located in Finland, but several locations abroad are closely involved to the case business unit processes and strategy implementation. The nature of the business, the business model and the processes are highly complex including several markets, product segments and departments and numerous employees that are participating to the business processes. The processes require high level of communication and coordination to function.

The interviews have been conducted in the case business unit with focus on the internal stakeholders from all the line functions. This thesis does not cover communication to external stakeholders.

The research question has been defined along the process while understanding of the current practices and interaction on the strategy communication has been build. The communication

of corporate strategy is not the focus of this thesis, but it has been important part to understand how the corporate strategy is communicated in the case organization and what channels have been used for the corporate strategy communication. The references to corporation wide strategy communication and practices can be seen in theory and also in the case business units all organizational levels, including human research, corporate communication and strategy process management and by the line functions' action plan processes. Also the strategy communication practices of other business units have been examined to find out the best possible practices utilized already in the company.

2.1.1 Action research

Action research was selected for this thesis as it was the most suitable approach and research strategy for this topic and with the study circumstances. Action research combines interactively theory and practice and the main goal of the action research is to change, affect and improve the subject under evaluation. In action research the researcher is active participant in the organization and can affect the change. The actual study in the action research is conducted with qualitative method, more precisely with semi-structured theme interviews. Action research includes planning phase, execution phase and follow-up phase. (Kananen 2013, 24, 29, Coghlan & Brannick 2014.)

Typical for qualitative research and action research is that they are not linear processes and do not follow certain process steps but they are more like to be a cycle or never-ending-process and process that can be started in from any phase and all the phases in the process guide to evaluate the choices made before. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2009, 14.) The previous description could be directly from this thesis project. The researcher has sailed timely and mentally between several choices of subject, reading and collecting the material, re-modifying the subject, considering the method and the approach and so on. Luckily also several breakthrough points have been on the journey. The subject of this thesis has been re-defined and re-evaluated several times to find most beneficial topic for the case organization and the gained knowledge and understanding has guided the view and understanding of useful and valuable topics. The topic has shifted from strategy communication with emphasis on the organization communication towards business unit strategy implementation and execution with support of organizational communication.

The main understanding that researcher has made during this project is that corporate strategy communication, general internal communication and business unit strategy communication are not synonyms. It is important to understand how these are organized in the organization and to understand the theory supporting the practice, but it is also important to understand, that these have they own unique roles in the organization.

2.1.2 Qualitative methods and interview

The starting point of the qualitative research is to capture and describe 'real life' and the objective is to analyze the target phenomena as holistically as possible. Often main source of information are people and the optimal research allows their own opinion, 'voices', to be heard with for example using interviews. The study subjects in qualitative research are selected not randomly included. Also often the study plan is defined along the project and will be modified according to circumstances. Also the cases and materials are unique in the qualitative research. (Hirsjärvi et al 2009, 161, 164.)

The approach in this thesis is qualitative research, the results are interpretations of the phenomena under research and it will be made based on the findings of the research. The most significant difference between quantitative and qualitative research comes from dealing with deviations and outliers in the results; in quantitative research the deviations are accepted and will be calculated to the averages. In qualitative research it is important to pay attention to all deviating answers and findings because they are significant; even single differing answer has to be noticed, evaluated and reported. (Alasuutari 1994, 35.)

Qualitative research methods were selected as most suitable for the case to gain in-depth understanding of the business unit strategy communication practices and need. The semi-structured interview was selected to perform the actual research.

The interviews have structured questions but the free discussion has been allowed. The structured questions are required to have comprehensive understanding of the topic and current practices and the possible development areas in the organization. The interviews contain questions relating to the current practices in the organization combining theory of strategy implementation. The semi-structured interviews included also several rephrased questions to find out the real understanding of strategy and also how the middle-level-managers experience the strategic communication in the organization and the level of common strategy understanding were defined. Open discussion was encouraged in the beginning of every interview and also during the interviews and the questions' order was modifying during the interviews to allow free discussion. The main focus was on the business unit level strategy communication, but as the corporate level strategy and business unit level are closely linked and as there is one common strategy process for the whole company the questions cannot nor should be totally exclude corporate strategy aspects. In addition the communication practices, interest and information needs and possibilities to improve shared strategy understanding were in focus of the interviews. The questions were prepared based on the strategy and communication theory to investigate and compared the findings of the existing literature to

the research results. The questions were evaluated before the interviews with the business unit management to gain full support for the research in all the phases, but also ensure the practical benefits and fulfill the business unit's information needs.

The interviews were focused on the key departments and people on the key roles to implement the business unit strategy. The interviewees have been selected in close collaboration with the business unit management from the collaboration units and key stakeholder groups to ensure a comprehensive and unbiased perspective to the strategy implementation and communication and to notice the opinion from all stakeholders. The interviewees were targeted preferably to people in supervisor position, but it was not exclusion criteria if the interviewee acted in a role with superior type responsibility but did not have direct subordinates due to matrix organization structure. The top management representatives and people participating to the strategy drafting process were excluded as the main interest of the study is to learn how the superiors and key stakeholders outside the strategy process receive information about the business unit strategy. The interviewees were selected to present all critical departments. The studies concerning middle managements role in strategy implementation and strategy communication were used in the theory as reference, but the made interviews mostly presented upper middle management due to the need to first understand these key contacts information sources, information needs and practices before conducting interviews with lower management levels. Also the matrix structure of the organization prefers the selected approach of targeting interviews. The follow-up study could be made with the next level of management to gain understanding of how the made communication functions and also effect of made improvements.

Remember the safety measures

Alasuutari (1994, 19) suggest to consider carefully the most suitable interview technique and level of structure to meet the requirement of the case under research. This is important evaluation as the main advantage of interviews are that it is time consuming and it required detailed planning. Also the reliability of the interviews has to be carefully considered, because typical aspects impairing reliability of the interview is that interviewees can favor socially acceptable answers. (Hirsjärvi et al 2009, 206.)

One trial interview was conducted to examine the interview arrangements including the cover letter send for the interviewees beforehand, test how the selected questions were understood and received and eliminate other possible improvement needs before conducting all the interviews. No major improvement items were found during the test interview.

The interviewees were told the purpose of the interview explaining that this is part of the thesis project and also presented that the head of the business unit acts as a sponsor of the study to give credibility for the study. The possibility of the interviewees giving socially acceptable answer was also evaluated during the review of results, but because it was explained already in the cover letter that the results will be presented without name or any other reference information, the researcher believes that the risk of flattered or biased comments was minimized. Also due to that the results also included critical comments and improvement ideas, the impact of social pressure is not critically affecting the results.

13 interviews were conducted with middle-management of the key stakeholder organizations. The interviews were conducted both in face-to-face meetings and telephone interviews and both in English and in Finnish. The length of the interviews varied between 30 and 90 minutes. Also 4 manager of the business unit was interviewed to understand their perspective on the state and practices of the strategy communication and also to understand their view of what kind of strategy information the stakeholders should possess. These interviews were conducted face-to-face and the average length of the interviews was about an hour.

The stakeholder interviews were littered by the themes to a table to enable the review and analyses of the results. The answers were collected to the table based on the related themes, not based on the restructured questions. The table of the answers enabled to compare the answers and also highlight important themes. The answers were written without expletive words. Direct phrases were used for the notes whenever possible and the direct phrases used for in thesis were translated to English when needed. The main focus was to write down all aspects relating to current strategy communication practices, strategy information needs and improvement possibilities. The main focus was on content of the answers, not on the word by word literation. Also observations were made relating to other possible information sources, for example if some obvious information sources were excluded, and differences between interviews to find out variances between information sources, needs and understandings about the strategy.

2.1.3 Other materials

Before the actual interviews included to the study, several interviews were made to understand the existing strategy processes, different actors and their role in the strategy communication, relationship and roles of the corporate strategy and business units and existing strategy communication practices. Also the link between business unit strategy and line function action plans was studied. There were 4 people interviews to understand the current strategy processes and actors.

Also the case organization strategy guidance documents, timelines, practices and templates were studied to gain full understanding of actual strategy practices and existing guidance. Profound content analyzes were not accomplished for the materials because great part of the materials related to corporate strategy communication or to the corporate strategy process or HR processes. (Hämäläinen & Maula 2004, 137.)

2.2 Role of the researcher

In action research the researcher is often participating to the change as actor, not as observer. This thesis has been accomplished with insider action research as the researcher works in the case business unit. (Coghlan & Brannick 2014.)

The researcher works in the case organization in the business unit under evaluation. The researcher is not under manager responsibilities, but she is deeply involved to the business processes. Researcher's main responsibilities are not related to strategy, but she is participating to strategy process as a business unit member and she has possibilities to influence the communication in the business unit.

The advantage is that due to researcher's in-depth knowledge and understanding of the roles, the interviews were arranged easily and the interviewees could have spoken more freely. Also the access to information has been well available. When doing research in your own organization it is important to pay attention to research ethics and separating own beliefs and pre-existing knowledge from the research results.

2.3 Reliability and validity

Reliability refers to how well the research could repeatedly give similar results. The reliability is also related to randomness of the results, the research is not reliable, if the results cannot be repeated and the results are not random. (Hirsjärvi et al 2009, 231.) Validity means how well the selected research method can measure the selected feature. This is to ensure the selection on correct methods and indicators. (Hirsjärvi et al 2009, 231.)

The reliability of qualitative research can be increased with detailed description of how the research has been carried out in all phases of the research. It is also important to explain how the findings have categorized and what has been reasoning behind the chosen rationale. In this thesis the researcher has recorded all the interviews to ensure reliable documentation of the interviews. It would have been also document the description of distractions and possible aspects interfering has been included to the interview documents. (Hirsjärvi et al 2009, 232.)

The research process has been earlier described in detail and the researcher believes that the research has been conducted in such a manner that the results are valid and reliable. But it is important to notice that this thesis has been conducted with the qualitative methods and as action research, the assumption is that the results would be different if the research would be conducted later as the purpose of this thesis is to improve the phenomena under evaluation.

2.4 Measuring and evaluating communication

The target of this thesis is to evaluate the current status of the strategy communication in the case business unit and theoretical framework is required to understand how to evaluate communication. As Juholin (2010, 19) states, it is important to understand the status and the satisfaction of the current level communication and processes to be able to improve the communication further.

First of all, it is important to understand, that communication is abstract phenomena and it is difficult to evaluate the real effect and power of communication, because it is even difficult to define when communication has had an effect. Has communication affected when receiver reacts as sender had intended and then acts as expected? But has communication affected also when receiver decides to act oppositely as sender hoped? This example clarifies why it is important to separate an effect and a success of the communication. Communication has been effective when communication has somehow changed receiver. Communication has succeeded when communication has changed received in the way sender had aimed. (Åberg 2006, 160.)

Furthermore it is important to understand that the power of communication depends on the subject; the more difficult subject, the longer and more effective communication is needed. It is easier to change individuals' opinion and information and most difficult to change group behavior, values and culture. To change information, announcement or news is sufficient, requiring that the source is reliable and that the content is understandable. Changing attitudes required much more and opinion leaders have important role. (Åberg 2006, 134-137.)

Communication tools can be divided to poor and rich and when evaluating the effect of communication it is important to also consider the effectiveness and resource intensive. The first refers to how well the targeted effect has been reach and the second refers to how much resources have been required. Rich media have the most affect power but on the other hand they have high resource intensity. The more difficult the issue the more powerful the media should be. It is also important to consider the used time and effort when evaluating power of

communication. The efficiency of communication is relative poor and at the best it can only target the thoughts of receiver to the direction that sender hoped. (Åberg 2006, 160.)

Assessment means that something is evaluated to understand its value and meaning, but also to identify the weaknesses. Juholin highlights that communication evaluation should be based on and tailored for the target organization, to be connected to organization's targets and the aim is to develop the organization and its activities and the evaluation results can be used to the support decision making. The evaluation can be even connected to overall targets of the industry. The focus of evaluation also includes how the activities are planned, executed, what are the results, the needs for improvement and the urgent items for action and the measures are always closely related to target organization and they cannot be stated in general. (Juholin 2010, 18, 30.) Also Hämäläinen and Maula emphasize the importance of the planning and consecutiveness of the planning and the evaluation (Hämäläinen & Maula 2004, 129.) The assessment can be focused to communication itself or improvement of the used communication tools and their suitability (Hämäläinen & Maula 2004, 139).

The main focus on the communication evaluation can be communicational outputs, for example number of publications, or it can be on the effectiveness of the communication or usefulness and suitability of the communication channels, or the availability and access to the strategy information, or how well the strategy is understood or even how well the strategy has been executed in the organization's daily work. (Hämäläinen & Maula 2004, 121-122.) The successful strategy execution or success of the company could be also related to successful strategy communication, but in this thesis the focus is limited to communication. Before starting to measure the success to the strategy communication, it is important to define the main targets and produce the questions to receive answers to the selected interest points, can the measurement be repeatability. (Hämäläinen & Maula 2004, 121.) Formulating the questions is important phase as the questions have direct effect to the results, for example awareness and understanding are not same thing and further implementing the strategy information to the own work is separate dimensions. It is always important to test the questions before executing the survey. (Hämäläinen & Maula 2004, 122.)

Most important thing is to understand that all the assessments and evaluations have to be tailored for the target organization, to the situation in the organization and connected to the targets. The communication evaluation stairs present the phases of evaluation and focuses to the target setting, but it does not include the improvement to be made after the evaluation. Also the emphasis is on the link between input and final results, for example the available resources and the final results are compared. (Zerfass et al 2015, Juholin 2010, 34-37.)

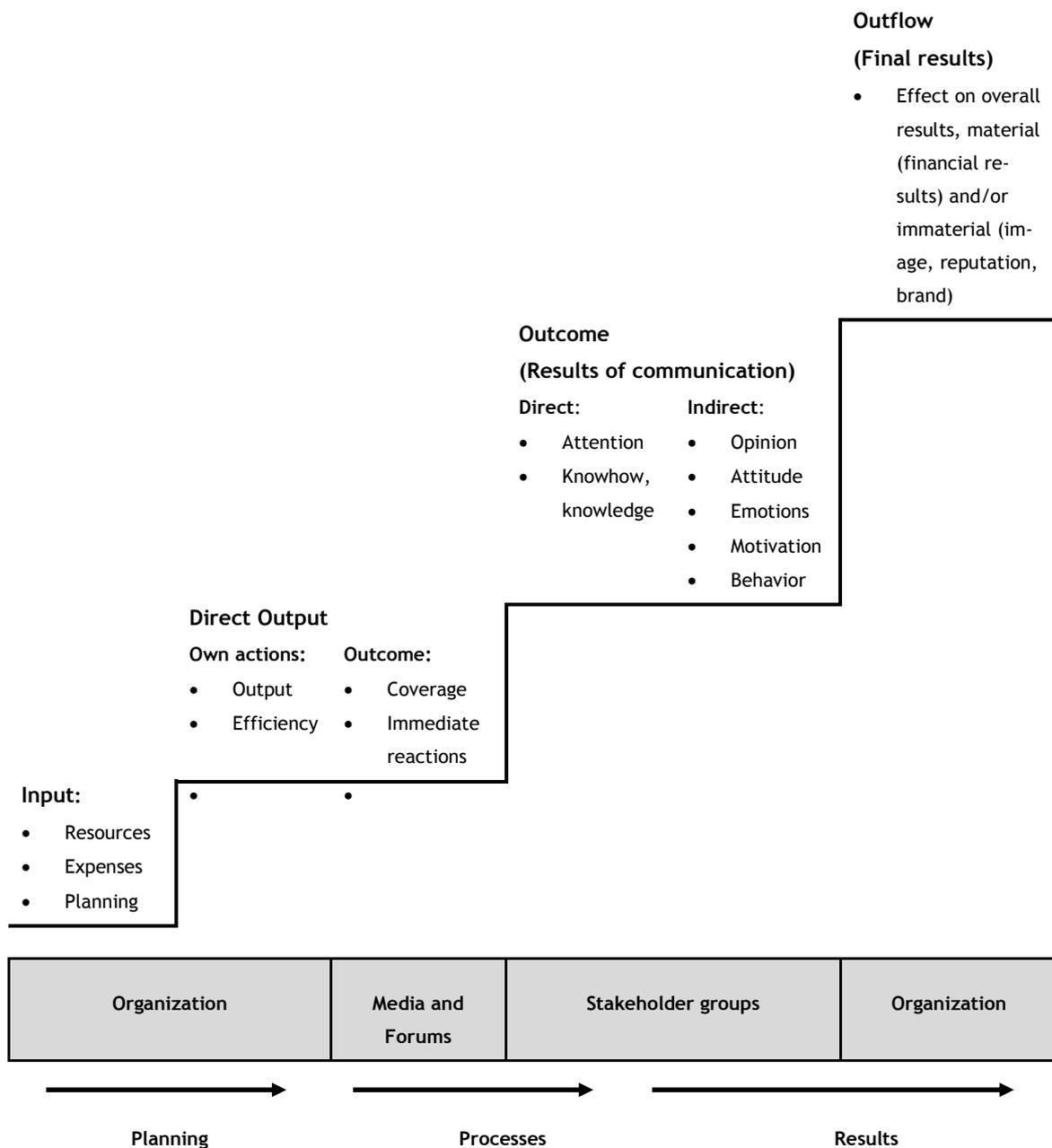


Figure 2: Communication evaluation stairs (European Communication Monitor 2015 (Zerfass et al 2015, Juholin 2010, 34)

2.5 Strategy communication assessment

As the perception of communication has shifted from the process model with only sender and receiver to more complex understanding and also the measurements should reflect this change and communication measuring should be moved to measure shared meanings and cre-

ating understanding from calculating the number of messages and the performance indicators should be evaluated to find out whether they reflect and measure the correct and most essential aspects of the communication. The communication interaction and dialogue with concept of subject instead of objects or received has entered the communication evaluation studies as well as concept of community. (Juholin 2010, 22-24.)

Juholin states that the communication measuring has been considered difficult also because the effects of communication are often indirect affecting for example the commitment, recalling or awareness. This could be translated to evaluating the value of the communication; what kind of value the different forms of communication create and how different communication efforts have facilitated the success of the organization. (Juholin 2010, 29.) Hämäläinen and Maula (2004, 141-142) have defined the levels of strategy communication success to be: message reach a target, message receives attention, message is understood, message is linked to own work, message has the aimed impact to a receiver, receiver commits and finally receive acts in the way sender had aimed.

When considering how successful the corporate strategy communication has been, following dimensions are important and relevant and should be evaluated; usefulness of the used communication tools and channels, employees satisfaction to the strategy communication, employees' understanding and adapting to the strategy, organization's good reputation and customer satisfaction (Hämäläinen & Maula 2004, 119.) The successful strategy communication can be seen as target oriented employees and efficient working, experiencing the everyday work meaningful and part of good customer service and finally should be visible in the company's result. It is important to evaluate the current status of strategy communication and define the ways to further develop the strategy communication. The hypothesis is that evaluating the strategy communication is in close link with the success of strategy implementation. Hämäläinen and Maula have also stated that there are no existing exact functional measurements and performance indicators for evaluating the successfulness of the strategy communication. (Hämäläinen & Maula 2004, 119.)

The most typical communication measurements have been publicity and media coverage and on the other hand the internal work atmosphere survey as part of the HR management (Juholin 2010, 16). In the communication the latest perception has been that the overall organizational communication should support the overall corporation activities, not just media coverage or publicity and this also reflects the communication measurement. (Juholin 2010, 16, 28.)

Strategy communication and its successfulness have been evaluated also from different perspectives; the target organization, the defined targets and used research methods guide the

research process. Rouhiainen (2003) has studied company's global strategy communication from the middle managements and employees perspective with a questionnaire survey containing mainly quantitative questions. The strategy communication in Rouhiainen's (2003) study relates to renewal of the corporate strategy in the target organization and thus is focusing on the change management and change communication and all the employees are target audience for the strategy communication. The study focuses on the used communication methods, but also how middle management's and employees' understanding and commitment of the strategy. In the case organization the research was accomplished with targeted interviews to evaluate the current status of the strategy communication and improvement ideas and in addition the communication targets were defined during this research project. The quantitative information is in main focus in the case organization. (Rouhiainen 2003.)

During this thesis project, it has not been possible to focus on the final effect of the communication on the receiver, but it is important to understand that the amount or the quality of the communication does not guarantee the success of the communication. Understanding the role of topic is also important; changing information requires less effort but for example change on culture or attitudes requires more profound focus on the communication is required.

2.6 Business unit strategy communication assessment

The researcher agrees with Hämäläinen and Maula based also on the literature about previous evaluating the success of the corporate strategy communication, but as it is more closely directed to evaluate the corporate strategy communication also including external stakeholders, it cannot be directly adapted to the business unit strategy communication evaluation. Theory about communication evaluation has been included to support the assessment and eventually improve the case organization strategy communication.

On practical level the starting point for measuring is to ask how the communication in different forms has facilitated the organization's success and helped to reach the set targets (Juholin 2010, 15). Often the theory of communication and measuring communication is related to external communication and publicity. The theory has been modified to adapt to the internal communication in the case business unit. The challenge with communication and its measurement is also that is so closely linked with management and leadership and the targets and the results can vary lot being financial and non-financial (Juholin 2010, 42). Juholin has presented concept of ROC (Return on communication) which refers to following questions: 1) what benefits should and could be received with communication, 2) what harm or dangers can be prevented or minimized and 3) what current state or status can be preserved with communication? (Juholin 2010, 54.) ROC has been derived from the concept of ROI (Return on

investment) which refers only to the financial aspects meaning on used expenses and received income, which are not useful measures for communication. (Juholin 2010, 51-52.) The ROI is not useful in the case organization as there is not specific communication budget. The ROC will not be utilized as such in this thesis, but with all the activities, the needed efforts and results should be in balance and it is important to understand what kind of communication resources the business unit possesses and target the existing resources in most efficient way and keep the balance in mind when planning the activities.

Juholin presented concept of the PRE that has been used for the communication evaluation in international literature. PRE stands for Planning-Research-Evaluation and connects the evaluation and planning. The weakness communication evaluation especially in the corporate communication is detachment of actual overall communication effectiveness and seeing communication only as separate campaigns and activities. (Juholin 2010, 37.) The PRE-framework below was presented Juholin and it is used here as framework for the communication evaluation study in the case organization.



Figure 3: Picture modification of PRE-process presented (Juholin 2010, 37)

The evaluation of the strategy content could be connected to the communication evaluation survey and feedback and ideas to the strategy could be collected at the same time (Hämä-

läinen & Maula 2004, 119.) Also to find out the topics that are especially worrying or interesting for the staff can be included to the survey (Hämäläinen & Maula 2004, 140).

The repeatability and possibility to compare the results later are subjects that are important to keep in mind already in the planning phase as well as execution. Also utilizing other existing performance indicators should be considered. (Hämäläinen & Maula 2004, 123.)

2.7 Evaluation tool for communication quality

Vos and Schoemaker (2004) have developed a balanced scorecard tool to assess and improve communication management and the tool is referred also as audit. The reason why the tool of Vos and Schoemaker was included in this thesis, it give understanding of performance assessment in communication and explains the concept of communication quality. The communication quality evaluation model by Vos and Schoemaker (2004, 32) can be used in different types and size of organizations, in a part of the organization or in organization as whole. The model requires always tailoring to meet the organization's needs, the model is just a prototype and it is not designed to be used as such. (Vos and Schoemaker 2004, 32.) It is also important to keep in mind that also this model is designed for corporate communication including external communication, so quite a bit of tailoring is required.

Vos and Schoemaker (2004, 17) define the quality of communication as "The degree to which communication contributes to the effectiveness of organizational policy and strengthens relations with parties upon which the organization depends in order to be able to function well.". This definition states also why the communication is so integral part of the well-functioning and efficient organization. It summarizes also the essential aspects for strategy implementation through communication.

The dimensions or pillars of communication quality are clarity, environment orientation, consistency, responsiveness and effectiveness. Vos and Schoemaker have used these dimensions to assess quality of four communication areas. The areas are concern communication, marketing communication, internal communication and organization of communication. (Vos and Schoemaker 2004, 39-40.) The focus of this is on internal communication tailored for business unit communication assessment. The researcher has modified the tool of Vos and Schoemaker (2004) to meet the needs of the case business unit.

The suggestion is to implement the assessment system in phases starting with several test and preparatory phases before carrying out the actual assessment. Finally the results will be concluded and carried out into the action. (Vos and Schoemaker 2004, 45-47.) The assessment helps to define the priorities for improvement (Vos and Schoemaker 2004, 73).

Vos and Schoemaker (2004) have used numeric evaluation scales, but in this thesis the dimensions have been used to guide the focus the qualitative evaluation of the business unit communication to the most significant aspects of internal communication to facilitate the strategy communication. The presented quality management systems can be used as reference to evaluate and plan communication for the business unit. One of the aspects that can be used is the concept of quality itself which Juholin (2010, 50) links with sharing the meanings and information and learning. Because the quality of the communication is more important measurement than quantity, it is important to understand the aspects related to communication quality.

Internal communication		
Clarity	Information to staff is clear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is available, complete and understandable • Information is available on time or easily accessible and found • Tools e.g. Intranet is user-friendly • Bulletins contain up-to-date information
Environment Oriented	Communication reinforces commitment and supports change management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication support commitment • Communication encourages two-way communication and discussion • Special focus on communication in change situations • Couraging to use communication experts
Consistency	Coherence with HR and with other communication domains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coherence with other departments e.g. HR and communication • Clear procedures and responsibilities of communication content and timing
Responsiveness	Communication contributes to internal views on external changes and communication skills encourage internal responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize of communication skills of managers to promote responsiveness • Internal communication reflects the external and contributes employees awareness
Effectiveness and efficiency	Internal communication audits cost efficient methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal communication and internal communication tools are assessed • Internal image is assessed (can be part of staff satisfaction surveys)
Organization of communication		
Clarity	Communication vision is clearly defined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined communication vision • Defined how communication contributes to organization's success • Communication is used as management tool
Consistency		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication policies and responsibilities are agreed between corporate and business unit level

Table 1: The dimensions for internal communication assessment (Adapted and modified from Vos & Schoemaker 2004, 42-44, 62-66)

2.7.1 Assessment in practice

The target organization its size and features determines the research method, number and style of the questions (for example is the emphasis on quantitative or qualitative data) and research sample size or are all the employees target group. Resources to carry out the study and the set targets for the survey and use of the results depend from the target organization and also from the plan and purpose of the survey. (Hämäläinen & Maula 2004, 124.)

The evaluation requires time and resources and should not be accomplished without planning. The target is based on the need in the organization and as a result of the research neutral information should be received, but it is important to remember that evaluation is always relative and comparative and there cannot be received absolute truth or answer. Juholin states that it is more important to understand how things are evolving instead of trying to find exact information. (Juholin 2010, 32.)

Juholin (2010, 58) suggest to first define the targets and then follow that with key performance indicators and finally state the follow-up monitoring activities. The main task of targets is to guide the activities, give the direction and help to focus on the priorities; also in communication activities as already stated the importance of the targets in strategy implementation. Good target can be monitored and measured, they are realistic and reachable with the available resources, they are targeted and the targets should be also time-bound. Also the communication targets should be concrete enough and realistic. All the targets should have indicator that really measures the dimension and its development. (Juholin 2010, 58-61, Hämäläinen & Maula 2004, 143.) Examples of communicational targets could be adapting new practice, improve internal dialogue and co-operation in the organization or improving the understanding about the strategy (Juholin 2010, 52-63).

3 Strategy

It is important to understand the phenomena called strategy before starting to evaluate and study the strategy implementation in a business unit level or furthermore focusing on the superior's role in the process. In general it is important to have some understanding about the topic before entering to communication planning.

The origin of the word strategy comes from Greek word "strategos" which means originally the skillful management of war (Kamensky 2010, 16). Hambrick and Fredrickson (2001, 49) remind that great generals are responsible for the whole and they should also make sure that their mid-level managers know the strategy of otherwise the activities lose the efficiency and focus. Whittington summaries the main challenge of the strategy is that the organization are 'mindless' and consists on individuals who should be united to work towards common goals (Whittington, 2001, 99). The top management can be seen as generals guiding the 'mindless' organization consisted of individuals with the strategy keeping in mind all the different parts of the organization. Juuti and Luoma (2009, 29) have stated that organization needs strategy to succeed and according to one study only 9 percent of Finnish organization considers to work without strategy. At least the main points of the strategy should be public, to guide the organization to success (Lindroos and Lohivesi 2006, 29-30).

According to Juuti and Luoma (2009) who are referring to Mintzberg the strategy is needed for four reasons, first to give a direction for the organization, it will be the guiding star moving the organization towards its goals. Second reason for strategy is to help to focus and integrate the activities, without strategy the organization is only a group of individuals without common activities. Even less impressive strategy can connect the people to work for same goal, if the people are enough committed to the same strategy. The third reason is that strategy is needed to build an identity for the organization. The fourth reason is to build coherence and consistency to the work of organization. The strategy is an answer to people's need to be lead and managed. (Juuti and Luoma 2009.)

The today's history of strategies in business management science is fairly young with only last 50 years history but still strategy is the most used term in business management (Kamensky 2010, 13). Strategy gives good framework to manage and develop business, organization and staff, but it is also one of the most misused words which can be used based on the user's knowledge, aims and desires in which ever content (Kamensky 2010, 13). One of the challenges with strategy is that strategy has become a catchall term, synonym for everything important and it ends ups confusing and diminishing the meaning and power or the strategy concept (Hambrick&Fredrickson, 2001, 49).

3.1 Definition of strategy

One of the things that came clear during this thesis project is, that there is not just one definition of strategy, but several definitions of the strategy and in general very little agreement about any other aspects related to the strategy. It is not possible to summarize briefly or unambiguously so complex and wide a concept as strategy and also simply because there is not just one single right answer to what strategy is (Kamensky 2010, 13, 16, Whittington 2001, 1, Martin 2014). Cummings and Daellenbach (2009, 237) have also highlighted that since the 1990s there has been constant discussion about 'what strategy really is', who makes the strategy and in what level strategy happens (senior executives vs smallest micro-activity), relationship of strategy management and change management and even what makes the decisions strategic. (Kamensky 2010, 13, 16, Whittington 2001, 1.) At least it has been stated that strategy would not be needed without competition (Kamensky 2010, 13, 16).

The researcher personally prefers the definition by Juha Näsi; "strategy is the story line, the heart and the guiding start for all the activities and operations in the organization" (Lindroos & Lohivesi 2006, 28).

Kamensky's (2010, 18-19) strategy definition highlights conscious decision making on guidelines for central targets and activities in a changing business environment. Johnson et al defines the strategy including three elements; long term, direction and organization incorporating deliberate and logical decisions but also emergent patterns (Johnson et al 2012, 3). Juuti and Luoma (2009, 24) include the organization's unique excellence and capabilities in the strategy definition. The long-term refers to years or even decades and can include several strategy options (Johnson et al 2012, p. 3). Kamensky emphasizes the importance of understanding the made choices to implement them determinedly and in good discipline (Kamensky 2010, 19). Even not all schools of strategy are emphasizing such a rational approach as Kamensky, his strategy definition justifies the importance of strategy communication to explain the made choices or starting point and assumptions behind the made strategy plans. Johnson et al (2012, 3) state that strategy is "The long-term direction of an organization", but Hambrick and Fredrickson (2001, 58) note that strategy is not just about distant future and as the strategy term used to be 5-10 years, it more usually is now 2-3 years.

Porter has defined strategy as being different and choosing a distinctive set of activities and it requires integrating and excelling several activities. The strategy is not about unique position, operation excellence, but it is about making choices and also making decisions not to do something, it is to manage and lead the whole, not just parts. Porter (1996) also notes that the main challenge of strategy comes from inside of the company and trade-offs are an integrated part of strategic management and strategy. (Porter 1996).

Not just theoretical definitions

After a long consideration the researcher decided to leave out the famous and well known strategy definitions. This has been done, because there is not just one strategy definition that would cover all aspects of strategy, but all the strategy definitions differ. The researcher furthermore found more important to present all possible aspects included to the strategy and because she wanted to highlight the fact that the strategy is always targeted and tailored for the organization and those are the main items that really matter for the everyday life of the employees and workers.

To the researcher's understanding, it is more important to understand the different aspects and dimensions of strategy than learn several strategy definitions by heart. This is also important in the communication planning to understanding just about the communication is not enough if the communication does not cover all the main aspects related to strategy. The communication should cover all the main aspects of strategy and the communication expert should be able to give input by ensuring that all the aspect relevant to strategy are covered by same time considering the different stakeholder groups' perspectives and interests points. At least following items include to the strategy; goals and objectives, competitive environment, internal strengths and capabilities, effective implementation of the strategy, resources and organization structure, efficient processes, investments, creating value for the customer, it is way of achieving the targets, focus on the future - it is way to succeed. Strategy is support for decisions, coordinating company's activities, targets and guiding star. (Grant & Jordan 2012, 10-21, 24-26.)

Meanings and definitions for strategy are numerous; they included guiding organizations' activities, defining most important items and activities, base for the action plans or made choices (Suominen et al 2011, 25). There is not just one definition of the strategy. Often word strategy is also used as synonym for everything important (Suominen et al 2011, 25). At the best the strategy can inspire, give guideline for all the activities and also give support and reasoning for the superiors work and decision making (Suominen et al 2011, 11).

Strategy should show the purpose and direction for the whole company in all the levels and to help define what kind of work will be done (Montgomery 2008). Strategy should not just position firm to competitive environment nor should it not be about achieving competitive advantage, but to acknowledge the changing environment and defining what kind of company it will be (Montgomery 2008). Strategy should not be just operational effectiveness even it is important for the company (Porter 1996). But still often today the strategy is simply seen as plan (Santalainen 2009, 17, 20) or it can be seen as positioning in the external environment

and acting differently than competitors. According to Santalainen strategy can be even view or ideology defining the way to interpret the world. (Santalainen 2009, 20.)

The five elements that constitute strategy are according to Hambrick and Fredrickson (2001) are 1) arenas; where will we be active, 2) vehicles; how will we get there, 3) differentiators; how will we win in the market place, 4) staging; what will be our speed and sequence of moves, and 5) economic logic; how will we obtain our returns. Strategy should not be just random choices in these areas, but it should be intentionally chosen, well prepared, inter-connect aligned, integrated and coherent whole of these elements and organization's arrangements and processes should support the implementation of chosen strategy. Hambrick and Fredrickson highlight the need for comprehensive strategy and they also highlight that strategy is not long range planning but more about making intent and educated choices and the strategy tools can be used to improve the strategy as whole. (Hambrick & Fredrickson 2001, 54, 58.)

Use of strategy tools is recommended, but strategy is not just using strategy tools nor a result of using these tools as the tools are with narrow scope and thus also the resulting strategy would be too narrow (Montgomery 2008, Hambrick & Fredrickson 2001). Tools can help to allocate the current position, to see possibilities, identify threats and help with making better choices and trade-offs than competitors, but the tools do not remove the need for consideration and tools can also simplify complicated phenomena too much (Vuorinen 2013, 16, 35-36).

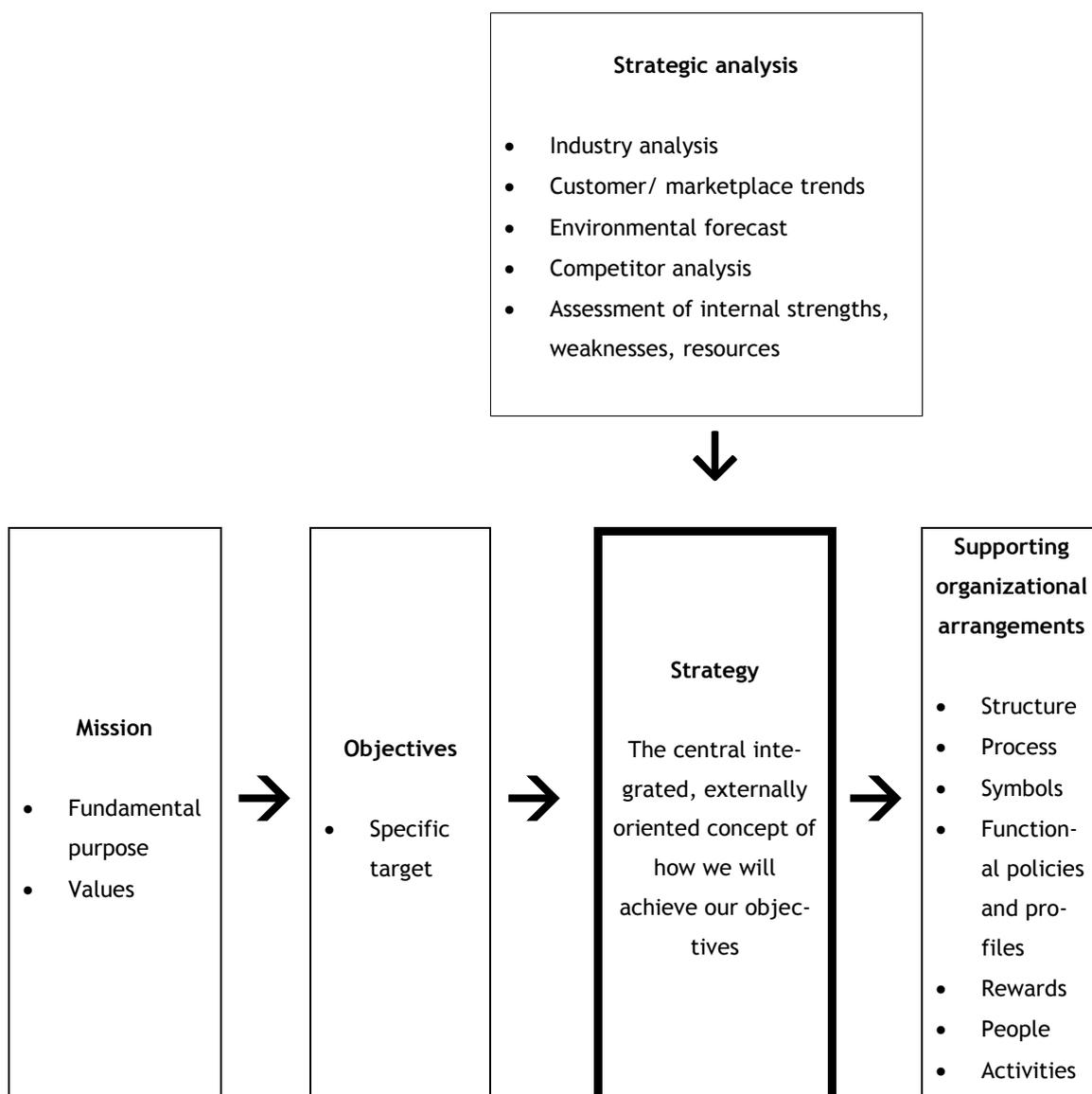


Figure 4: Putting strategy in its place. (Hambrick & Fredrickson 2001, 50)

3.2 Different approaches to strategy

Different approaches to strategy and their focus on management will be presented briefly. Even the thesis is not following any specific school of strategy nor is this thesis trying to include all the strategy theory, it is important to understand the basic on what the strategy has been built on.

The different schools have different beliefs. Classical school is rational and plans are important. Processualists are focused on internal aspects as Evolutionist focus on the markets.

Systematic approach emphasizes the 'sociological' sensitivity to understand both internal and external (competitors) activities. The different schools of strategy also present different decades, Classical was in power in 1960s, Processual in 1970s, Evolutionary in 1980s and most recent is Systemic approach in 1990s. (Whittington, 2001, 38.) According to my own perspective, it does not matter what is the school of strategy under focus, but communication is important in all approaches even the content of communication may vary between made plans, market information and internal information. Also the role of managers varies between different approaches.

Santalainen (2009, 17), has interpreted the effect of different strategic approaches. The rational strategy approach focuses on finding the right plan towards goals. Strategy is the tool box to achieve the set targets. Rational strategy approach is the most common and most popular interpretation of strategy. Evolutionary approach presented for example by sceptics like Mintzberg present that it is not possible to plan future and that the strategy can be understood only afterwards. In addition to rational and evolutionary approaches, Santalainen (2007, 17) presents processual approach which combines the two previous approaches and strategy is seen as constant learning and anticipation process. Santalainen states that processual approach could be presented as today's strategic thinking and acting or other words strategizing. (Santalainen, 2009, 17.)

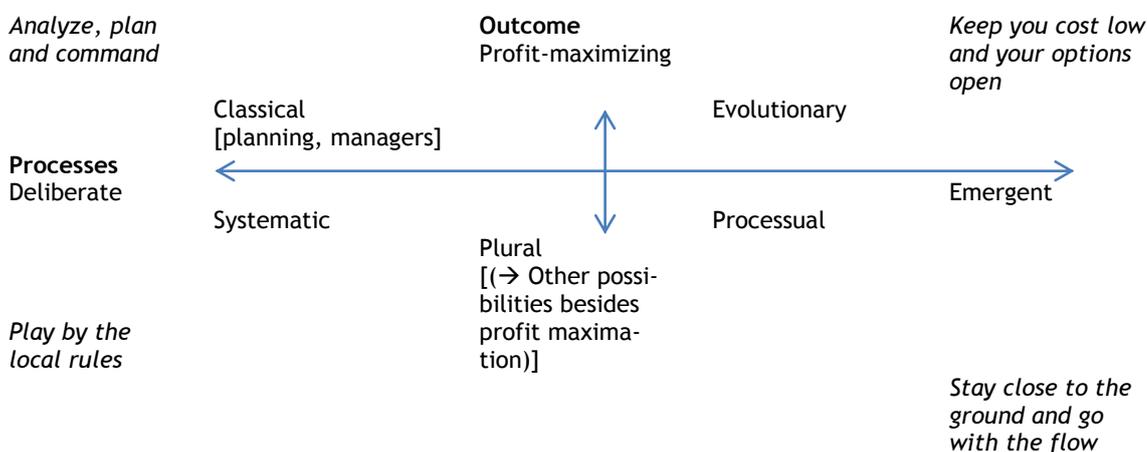


Figure 5: Summary implications of the four perspectives on strategy (Whittington 2001, 3)

The definition and focus of strategy has developed and evolved over the decades. The different schools of strategy are 'products of their own time' and different aspects of the strategy have been emphasized and have even been 'fashionable' in different times. Cummings and Daellenbach (2009) have studied the strategy articles and their main focus over the decades.

Examples of falling trends are words models and tools, but which does not mean that they would not be used, but as they are already so integrated part of the strategy process and their use has come even more eclectic, that there is no need to write articles about them and it is generally important not to understand only the current themes of strategy, but to reflect them to the long development history of the strategy as the new themes have been built upon the previous themes and theories and learnings. (Cummings and Daellenbach 2009.)

1960s	1990s	2010?
Strategy as NOUN (i.e., thing)	Strategizing as VERB (i.e. actions)	Strategized or 'becoming strategized' as ADJECTIVE (i.e., quality)/or ADVERB (i.e., manner)
The big decisions in the present that aim the organization toward particular targets in the future	How past practices/processes create patterns that shape the present and the future	How future desired characteristics (e.g., greater orientation, greater integrated effort) encourage activities in the present (e.g., branding, planning, processes) that build a manner or way of proceeding

Table 2: The altering eye: different language and tense of strategy (Cumming and Daellenbach 2009, 253)

3.3 Strategic architecture

Kamensky (2010) has presented concept of strategic architecture which includes mission, vision, strategic business unit, and strategic goals. Even Kamensky's strategy architecture may not be so commonly know it connects the different elements of the strategy and gives overall picture of elements that can be included to the strategy and due to that Kamensky's strategy architecture has been presented in this thesis.

In mission organization summaries the goals and purpose of company's existence and it answers to questions 'What business are we in?' and helps management to focus on key objects of the strategy (Johnson et al 2007, 7). According to Kamensky the mission tells how the vision will be achieved, but mission has to be legitimate and accepted within the organization and also outside. Good mission can be the basis of the whole organizations existence. (Åberg 2006, 71.)

Vision refers to desired future and long-term goals of the organization and answers to questions 'what do we want to achieve?' (Johnson et al 2007, 7). Kamensky (2010, 79) points out the challenges of vision as vision should be powerful, real and clearly guiding the direction, but the good vision should also include bold objections and be even intimidating. Vision

should be simultaneously indefinite and clear sight of future (Kamensky 2010, 79, Lindroos & Lohivesi 2006, 26). Organization's and working community's commitment to vision is important (Åberg 2006, 70). The benefits of vision can be divided to three levels and on the top is to facilitate the future success of the company and it gives the main direction for the company. Second level is the mission to guide the activities based on business scope and values towards vision. The third level is to evaluate how the vision facilitates in the strategy planning and implementation phase. (Kamensky 2010, 81-82.) Good vision helps already in the strategic planning and also in strategic implementation by facilitating management's and staff's commitment to strategy and focusing the attention to most central aspects (Kamensky 2010, 81).

Objectives and targets are precise and often quantifiable targets of organization's activities on a defined period (Johnson et al 2007, 7). All organizations use objectives even if they have not stated mission, vision or values. The objectives are often financial and they state the outcome of organization's activities and examples of objectives could be market share, sales of profit level but they can be also related to customer service or satisfaction or environmental or social goals. (Johnson et al 2007, 80.) Lindroos and Lohivesi (2006, 168-169) state that the bonus system target setting is the best way guide the actions in organization. Already Sunzi (2005, 77) stated that if the top management i.e. officers and employees i.e. troops who have common, most similar goal they will win.

The rewarding systems are one of the most effective tools for human resource management and it has the great impacts and it can be used to facilitate the strategy implementation. The objectives behind the rewarding system should be conducted from strategy and the rewarding systems should be led not only managed. (Henry 2007, 5-6.) To effectively use objectives as part of strategic management and strategy implementation, it is important that the objectives correspond with the strategy and sufficient communication to staff of the rewarding system, objectives and strategy is needed. It is vital that superiors and managers understand the strategy and the objectives conducted from the strategy and are able to communicate and explain them to employees. (Henry 2007, 13-14.)

More than one strategy

There can be more than one strategy in an organization. The most common strategic levels are corporate strategy and business strategy. The different strategies are guiding different levels of company's management. (Kamensky 2010, 22.)

Companies with more than one business unit require corporate strategy to take care of the general advantage of the company and building synergies between business units and how to

create value of individual businesses (Kamensky 2010, 23, Johnson et al 2012, 12) Corporate-level strategy is determining the main strategic decisions for the company for example the range and relationship of businesses (business units) included and the geographical scope and answers to the questions of company's existence and main principles as mission, vision, values, business idea and main targets of the company. (Johnson et al 2012, 6, 12, Kamensky 2010, 23.) Also organization structure, resources, management, rewarding, planning system and company culture are under corporate strategy (Kamensky 2010, 23).

Business-level strategy guides the business unit's every day actions to compete in the market. In the business-level will be made the decisions how the company can create competitive advantage in the chosen business areas. (Johnson et al 2012, 7, 12, Kamensky 2010, 24.)

Johnson et al (Johnson et al 2012, 7) also mentions operational strategies which are closely linked with business strategies as implementation and success of business strategies depend on activities and operations on operational level. (Johnson et al 2012, 7.)

Kamensky stated that it is important to clarify the level of strategy that is under discussion and how it is linked to other levels (Kamensky 2010, 21). Focus in this thesis is the communication of a business level strategy in the case organization which is a business unit within a larger corporation and this has been also core part of the thesis to dig in and explain the business level strategy communication in practice in an organization with several business units.

3.3.1 Culture and commitment

This thesis does not focus on the organization culture or commitment nor are these in the focus of the study project. But culture and commitment have been emphasized several times in the literature, that these phenomena will be briefly described and also because both are closely related to successful communication. Norton and Kaplan (2009, 168-169) state that in the end the successful strategy implementation relies on the commitment of the staff and how well the staff is commitment to the strategy and to reaching the strategic targets. The main phases to adjust the employees to strategy are; induction to strategy including communication about values, vision, mission and strategy with the strategic targets and how these targets will be achieved. The second phase is to connect personal (bonus) targets to the strategy and finally integrate the training and development programs so that employees receive needed skills, information and know-how. (Norton and Kaplan 2007, 299, Norton and Kaplan 2009, 168-169.) Grand and Jordan also emphasize the culture's role in strategy implementation (2012, 442-446) and on the other hand communication modifies culture (Norton and Kaplan 2009, 169).

Organization capital refers to organization's shared understanding of vision, mission, values and strategy and it also refers to organization culture enabling the knowledge sharing horizontally and vertically. Communication can greatly facilitate the creation of organization culture and organization capital. (Kaplan & Norton, 2004.) Kaplan and Norton (2004) have created a framework to describe organization capital and the elements are culture, leadership, alignment and teamwork referring to knowledge sharing. Kaplan and Norton describe the culture as prevailing attitudes and behaviors in organization and how they affect the activities and purpose, in one company can be several cultures in different units. (Kaplan & Norton 2004.) Culture determines communication, but communication also creates and renews culture (Åberg 2006, 84-86). Åberg reminds that organizations changes even though the change is slow and also all new employees are shaping the current culture (Åberg 2006, 52). The organization culture will not be under focus in this thesis, but it could be interesting topic to continue studying the influence of culture to strategy implementation and communication as culture can be facilitating or hindering the implementation (Kaplan & Norton 2004). Sull et al (2015) have studied the reasons behind strategy execution challenges and their findings question the view of alignment as key for strategy execution. Based on their study, they noticed that alignment alone is not enough to ensure strategy execution, but coordination across units is critical part of the execution. (Sull et al 2015.)

3.4 Strategy process

Traditional strategy process is linear and the main phases are in chronology order first to create the strategy and then execute the strategy (Vuorinen 2013, 39-40). The strategy process can be further divided to smaller steps below the process according to (Lindroos & Lohivesi 2006, 31).



Figure 6: Traditional strategy process (Lindroos & Lohivesi 2006, 31)

But the strategy management can be also seen more holistically and with phases that are not in chronological order, the phases being analyzing strategic position, making strategic choices and executing the choices (Vuorinen, 2013, 42).

Usually the board initiates and guides the strategy process and CEO has the main responsibility of the process and he/she will receive assistance of business unit leaders and other management. Execution of the strategy is usually responsibility of managerial level and commonly employees do not participate to the strategy process. (Vuorinen 2013, 250.) Strategy process, its formality and extensive coverage should be tailored to fit the target organization's needs including company's size and maturity (Vuorinen 2013, 39).

Supervising is evaluating that made decisions are implemented correctly and that correct actions have been implemented. The monitoring and supervising can be divided to four phases which are anticipating the consequences of made decisions, collecting information of made actions, comparing the anticipated and realized results and make corrective actions if needed. (Åberg 2006, 69.)

The strategy process types are top down, bottom up and interactive model between these. In top down model the top management designs and implement strategy. (Åberg 2006, 121.) Top down model seems to be the most commonly used strategy formation approach.

3.5 Strategic Management and leadership and role of top management

Strategic management is activity enabling success on the long run when operational management is focusing on the short term management (Vuorinen 2013, 15). Strategic management has three major challenges; to create the strategy, to implement the strategy and to renew the strategy early and powerfully. Often the greatest challenge is considered to be the implementation of the strategy. (Kamensky 2010, 319.) The basis for the strategic management is to understand the corporation as a whole organize the resources (organization structure) and manage and respond to environmental changes and to make decisions related to all of these and also understand the decision making practices and processes without forgetting innovative development behind all of these. (Cummings and Daellenbach, 2009, 255.)

In this thesis the role of top management is acknowledged and especially their role in facilitating communication is accepted as basic assumption behind the research in the case organization. In the strategy literature the roles and significance of the top management varies greatly between different approaches and especially processualists are cautious about the role of 'visionary' leadership and especially gap between strategic decision and action (Whittington 2001, 42). The role of top management role in communication has been considered both as aspect of management and leadership.

Porter (1996) and Montgomery (2008) highlight the need for leadership in the strategy planning and especially strategy implementation and Porter especially emphasizes importance of

clear communication (Porter 1996). Montgomery (2008) emphasized the role of CEO, but the role and leadership of other top managers is also important in communicating the strategy (Montgomery 2008, Galunic & Hermreck2012). Also Kaplan and Norton (2009, 170) emphasize the top managements' communication and the leadership; employees need leaders who they can follow. In addition the employees feel that top management has deeper understanding about the strategy than their own superiors (Galunic & Hermreck2012).

The strategy is on responsibility of the managers and it requires leadership and it should not be merely to make operational improvements, but it should be about making decisions, communicating them and also to provide discipline to decision making. Leaders must teach others about the strategy. (Porter 1996.)

There are two perceptions on management which are leadership and management. Management is to organize things fluently including management systems and leaderships ability to make people do something and it is related to personal qualities. (Åberg 2006, 65.) Strategy execution requires both management and leadership (Åberg 2006, 69).

3.5.1 Organization structure and stakeholders

Juholin (2010, 20) defines stakeholder as someone who possesses resources like knowledge, know-how, money or material which can be used for the company. In return the stakeholders wait for something; salary, return on investment or possibility to influence the activities. Stakeholders are the people and groups in and outside of the organization depending on or affected by the organization. Stakeholder term often refer to shareholders, but also employees, suppliers, government agencies. (Johnson et al 2007, 78, 89-90.) The internal stakeholders can be also divided to several stakeholder groups and individuals can belong to several stakeholder groups. (Johnson et al 2007, 90.)

Structure is big part of the strategy and strategy implementation. But structure is not only affected by strategy, but strategy can be also affected by structure (Whittington 2001, 99).

Three basic organizational structure types are functional, multidivisional and matrix (Johnson et al 2007, 233). In the case organization the used organizational structure type is matrix. In matrix structure organization's different structural dimensions, for example product divisions and functional specialism, are combined and typically, middle managers report to several senior managers (Johnson et al 2007, 236).

Matrix structures advantages are knowledge-sharing and integration of knowledge, flexibility and dual dimensions (Johnson et al 2007, 237). The challenges of matrix structure are com-

plex relationships instead of single management lines and this often causes problems with decision making and specially on the speed of decision making and also may cause conflicts as employees have to report to several managers as well as unclear job responsibilities (Johnson et al 2007, 237). Johnson et al states that main challenge in matrix organizations is to control those (Johnson et al 2007, 237). Johnson et al also states that (Johnson et al 2007, 237) in matrix organization senior managers have important role collaborating and leading the complex organization (Johnson et al 2007, 237).

But besides the organization structure approach the organization can be defined differently. Organization is according to postmodern perception a work community with social construction that perceives through conversation and stories and that organization equals to how the members perceive and picture it. The traditional target oriented definitional for organization is that organization or work community is group of people that systematically aims towards specified goals controlling available resources. This definition includes the elements of company; people, resources and targets. But it is today more difficult to define organization because all organizations are networked to some extent and people are scattered to several locations and also outside company premises. Organizations are constructed from people, resources and defined goals and their activities can be forecasted to certain extent and power and delegation of work. Organizations develop also practices and rules for communication. (Åberg 2006, 50-52.)

The postmodern conception has changed the thinking and concepts about organizations and focus has shifted from universal models and principles towards approach of organizations as individual cases with local knowledge with less rationale and predictability. The postmodern research presents organizations as socially constructed, learning, goal orientation is prerequisite for coordinated actions and emphasize is on jointly accepted visions and larger objectives. (Åberg 2006, 54.)

The strategy process has been also modified within decades and latest understanding is that the top management cannot solely formulate the strategy; the broader group of stakeholders has been included to the strategy process to gain best possible strategy. Also the possibility to give feedback and participate to the strategy process increases the commitment to the strategy (Lindroos & Lohivesi 2006, 49-50, 57).

3.6 Future of the strategy?

Strategy has evolved and developed over the past decades. The strategy is here to stay, but what will it be or what it will become? This little chapter is used just briefly present some possible directions were the strategy could be moving on.

Juuti and Luoma (2009) have presented the idea of moving from rational view through complex view to post-modern view. The role of strategy is radically different between these views. As well known the strategy we know today is rational. It includes planning and formal process. To roles of top management and other employees are clearly separated and participation to the strategy is possible if the top management allows. In the complex view the responsibility of the strategy has shifted from the top management to be everyone's responsibility. This is by definition complex without formal strategy process and the focus is on interactions and relationships and even on feelings. In the postmodern view the focus is on relationship between company and customers and strategy present in every activity. The post-modern view also heavily lies on the dialogue, storytelling and images - no longer plans and processes. (Juuti&Luoma 2009.)

A new approach to strategy is strategic thinking complimenting other strategic theories. Its main benefit is that it combines strategic concepts and tools to actual management challenges and can be also related to leadership instead of management (Santalainen 2009, 17). Strategic thinking means that using different strategic frameworks and tacit knowledge can be made deeper analysis and the usual alternatives can be challenged and the target is to define a model of success that is tested with making and implementing strategies. (Santalainen 2009, 20.) Strategic thinking is seeing and understanding towards future, visioning. But it requires ability to see backwards, utilizing experience and tacit knowledge, but it is not mean that future would be continuation of history, but the previous success factors should be recognized. (Santalainen 2009, 21.)

Trends in strategy also change and the new focus areas include managing organization's complexity and unpredictability including also inertia and chaos. These terms are quite far from the traditional strategy and organization understanding, but also these emphasize the needs to change the strategy processes and strategy implementation including communication. New complex organizations require more information and also maybe more freedom to create their own systems and organization and networks and the conditions to create either incremental or radical change. The simple rules may facilitate the behavior of organization still allowing flexibility. (Grant & Jordan 2012, 471-474.)

Also the strategy-as-practice concept has been presented. In strategy-as-practice the strategy is more understood something the organization does, not something that organization has. (Paroutis et al 2013.)

The researcher does not see that the rational strategy methods would disappear, but with this development the communication plays greater and more significant role in organizations.

4 Communication

Communication is an event, a process, in which through giving meanings of the status of the affairs is interpreted and in which this interpretation is made available to others through interactive, message transferring network (Åberg 2006, 85 [Åberg 2000]). It is sending and receiving messages with information, but also creating, sharing and interpreting meanings by both sender and receiver. The receiver interprets the message which means, that it is not the original idea behind the message, and the requirement for successful communication is that sender has created understandable, interesting message. The third factor facilitating shared understanding is interaction. But even understanding the send message does not mean that receiver would accept the message or act according to message. (Åberg 2006, 84-86.)

The communication is always vulnerable and subject to distractions. The types of distractions are barrier, noise, deficiency and distortion. Barrier is external distraction (for example email send to wrong receiver), noise refers to several competing and interfering messages, deficiency is internal distraction (for example bad hearing ability or poor concentration) and distortion is also internal distraction were receiver interprets the message differently than receiver has meant. (Åberg 2006, 85, 91.) Communication is not just mechanical information transfer or a process ending when the message is send, even that is important, but communication should be a possibility to create common understanding and build feeling of belonging and sense of community. Semiotic models came to communication after process models and they highlight meaning sense making. (Åberg 2006, 83.)

But keep in mind Wiiio's wisdom: Communication usually fails, except by accident! (Åberg 2006, 90.)

4.1 Organization communication

Åberg believes that communication is the most important recourse in work organizations because the organization cannot function without communication and there cannot be management and leadership without communication (Åberg 2006, 12). But before going further to explain the role of communication in the strategy implementation it is important to explain what communication really is and what organization communication is.

Communication is organization resource and as other resources also it requires planning, directing and supervising like any other resources and it also supports organization achievement of goals and profit. The organization communication happens in organized settings which also guides the planning of organized communication, it main function is to support achievement of objectives and it usually includes several technical tools and communication channels for

example network communication (intranet) or staff magazine. Organization's communication is a system including communication channels, arrangements and rules. (Åberg 2006, 96 [Åberg 2000, 96].)

According to Åberg the reasons to communicate (2006 [2000]) in organization are to support basic activities (for example service and product production), to profile the organization, to inform, to induction and commit personnel to organization and to interact. Åberg calls this 'organization profit or result communication model' and the dimensions of Åberg's model are context of communication (either internal or external communication) and content of communication (scale being a single work task to messages concerning the whole corporation). Organization can directly affect first four of these, but the fifth which is social interaction, 'grapevine', is out of the organization's direct command. (Åberg 2006, 96-97.)

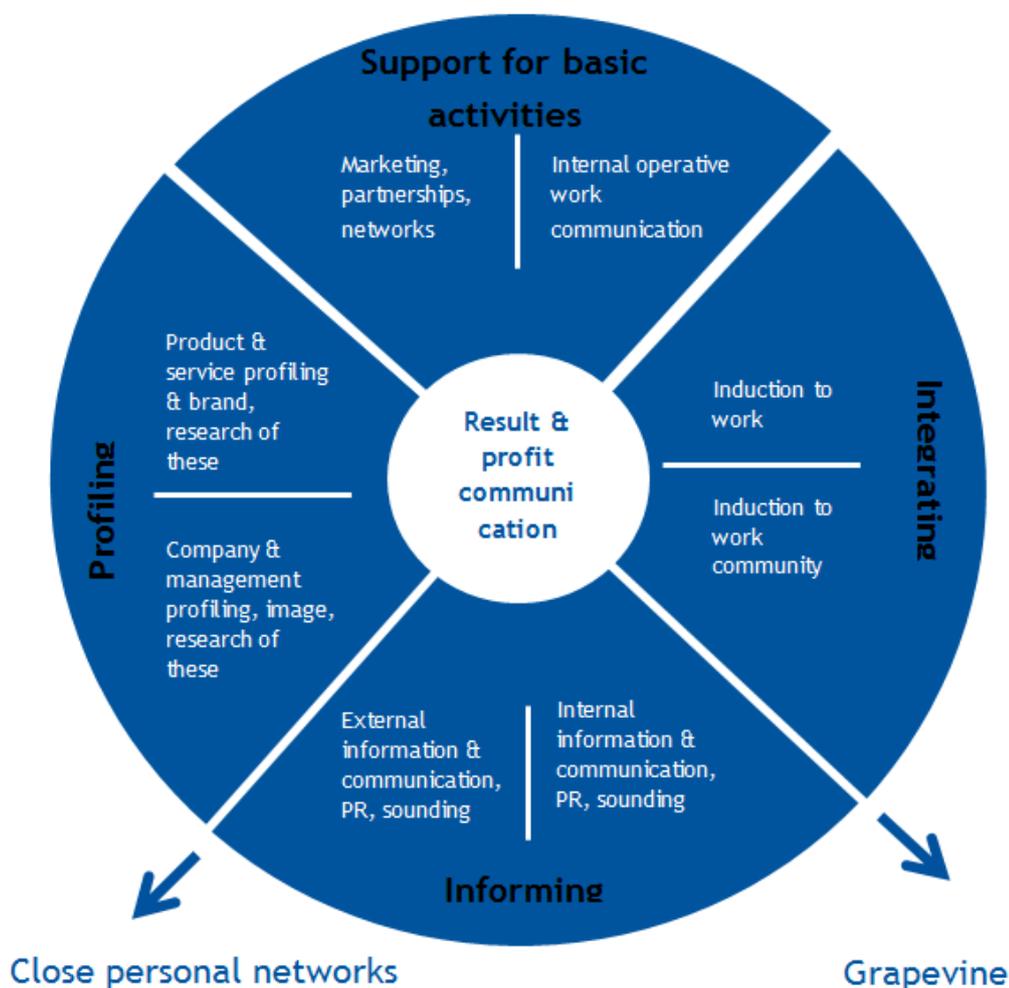


Figure 7: Åberg: result and profit communication model (Åberg 2006, 98)

The strategy communication on my opinion belongs to all five dimensions or reasons to communicate. Strategy is communicated to external stakeholders, it is part of the company profiling, strategic objectives have important role in human resources management, big part of commitment and induction to organization are usually derived from strategy and all the organization's activities should be related to achieving the objectives and targets.

4.1.1 Leadership and management communication

Leadership communication is special theme within general communication and Åberg (2006, 93) has defined the leadership communication as management and leadership in organization that emphasizes interpretation of the meanings, creating and sharing information that is required for activities, organizing, aligning, supervising, motivating and encourage individuals and teams including interaction and sense of community. The leadership communication is leading and managing and leading and managing would not be possible without communication as team is required to accomplish the work. Leadership communication is versatile and presented through several ways; formal communication situations (for example meetings, appraisal discussion), everyday communication and network leadership. (Åberg 2006, 93-94.)

Management view to communication emphasized the need to create communication system, because communication is the way that organization functions and aims to achieve the objectives. The main communication themes in management view are aligning the activities, sharing the task (delegating) and coordination. (Åberg 2006, 154.)

Also Kotter has separated the management and leadership; both have important but different role. Management is needed to ensure that the system works. Leadership is needed to improve the systems; it encourages employees to do more. Management is managing things, leadership is leading people. (Kotter 2012; Åberg 2006, 206.)

The Internal corporate communication model by Welch and Jackson (2007, 186) describes well the dimensions and importance of the internal communication, but also presents the importance for leadership communication.

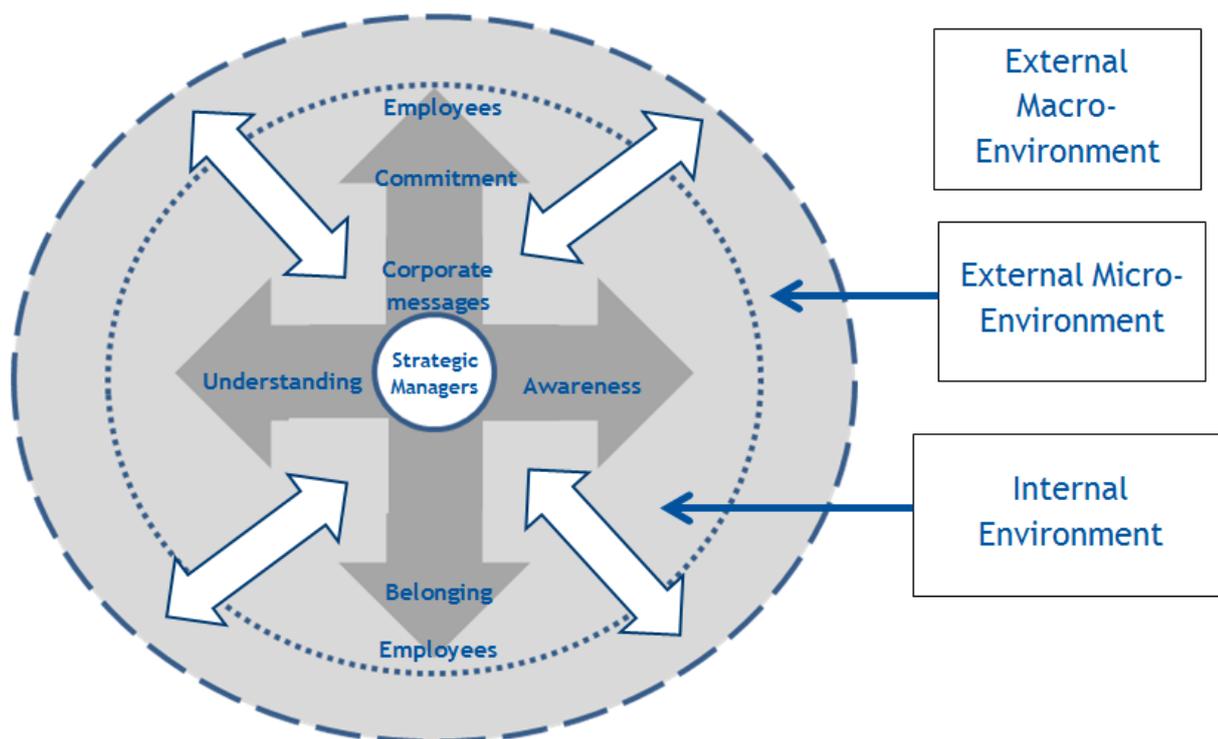


Figure 8: Internal Corporate Communication (Welch&Jackson 2007, 186)

Leadership view relates to concept of rich and poor communication media, tools and channels. The used features are speed of feedback, possibility to use parallel cues in in the communication events, natural language and personal effect of the used media. The richest media is one with instant feedback, the communication events and situations where the speech, gestures and facial expression and materials picture and text support each other and in which can be used natural forms of communication like pictures, speech and text and where the interaction is possible. (Åberg 2006, 158.) The richest communication tools are based on personal, on time and instant interaction and examples are discussion by two people or in small groups including unofficial coffee table discussions but also virtual communication tools and forms. The poorest forms of communication are brochures, announcements and reports which are impersonal and often contain complicated language. (Åberg 2006, 158.) Most of the today's management communication is mediated communication (for example email and phone) (Åberg 2006). Email communication is suitable to deliver exact information, it is documentable, independent from time and place, and it is easy and fast. The challenges of email communication are that it is vulnerable for distractions, it may allow too easily 'spamming' and it can be even too easy to send emails.

For effective and efficient leadership communication it is important to select most suitable communication tools for each situation. It would be for example waste of time and resources

to use rich communication mediums like face-to-face meeting when email is sufficient. Good leaders used the rich communication tools in situation where the topic was complicated, commitment or creating circumstances for commitment and to communicate displeased news. (Åberg 2006, 159.)

Satisfaction to communication and work motivation has a direct link and the people who are satisfied with internal communication are more motivated than those who are less satisfied with internal communication. Managers have important role but also subordinates should be active in the communication and interaction. (Åberg 2006, 110.)

4.1.2 Change management and communication

The change has become everyday phenomena (Åberg 2006, 63). Business management is change management, because the objectives differ from the current state (Åberg 2006, 126). Japanese Kaizen-thinking sees change as constant improvement compared to western thinking that sees change as something that should be conquered when change comes on the way (Åberg 2006, 123). Kaizen also sees that people target towards perfections (Åberg 2006, 125). Kaizen emphasizes three communication aspects: sounding, aligning the activities to respond the change and constant communication about the change (Åberg 2006, 126). Sounding includes six phases: recognizing important internal and external factors and aspects, develop system to follow these factors/aspects, follow the weak signals, action recommendations based on weak signals analysis, carrying out the activities and then follow-up and supervision (Åberg 2006, 126).

When change is constant process, there should be also constant communication, even during the slow periods and when the plans do not realize as planned and especially in these cases it is important to communicate to show holistic picture of the change. The constant change process has to be described and it has to be followed constantly and up-to-date. (Åberg 2006, 132.) There has to be communication especially when there are no news and also inform when there are subjects that cannot be communicated, what is happening at the moment and what will happen next (Åberg 2006, 132).

To succeed companies have to change. Kotter (2012) has listed the main reasons for failure in succeeding with change and communicational aspects are strongly present. For example underestimating the power of vision, under communicating the vision and failing to create and communicate short-term wins. Also the Kotter's eight-stage process heavily relies on communicational aspect; establishing sense of urgency which is needed to trigger the change, developing and communicating the change vision, create and communicate short-term wins and rewards employees to reinforce the efforts for change and finally on the anchoring the new

approach in the culture also requires communication especially about the changed behavior and new success. (Kotter 2012.)

Culture has significant affect to change (Campbell 2014). Campbell (2014) highlights the effect of culture and commitment to change. One of the main tools to create commitment is to communicate; early, clearly and consistently as Campbell it states. She suggests having core messages and using plain language and repeat, repeat and repeat. (Campbell 2014, 71, 116, 138-139.)

4.2 Internal communication

Internal communication or some time also called employee communication. It is used to share information, build understanding in the organization, but also create enthusiasm and commitment in the organization. It is target oriented, meaning that internal communication is used to achieve goals, for example influence knowledge, attitudes or behavior of employees. (FitzPatrick & Valskov 2014, 7, Vergheze 2012, 7) According to the definition of FitzPatrick and Valskov (2014, 7) internal communication is planned and systematic. It is meant to influence employees, not just raising awareness, for example their knowledge, behavior and activities and attitudes or 'heads, hearts and hands'. It is also two-way communication and important part of the internal communication is conversation and listening the organization and employees, also listening the criticism. (FitzPatrick and Valskov 2014, 7-9.) Already by definition the main target of internal communication is to ensure that people understand the core purpose of the organization, and the connection between their daily work and organization's strategy (FitzPatrick and Valskov 2014, 13). Internal communication is in addition alignment, inclusiveness and involvement of all the employees (Vergheze 2012, 3). Internal communication is not about making things pretty; it has to be ethical and honest, but also because the employees are important communication channel to outside world (FitzPatrick and Valskov 2014, 17, 24).

The environment where organizations are functioning presented by Vos and Schoemaker, or as they call stakeholders 'the field of forces' (Vos and Schoemaker 2004, 21-22.) This thesis concerns only the personnel and internal relations field of communication.

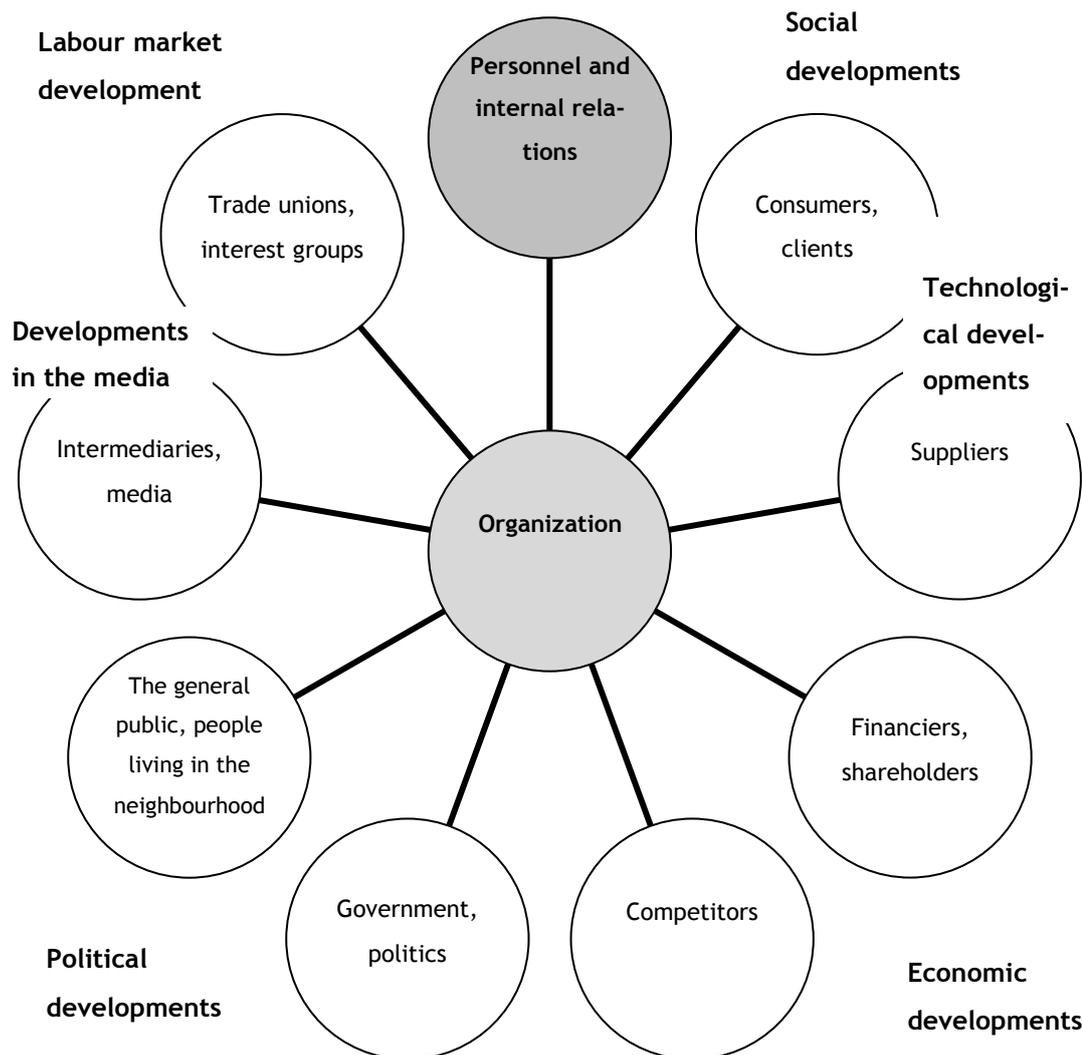


Figure 9: The communication environment and stakeholders of the organization ('The field of forces surrounding the organization' (Vos and Schoemaker 2004, 22 [Keunig & Eppink 1993, 1])

Vos and Schoemaker (2004, 19) have very accurately stated that organizations use communication to solve and prevent problems and that the communication is coming even more important as number of connections and dependencies increase. Vos and Schoemaker (2004, 19-20) encourage paying attention of communication capabilities of the whole organization and each individual but especially the relationship between the stakeholder groups and trying to see themselves as eyes of others. (Vos and Schoemaker 2004, 19-20, 32-33.)

4.2.1 Define the 'communication' in your organization

It is important to define what the communication means in the target organization. The term communication can refer only the communication by communication department and internal and external communication experts. This often refers to one-way communication. With communication the organization can also refer to everyday communication activities in the organization and its processes that give people possibilities to interact and participate to the development of the organization. This approach includes more interaction and two-way communication and it is not management with guidelines and restrictions. The third approach is something between; the communication experts coordinate and consult, it is both managed and free and independent interaction and communication in the organizations. It is advisable to discuss the role of communication in the organization to have shared understanding what is discussed when the topic is communication. (Juholin 2006, 72-73.)

The main understanding about the internal communication is that is all about the business! Internal communication has to be linked to the needs of business and organization. Usually the internal communication is linked to broader sense with the organization than just one business unit communication, but in the business unit strategy communication the internal communication is the most applicable tool.

Åberg suggests that the main task of the internal communication is to share information in same format at the same time to large groups of people and superiors' responsibility is to adjust and tailor the information for own department's needs, 'what this meant to our organization', this is part of good management and superior's work (Åberg 2006, 111), but for example FitzPatrick and Valskov (2014, 45) suggest to define the stakeholder groups and also outline the different outcomes of the communication in each group. It is not only about different goals for stakeholder groups, but it is truly to understand the different audiences in the organization; the differences in the stakeholder groups, in their behavior, in their preferences, in the communication channels they are using and most importantly of all to understand the conditions where they work and what they are doing in the organization. Segmenting the audience and define also the sub-groups. (FitzPatrick and Valskov 2014, 45, 59-61.) The main message is that; 'one size does not fit all!' Not even in communication.

Juholin states as alternative to thinking whether there are information vacuums the possibility of evaluating the different roles of for example email or intranet and possibilities to utilize them. (Juholin 2010, 24.) The main challenges of internal communication are too slow information flow which creates 'news vacuum' which are problem as 'grapevines' provides information and fills the information needs instead of official information. Naturally all in-

formation cannot be communicated, but the information of general interest should flow, examples of 'general interest' topics are; organization changes, nominations or mergers. Other challenge are data storages and networks, which refers to decentralized databases containing information that might be encounter individual information needs that cannot be specified nor forecasted beforehand (for example access required or random need as procedures for sick leave or foreign assignment). Third challenge are superiors because they are the link between whole organization and their own department and they are responsible for communicating tailor information to their organization and also communicating their organization's views other parts of organization. Fourth challenge Åberg mentioned is the physical space to enable random communication. (Åberg 2006, 111-112.)

Communication has been previously seen straightforward process including sender, received and message, but it has been realized that communication is much more complex and for example the receiver is not passive as previously presented, the communication is activities of sender and receiver and more relationship management and dialogue then one-way process (Vos and Schoemaker 2004, 22). Most of the effects of internal communication are indirect. Internal communication gives knowledge base for cooperation, effects work atmosphere and increases work satisfaction and motivation and these together effect productivity. (Åberg 2006, 111.)

4.2.2 Communication planning

Vos and Schoemaker (2004, 23) have presented the communication management in three phases (picture below). They refer to second phase as 'throughput' phase or internal communication and they encourage participation of organization as whole. (Vos and Schoemaker 2004, 23.) This through put phase has been interpreted as strategy communication or strategy implementation in this thesis.

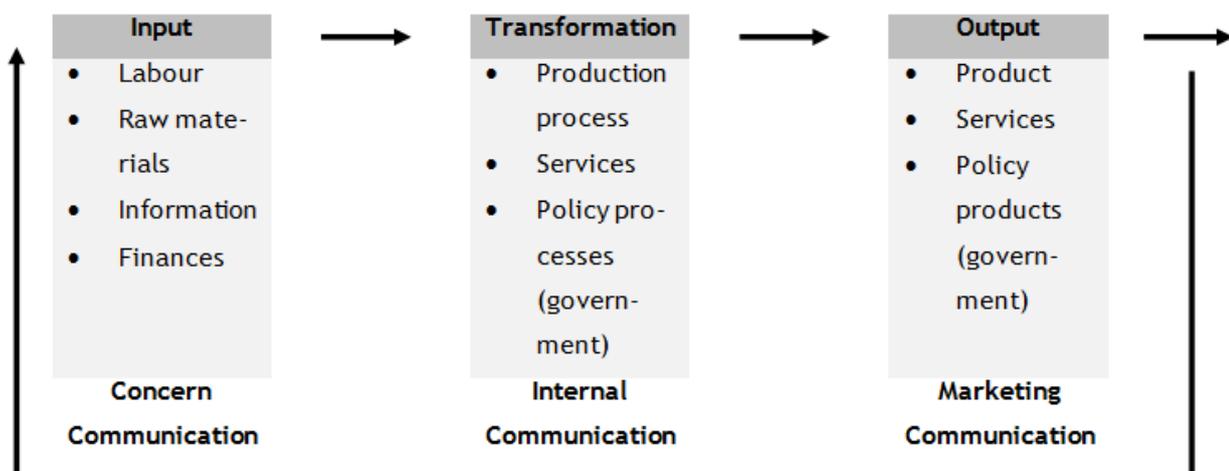


Figure 10: 'Input, Throughput and output of an organization (Vos & Schoemaker 2004, 23)

Vos and Schoemaker (2004, 24-25) also state that communicating the coordination is important. Often the clashes are between company image and product brand, but the same must be kept in mind with business unit communication, it must support corporate messages. Planning is important part of the internal communication. The communication planning includes target groups, used channels and the content (FitzPatrick and Valskov 2014, 28). The communication is starting with the objective, why the organization is communication and what it wants to receive with the communication. It is what most important to define what is the intended effect that is tried to achieve with the communication. (FitzPatrick and Valskov 2014, 43, 47.) Two useful tools for communication planning are WIIFM and YSIC; WIIFM stands for 'What's in it for me?' and YSIC means 'Why should I care?'. These refer to understanding and formulating the communication so that the audiences understand the main message. (FitzPatrick and Valskov 2014, 48-49.) The content and the message should be also carefully planned. The messages should be simple, with correct language and relevant to the audience. The messages could be also personal. The message could be also build by thinking 'what happens if we do this' or 'what doesn't happen if we don't do this'. (FitzPatrick and Valskov 2014, 77-84.) Good practice is to combine the messages to their current work activities and responsibilities (FitzPatrick and Valskov 2014, 83).

The suggestion is to make a concrete plan for example with priority, link to strategy, key target groups with description of the activity itself (Ferguson 1999, 58). Good internal communication requires understanding of the business and organizations activities and the strategic and operation needs the organization have (FitzPatrick and Valskov 2014, 29).

Why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your overall business or organizational objective or goal? Know how your communications are to add value is the most important question, and all other answers have to support it.
Who	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is this relevant for? • Will they understand? • What do they know and think now? • What do you want each audience group to actually DO differently?
What	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are we actually asking people to engage with? • What is in it for them?
When	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any timing conflicts with other messages or events? • Is speed important? Or can you wait for complete information?
How	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What medium or channels are most appropriate for the content and the audience? • What style is most suitable?
Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will you track whether or not you are having the intended impact?

Table 3: Six essential questions for planning (FitzPatrick and Valskov 2014, 42)

4.3 Communication in strategy implementation

Strategy and its importance for the organization have been stated before, but the implementation of strategy nor the importance and the challenges of strategy communication have not yet been presented yet in this thesis and this chapter will focus on the role of communication in the successful strategy implementation.

First of all, the strategy can be implemented only in the everyday work and practices and it requires commitment and skills from the whole personnel and leadership aligned to execute the strategy by top management and superiors (Lindroos & Lohivesi 2006, 47). Because of that the role of communication is significant (Lindroos & Lohivesi 2006, 53). It is also important to understand that the strategy execution is much slower process than strategy formulation and

it is mainly about leadership and management and commitment (Lindroos & Lohivesi 2006, 176).

In the literature the role of communication is not often the part using numerous pages at least on the practice of how to communicate, but also the need of the communication has been noticed and the repeating the message and the amount of communication has been noticed and emphasized (Kaplan & Norton 2009, 170-173). It is important that all the receivers also understand the message (Kaplan & Norton 2009, 173).

The strategy communication has been related to 'old school' strategy work in some strategy literature as in rational view it is possible to create the strategy in isolation and then just implement by communicating the main points of strategy. As the world and companies have become more and more complex also the understanding of strategy and its formation and implementation has changed. It is not possible just to give one clear target, present it and wait for it to happen, it is also interaction. (Juuti & Luoma 2009.) It is important to define the information needs within the organization as everyone does not search so proactively information (Åberg 2006, 94).

The implementation of made strategic plans can be secured by supervision, communication and education and connecting the strategy to operational management besides the quality of the strategy process (Kamensky 2010, 60). Åberg (2006) highlights that strategy implementation is mostly communication and that is the reason why the well planned and executed strategy communication is important part of the strategy execution. The importance of communication and interaction has been even claimed to be the main key elements in the strategy implementation (STRADA).

4.3.1 Get ready for strategy communication

Often the challenge in general strategy communication event is that there is not enough room and time for discussion and interaction to interpret and truly understand the meanings of strategy. (Åberg 2006, 121.) Especially when the strategy has been renewed or changed there and special attention should be paid to motivating and gaining commitment of those who are reluctant to share the new strategy and vision. (Åberg 2006, 125.) Vos and Schoemaker states that communication is used in organizations to solve or prevent problems (Vos & Schoemaker, 2004, 19). Communication and education are needed to create wide and profound strategic understanding and know-how in the organization. Connecting the strategy to operational managements means linking strategy and yearly action plans, everyday management, personal target settings and rewarding system. (Kamensky 2010, 61.)

Strategy communication consists of three areas; communication about the content of strategy, communication about the strategy process and communication supporting the strategy execution. The coherent communication about the strategy content creates shared understanding about the strategy and facilitates the execution. The communication supporting the strategy execution is quite close to everyday communication supporting the work assignment accomplishment, development of everyday activities but it also includes also the communication about feedback and improvement ideas. (Hämäläinen & Maula 2004, 28.) Strategy communication also facilitates the everyday activities coordination and prioritization. (Hämäläinen & Maula 2004, 31.)

Coordination and integration both relate to sharing and agreeing on common work activities. In coordination the work will be accomplished in different parts of the organization and in integration separate processes or departments will be integrated. Coordination also includes delegation. (Åberg 2006, 152.) Coordination is important task and coordination is usually communication between different department and clarity is very important in coordination communication. In coordination the 'baseline' communication is important that everyone knows what has been agreed. Secondly the checkpoints are also important part of communication especially in the beginning and in the end. Additional requirements for coordination are the communication has to be motivating and firm. The challenges of coordination are that something will forget, something will be done by several departments or things have been done in different speed. (Neilson et al 2008; Åberg 2006, 153.)



Figure 11: Strategy communication categories (Hämäläinen & Maula 2004, 31)

4.3.2 Tackle the challenges

Neilson et al (2008) have studied the challenges in strategy execution and their findings show that four main elements behind challenges of strategy execution are clarifying decision rights, information flow, aligned motivators and structure. The two clearly most important are decisions and information to facilitate effective execution of strategy. (Neilson et al 2008.)

Neilson et al (2008) found out the information flow as main reason behind the strategy execution failing. Two detailed challenges were information flow cross organization boundaries and information about competitive environment flowing to headquarter. The problems have to be first addressed and defined in the target organization to find out the solution. (Neilson et al 2008.) Kaplan and Norton (2004) underline the need for open communication in especially in organizations that require considerable integration to implement the strategy. But it is important to understand that communication does not ensure understanding. The challenge of strategy communication is how to ensure understanding of strategy and clear sense of main objectives as the amount of communication does not ensure understanding, this is important especially with the managers who are communicating the strategy forward. (Sull et al 2015.)

Kamensky has summarized ten success factors for strategic management and first on of the factors is shared strategy and business language. The other nine factors relate to knowledge and skills on management and business, personal attributes as courage and social skills and networking skills and ability for team play among other factors (Kamensky 2010, 29). The common language is basic assumption to create shared understanding and especially with such a complex concept as strategy with several possible theories, levels and practices (Kamensky 2010, 30).

Part of the communication is also upward communication. The upward communication including critical feedback has important role enhancing the strategy, decision making and overall success of the organization. It is important to ensure the communication climate and practices allow and accept also critical feedback. The communication, discussion opportunities and communication networks are important, but can be challenging in the large organizations due to great number of potential links. To facilitate the upward communication, it is important to promote top management's both formal and informal contacts with employees from all levels in cot besides official communication. Also organization's communication channels should be equipped to allow two-way communication and even critical feedback and pointing out also problems without solutions. (Tuorish 2005.) The strategic learning should not be only 'privileged' of top management, but everyone should have possibility to learn as everyone must adapt (Whittington 2001, 112).

Johnson et al (2007, 7, 9) suggest writing strategy statement that summarizes organization's strategy and incorporates mission, vision and objectives. According to Collins and Rukstad (2008) those companies who are not able to write simple and clear strategy statement also struggle with implementing the strategy. The strategy statement should be only 35 words or less long. The well-crafted strategy statement can help to align the employees behind the selected strategy as it is easy to communicate, also crafting the statement with the rules is can facilitate the managers understanding of their strategy as the strategy statement should include three components; objectives including timeframe, scope of the business including customers, geographical location and vertical integration and advantage explaining how to achieve the objectives including customer value proposition and stating the unique activities or unique combination of activities. The strategy statement can also guide managers' decision making and employees understanding of organization's direction. (Collins and Rukstad 2008.)

In strategy communication different stakeholders have different needs. Juholin (2006, 88-89) suggest stakeholder analyzes. She refers to external stakeholders but it is also important to understand the internal stakeholders. Welch and Jackson (2007, 185) already provide a suggestion to facilitate the stakeholder analyze.

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	Organizational / corporate issues, e.g. goals, objectives, new developments, activities and achievements

Table 4: Internal communication matrix (Welch&Jackson 2007, 185)

Quite many things have changed since Sunzi's time (2005, 128) where is advice to lead the troops with tasks but without sharing the meaning behind the tasks. Also the suitability of the military practices within the strategy might not be suitable anymore.

4.4 Role of superiors in strategy communication and strategy implementation

Many manager have stated that they would prefer good strategy that company can implement successfully than an excellent strategy that the employees do not understand that and the company cannot execute (Kaplan and Norton 2009, 347). This statement has been used to highlight the importance of strategy implementation in all levels of organization.

Also Campbell (2014, 72) highlights that right messengers have great impact on the commitment; people prefer hearing the message from their own boss, who understands their situation best. The role and importance of the top management is undeniable but there have been some objections or at least considerations about cascading the strategy communication to superiors and line managers (Galunic & Hermreck2012; Montgomery 2008,). One of the main reasons is keeping the information intact (Galunic & Hermreck2012). But the role of superiors in implementing the strategy is recognized (for example STRADA) .The researcher sees that these claims instead reinforce the importance on contributing time and effort to explain the strategy and focus areas to the superiors. They are the ones making the daily decisions (Martin 2010).

Often the strategy is connected only to the top management. Top management formulates the strategy and is in charge of the made strategic choices. Top management is also making the main decisions related to strategy implementation and execution, for example changes in organizational structure, resources, investments and budget. But how on daily work the strategy is achieved and implemented has not been in focus. This chapter will focus on the role of superiors and middle management in the strategy implementation, as for example (Suominen et al 2011) have stated the role of the superiors is important in strategy implementation (Suominen et al 2011). It is important to understand the aspects related to superior's role in strategy implementation.

STRADA program operates in the Helsinki University of Technology, Department of Industrial Engineering and Management and it focuses on strategy implementation and strategy communication research and development (STRADA). Within in the STRADA program the role of superiors in the strategy work has been studied and Suominen et all (2011, 5) has published a book of the results. This perspective of strategy work has been less focused in earlier strategy literature. Superiors have important role in communicating the strategy story throughout the organization, but not only communicating it but especially implementing and executing the strategy and made decisions in practical level including improving and adapting new ideas to everyday practices and inspire others to commit to the strategy. (Suominen et al 2011, 11, 16).

Suominen et all (2011) provide a practical view on the role of superiors in the strategy work. Superiors have direct and immediate possibilities to influence to the implementation of the strategy and superiors' role is to explain the strategy to their teams, but their role is also to collect and process the feedback of the strategy, its implementation and possible challenges and improvement ideas. (Suominen et al 2011, 11.) Also Hämäläinen and Maula (2004, 107-118) have defined the superiors' role in strategy communication and the superior is communicating the strategy in two ways; to the subordinates and to their own superiors. Due to their

possibility to directly impact the activities, it is important that superiors are functioning according to one common guideline to same direction (Suominen et al 2011, 11). The strategy work requires time and effort; Superiors need first the information about the strategy, but information is not enough, superiors have to understand the strategy and they have to comprehend the strategy so well that they can tell the strategy to others.

4.4.1 Superiors' role in strategy formulation

Influencing the content of the strategy or shaping the strategy is the term that Suominen et al (2011, 13) introduces, it refers to talk and actions to create a shared interpretation of what is the strategy and what it means and this in practice is conducted by discussing, questioning, negotiating and reinforcing and convincing people. The main goal is to spread the chosen message, strategy, within the organization and create the shared understanding. At the best strategic influencing promotes success of the organization, it guides people to think and act independently but in a way that serves the shared goal. It also increases the ownership of the strategy, which is important because people commit more, when they have possibility to influence themselves. (Suominen et al 2011, 13). The role of the superior is also important as employees expect to hear about the changes in the organization and about the strategy from their own superior (Suominen et al 2011, 14).

In the communication to the subordinates focus is on formulating the strategy to everyday activities, practice and facilitating the change. Superiors are also important interpreters between strategy focused for their departments and the whole corporation's strategy and they link the department's everyday activities to the corporate strategy. The top management expect the superior to execute the strategy, follow-up the set targets and report progression. (Hämäläinen & Maula 2004, 107-111.) The strategy communication based on superiors as communicators can be efficient, but it requires lots of support for the superiors. For example communication is not so natural feature or talent for everyone; they maybe do not know how to communicate the strategy correctly and enthusiastically to their team. Superiors need help and support how to communicate and how to discuss about the strategy but often also the lack of information is challenge. Superiors need help with the content and correct information about the strategy as well as with the communication skills and tools. (Hämäläinen & Maula 2004, 107-111.)

The superiors have to have knowledge and understand the strategy before they can communicate it to their teams. The superiors need a possibility to discuss and ask questions about the strategy. The superiors also can lack the interest towards strategy and communication it further. (Hämäläinen & Maula 2004, 107-111.) The role of superiors in communicating the strategy is very important and there should be tools, support and encouragement for them to

communicate the strategy. (Hämäläinen & Maula 2004, 64.) A suggestion is to provide a support package for the superior containing broader information materials about the strategy and also provide background information, ready questions and answers, and other additional support and presentation materials, description about the strategy process and future steps and links to additional materials. (Hämäläinen & Maula 2004, 112-113.)

Superiors role is, or should be, active in strategy process, it is not only forwarding the given message, strategy, but it is to influencing and aligning other's perspective of strategy, giving their own feedback to the top management and also listening and communicating the feedback further, but also to be able to change the view according to feedback including own view and also to be able to react and make changes to the plans. Role of the superiors is also to modify, develop and question about the strategy. (Suominen et al 2011, 14-16.)

Suominen et al (2011, 27) also point out that there can be more than one strategy or plan, that the superiors are implementing at the same time, which requires superiors to understand and identify the most important strategies for the organization. Often even the management presentations about the strategy are not unambiguous and clear. Often the assumption is, that line functions modify the business strategies to their organizations' action plans, which already requires supervisor's active influence to the strategy. (Suominen et al 2011, 27.)

4.4.2 Supporting superiors in the strategy communication

Line managers and superiors have important role in communicating the messages, but often their do not have training to communication nor the confidence do so. Also manager themselves might not understanding the message or the connections to their strategy. There can be challenges with attitude; maybe they do not feel that their responsibility or they disagree with the message. Also the time constraints can be limiting their role in communication. (FitzPatrick and Valskov 2014, 117-118.)

Do they know it's their job? →	Who's talking to them? →	Are they trained? →	Have they got the right tools? →	Is anyone listening? →
Have they been told to do it? -In general On specific topics	They can't add value if it is dumped on them without briefing	Are they getting more than presentations skills training?	Do they get materials that actually work with their teams?	Who cares if they don't do it or gather feedback?

Table 5: Five questions, (FitzPatrick and Valskov 2014, 119)

Main responsibility of the business unit is to provide support but also encouragement to communicate. The support should include possibilities to discuss the strategy, provide support of some topics that managers could talk with their teams. Main understanding should be; managers cannot communicate the strategy to their teams, if they do not understand it deeply themselves. (FitzPatrick and Valskov 2014, 120-122.) Provide managers tools for communication, for example PowerPoints slides encouraging superiors to add their own examples to the presentation (for example blank pages), video accompanied with discussion points or carefully crafted questions and answers. But ensure that the materials answer to the needs of managers. (FitzPatrick and Valskov 2014, 125-126, 135.)

Employees including superiors have a great role in implementing the strategy as strategy execution is result of individual decision in everyday work by employees (Neilson et al 2008). They are in a key role to make improvement, but if they do not have understanding and vision of the entirety they cannot make right decisions. Clear communication and discipline is the key for strategy implementation and it enables employees to make correct decisions in everyday life. (Porter 1996.) The requirement for self-determine action of individuals and teams is shared common view to guide the actions (Åberg 2006, 55). Neilson et al (2008) have found out the one of the main challenges behind the strategy execution is to understand the rights and responsibilities to make decisions. Also Grand and Jordan (2012, 24-25) notice strategy's role in decision making; guiding with the alternatives to find suitable solution, but also the strategy itself is a collection of made decisions.

Sull and Eisenhardt (2012) suggest simple rules to facilitate strategy execution in everyday decisions. The rules are based on the corporate objectives and identified bottlenecks that prevent reaching these objectives. The rules are meant for managing these bottlenecks. The defined bottlenecks should be narrow enough and they have to be strategic. The rules help to act and make decisions aligned to corporate objectives as guidelines and they also help to

understand the corporate objectives. They can also facilitate the coordination between organization and business units and can increase transparency in the organization. The rules should be a result on thorough analysis and recommendation is that users should be involved to making the rules. The rules help strategy implementation by facilitating efficient and flexible decision making, but they require input from the employees and also thorough communication across organization. (Sull & Eisenhardt 2012.)

4.4.3 Strategy communication in practice

Previous chapters have been explaining the importance of strategy communication for organizations success. This chapter will be focusing on the communication in practice.

The most important things about communication are; Plan how to communicate, communicate enough and several times, use several communication channels and tailor the message for target audience, 'what is in it for me' and ensure that the audience understands the message (Kaplan & Norton 2009, 170-173, FitzPatrick & Valskov 2014). The effective communication has to be planned and tailored for the selected audience group (Lohtaja-Ahonen & Kaihovirta-Rapo 2012, 34-35). Define the target! What you want to change the listener's behavior, inform or entertain? (Lohtaja-Ahonen & Kaihovirta-Rapo 2012, 40.)

First of all, organizations are communicating to succeed which often means that organizations want to influence the employees for example to change their opinions or ways of working. To ensure that the receiver creates the intended idea, meaning in this case that the employee understand what employer wants, it is important to pay attention that the message is understandable, interesting and it is well presented. (Åberg 2006, 87-88.) Already Sunzi (2005, 96) guides to use communication tools and methods that are suitable for the situation. The message should be as clear as possible as it is the only tool or aid that receiver has to understand the original intended meaning, the idea from sender's head. Besides words and phrases presentation can include pictures and effects in the text. (Åberg 2006, 87-88.)

Select the most suitable and correct communication channel (Lohtaja-Ahonen & Kaihovirta-Rapo 2012, 49). Communication channels have impact on how reliable the information it considered, part of the channels reliability and reputation transfers to message (Åberg 2006, 138). The channel effects message and the communicator should select the channels to fit the message and the audience; it is wise to use more than one channel. (FitzPatrick and Valskov 2014, 93). Some of the channels for internal communication are; meetings, email, intranet, social media, video, print magazines, notice boards, events and shows and site vis-

its, web-casts and teleconferences but also the rumor mill or 'grapevine'. The select of channel determine the success of communication. (FitzPatrick and Valskov 2014, 104-114.)

So the organization should pay attention to what they want to say and how and they should carefully plan the content of messages, presentation and outlook of the messages and used communication channels and tools.

Communication with communication tools is 'mediated communication (Åberg 2006, 91). Organization usually have extensive selection of communication channels including intranet, briefings, meetings, staff magazines, blogs, interim and strategy events, bulletins and unofficial interaction and 'grapevines', but the basis for organization's internal communication is superior-subordinate network (Hämäläinen and Maula 2004, 96-106, Åberg 2006, 109). It is important to provide also support materials for the strategy communication for example presentations, videos, pictures or information banks (Hämäläinen and Maula 2004, 96-106). Lindroos and Lohivesi (2006, 163) also suggest to use a written summary to explain the strategy in shortly, clearly and understandably. The channels of personal interaction are important in internal communication, especially in superior-subordinate communication and the superiors are the main source of information. (Åberg 2006, 110.)

In addition, it is important to ensure horizontal communication channels in the organization. Horizontal communication channels have great effect on the co-operation and coordination between departments (Hämäläinen & Maula 2004, 154-155).

Appraisal discussions are important tool for management and top management views them as direct link between strategic decision making and everyday management and communicating concretely objectives, strategic focus areas, vision and mission. (Åberg 2006, 147.) Efficient appraisal discussion prerequisite is to sufficient basic knowledge of employee's tasks and departments role for the whole corporation (Åberg 2006, 148).

Network communication is communication in information networks through computers. Network communication has increased exponentially and also increased the number of networked people. (Åberg 2006, 77.) Networks can be used as mediums, 'tools', of communication or it can be seen as space of communication or as media among other traditional media. The network management is related to network as tool, 'medium' and as space. (Åberg 2006, 76-80.) The challenges of network communication is that network communication has fewer cues compared to traditional communication and it is thus less rich communication and speed and independence of time and place cannot compensate. Network communication is asynchronous communication which allowing better control for the sender to prepare the communication. (Åberg 2006, 113-114.)

4.4.4 Once upon a time and other tools to facilitate communication

FitzPatrick and Valskov (2014, 84) suggest to ‘getting the language right’ meaning that using shorter words, cutting the information to smaller pieces, avoiding jargon, but most of all, it is writing the message for readers and for their needs. The messages should be understandable, fascinating and useful (FitzPatrick and Valskov 2014, 89). Lehtimäki (2000) has studied the strategy making as a story focusing on the language practices of the strategy formation and communication processes with interviews. The results of Lehtimäki (2000) study were very interesting showing how the language practices are affecting the strategy making process and different stakeholders’ participation to it, but the gained understanding is mainly benefits theoretical understating, but it can be also in some instances be utilized in practice, but the possibilities to utilize are mainly on the understanding that the used language truly affects the possibilities to participate the strategy making process and giving voices for various stakeholders and opinions, but as Lehtimäki (2000) 91) suggests the utilization possibilities have to be developed further.

Åberg emphasized that messages should be interesting and well presented to facilitate the understanding (Åberg 2006, 85, 87, Lindroos & Lohivesi 2006, 164) and storytelling could be one possibility to present the messages more interesting manner. Forman (2013) has present-ed in detail the storytelling in business. The first and most important rule is, that all the stories must be truthful, “Never tell stories that aren’t true”. Also other language tools like metaphors can facilitate the understanding of the message (Väliverronen 2008, 26; Ferguson 1999, 147).

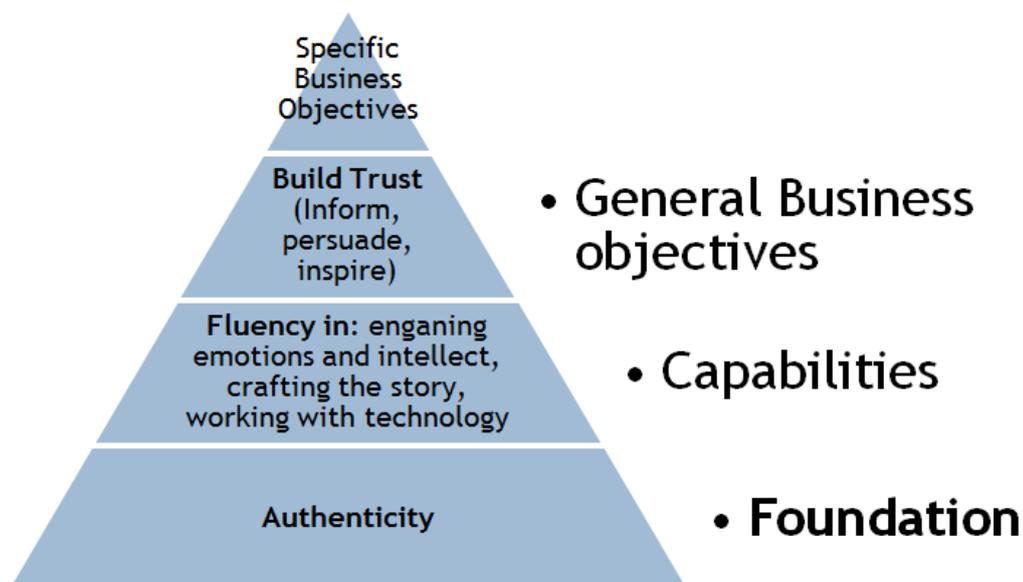


Figure 12: Framework for organizational storytelling (Forman 2013, 23)

It is important to use clear and understandable language for the strategy communication (Lindroos & Lohivesi 2006, 161). The simple and easily understandable strategy is a prerequisite for listeners to understand the strategy (Lindroos & Lohivesi 2006, 161, Surakka 2012, 52, 55). Communication should be modified for the target audience and stakeholder group. Also Kotter and Rathgeber (2006) emphasize the utilization of stories in communication. But remember to select the communication style to the situation when suitable tell a story, when limited time, just tell the facts (Visocky O'Grady 2008, 85).

Pictures and other visual images are useful for communication, as they are not linked with language and can thus reach a larger audience (Ferguson 1999, 148). Information design is to help to communicate better, clarify the relevance of complex data, and make the information easier to understand and turning the statistics into stories (Visocky O'Grady 2008, 16-23). Helpful in communicating the strategy information are visual displays of information in infographics or also called as information design. These infographics can be for example illustrations, symbols, maps, timelines, flows, networks and diagrams which are used with verbal language. Infographics can explain phenomena that would not be explainable without, for example weather forecasts are presented with infographics. Information design refers to less commercial design, whereas infographics are used more for informing. (Visocky O'Grady 2008, 23, Mereilles 2013, 11, 13.) Users need should always be the main driver to design the communication (Visocky O'Grady 2008, 87).

The information and communication design is important to facilitate the learning because there are different learning styles; visual, auditory/verbal and kinesthetic/tactile. Visual learners prefer visual images, verbal learners prefer written and spoken communication and kinesthetic/tactile would prefer doing. Most people learn with using combination of styles and that that should be also exploited in communication and use different communication channels; pictures, charts and other illustrations within written material, videos and audio if possible. (Visocky O'Grady 2008, 55-56.) Before starting to design something new, remember to review the existing corporate and business unit icons, symbols and other illustration materials, if they are still valid and familiar to the audience, utilize them (Visocky O'Grady 2008, 95).

Often the top management gives the face to the strategy and their active role in communicating the strategy shows that the top management is committed to the strategy and executing it. The personnel want to hear the strategy directly from top management. (Hämäläinen & Maula 2004, 64.) This is also a useful tool to be used in some occasions.

Remember, that strategy communication is just a small part of communication the employees and superiors receive and today's risk is an information overload, communicate wisely. Same

goes with the use of illustration and complex graphic content it is called map shock, so avoid overwhelming decoration and complexity also in graphic and visual elements. They may prevent understanding and learning and provide options for listeners with different background and interest. (Visocky O'Grady 2008, 75-77.)

And finally; follow the trends and new communication ideas, world and communication changes fast!

5 Results: How to improve the business unit strategy communication

The main focus of this thesis has been to evaluate the current status of the business unit strategy communication in the case organization and based on the assessment results further improve the strategy communication. The research question for this thesis was: How the strategic business unit can facilitate the strategy implementation and execution by improving communication in the organization? In this chapter the emphasis will be on combining the strategy and communication theories with the results of the communication assessment conducted in the case organization. The tools for communication evaluation and improvement were studied and presented already in the theory part and they are implemented in this chapter. The assessment was conducted by interviewing the superiors from the key stakeholder departments to understand the current status and practices of the strategy communication. The communication evaluation theory and tools including the framework for communication quality assessment were utilized to analyze the survey results.

The main focus of the interviews was not to find out the level of strategy knowledge but to find out how the superiors receive and search strategy information, what kind of information they need as superiors and how they use it and their possibilities to interact in the strategy formation. The emphasis was on the current practices and the improvement ideas. Because the strategy is so versatile and comprehensive - even ambiguous - concept, the interviews included general discussion about the strategy on a theoretical level. The results are linked with the strategy and communication theories to compare the findings of the assessment and interviews in the case organization to the prevailing understanding on the field of communication and also to the strategy theory. The focus is on the pragmatic improvement and development of the communication practices and processes.

Following support questions were defined in the beginning of the project to assist with research and development in the case organization:

- What type of communication is included to the strategy communication?
- What is the role of communication in the business unit strategy implementation and execution?
- What are the roles of corporate strategy communication and business unit strategy communication?
- What kind of information is needed to implement and execute the strategy?
- What are the main sources of information?
- What are the main stakeholder groups for strategy communication?
- What is the role of superiors in the strategy communication?
- What are the main communication processes and who is responsible for them?
- What areas of communication require improvement?

These questions were very helpful facilitating the research project especially in the beginning of the project. The first four questions prove to be the most interesting and challenging to find answers. Next chapters are presenting the results and improvement ideas and trying to answers to these questions. Furthermore, the results of this thesis project have been divided to two parts. Based on the theoretical research, interviews and the observations a model for business unit strategy communication process has been drafted to collect and present the best practices and tools to plan and execute the strategy communication. The other part covers the results of the interviews and research conducted in the case business unit and also presents in detail the improvements and concrete plan for the strategy communication.

5.1 A suggestion for a business unit strategy communication process

Lots of understanding about the strategy communication and especially business unit strategy communication was gained during this thesis project both through literature and through research and interviews in the case organization. In the following chapters this understanding will be shared and a suggestion for business unit strategy communication process has been presented and described. Some of the steps might be even self-obvious, but the researcher wants to describe process in detail to ensure common understanding to all readers regardless of preexisting information.

These chapters are not directly linked with the case organization nor designed only for the case organization, but naturally the model has been heavily influenced by the case organization due to the conducted research and understanding gained by it. Also the researcher close connection with the organization and little experience and benchmarking from the other organization affects the model.

5.1.1 Starting point

It is recommendable to familiarize to the existing strategy and communication processes in the organization. There might be already some suitable and useful processes that are not fully exploited. It is also possible to find out some areas of communication or some target audiences that are not covered at all or at least not enough. Also the roles and responsibilities of communication should be clarified as there are several participants involved in the strategy process including communication organization, corporate strategy organization and business units.

The idea in this step is to ensure that business unit communication practices are aligned with the corporate strategy communication practices. The idea is to remove or at least reduce

those processes and practices are overlapping and causing unnecessary work but moreover, to find areas and target groups which do not receive the strategy communication at all or at least are not receiving enough information. In this step is also possible to question existing practices and adapt new.

5.1.2 Stakeholder analyzes

When the corporate level processes and existing business unit communication practices have been evaluate it is time to review in detail the target groups for the communication, or as used in this thesis and this context, the stakeholder groups. Based on the research in the case organization there is a risk that the existing communication practices are covering only part of the stakeholder groups. It is important to review profoundly all the organizations and stakeholders participating to the work throughout the corporation and then compare these stakeholder groups against the existing communication practices. There is great possibility that the communication is limited to only part of the actual stakeholders and that is why it is important to review the stakeholders with open mind to find out all the stakeholder groups affected by the business unit strategy and participating to the business unit success. Usually the group is bigger than anticipated.

The next step is to analyze the communication needs and interests of the different stakeholder groups. It is good to take time and think what is relevant for each stakeholder group and what is their level of information and understanding of overall business and processes. Often the communication is targeted and planned for the 'usual suspects' and their communication needs might be different as well as existing level on understanding might be much higher than the other departments. The basic rule of thumb is to step back and explain also the obvious topics and concepts - these are not so obvious after all.

5.1.3 Formulating the main messages

Important part of the communication is to formulate the messages; clear and understandable messages with simple language are significant part of the good strategy communication. The main point of the strategy communication is to communicate the future direction of the business unit, explain the made decisions and changes but also motivate. The messages should be formulated carefully and suitable communication techniques including illustration, pictures, examples, metaphors and storytelling should be utilized to ensure that the messages are understood. The communication experts could be utilized to formulate understandable and interesting messages - this is one of their key competences. The good strategy communication consists of interesting and explanatory main messages, which are 'making sense', to the audience. The communication should not be IQ test but the communication should be targeted for

the audiences and the stakeholder groups and their different levels of foreknowledge and also their interest should be taken into account. General rules of communication apply also to strategy communication; it has to be interesting and understandable to the receiver, the importance of the strategy to the sender does not make it appealing to the receiver. This is also good test for the business unit; if you are not able to draft the core messages about the strategy, are you sure you really have the strategy? (Collins and Rukstad 2008.)

The researcher sees that part of the business unit strategy communication is to communicate also about the business in general and explain about the external environment. This is part of explaining the made choices and ensuring the common level of information. It is also important to link the corporate strategy elements, like corporate vision, mission and values, to the business unit strategy communication. If the business unit has own vision, mission or values they have to be incorporated to the communication and strategy messages in this level.

It is furthermore good to keep in mind that the audience may not have similar access to strategy communication by other business units or even to corporate level strategy communication. Because of this, it might be advisable to link the corporate strategy and even the strategies of other business units to the communication to give good overall understanding about the corporate strategy to the audience, without going into details with others strategies.

The tool 'six essential questions for planning' by FitzPatrick and Valskov (2014, 42) can be utilized to facilitate the communication planning. Some elaborative questions have been added to explain how the questions could be utilized in the business units.

Theory		Case business unit as example
Why	What is your overall business or organizational objective or goal? Know how your communications are to add value is the most important question, and all other answers have to support it.	The overall business targets are well known in business unit, but communication could be utilized to achieve these targets. Main question for the business unit is to consider 'what additional value could be received through communication?'
Who	Who is this relevant for? Will they understand? What do they know and think now? What do you want each audience group to actually DO differently?	Define the key stakeholders, it is not one audience, it is several audiences with different information needs. What is the level of their understanding about e.g. business processes and external environment. Is there something that the stakeholders could or should do something differently and could it be accomplished with communication?
What	What are we actually asking people to engage with? What is in it for them?	When compiling a message, always keep the receiver audience in mind. The communication is more successful when the message is important for the receiver.
When	Are there any timing conflicts with other messages or events? Is speed important? Or can you wait for complete information?	There should be plan how to communicate e.g. annual cycle for strategy information. But it would be wise to a plan to also for sudden communication needs
How	What medium or channels are most appropriate for the content and the audience? What style is most suitable?	The available communication channels should be evaluated to select the most suitable plans for each situation and for each stakeholder group to meet the preferences and needs of each stakeholder group
Feedback	How will you track whether or not you are having the intended impact?	This is probably the most difficult aspect. Survey with questionnaire could be carried out in some point to find out how well the information has reached. Also asking and listening about the feedback is also important part of evaluating the impact.

Table 6: Six essential questions for planning (FitzPatrick and Valskov 2014, 42)

5.1.4 Concrete communication plan

The best way to successfully carry out the strategy communication is to make a concrete communication plan. Besides the previously drafted strategy communication messages, the communication plan should include the selected communication channels to best reach and serve the shareholder groups and the audiences. Besides the communication tools, channels and messages the plan should include a schedule and resources to execute the strategy communication successfully. There is wide range of communication tools and channels including face-to-face meeting, teleconferences, videos, audios, written communication and countless other possibilities. Communication experts could be utilized also in this stage to plan communication and advice how to exploit the communication channels to their full potential. New communication channels should be also reviewed as the technology and communication trends are constantly developing.

Also the targets for the communication should be set in this phase of the strategy communication. The targets can be outputs of the communication (for example meetings, discussion events, newsletters and other communication events and materials) or the outcome of the communication which refers to increased level of understanding and knowledge or it could be even changes actions or attitudes. The latter is more difficult to evaluate, but it is important to understand and consider when planning the communication. Besides the targets, also the measures and ways to measure and schedule should be agreed on this stage.

Remember to also include the training to the plan. All the business unit representatives should be able to communicate the strategy in similar way. The training could be general communication skill, like presentation skill, to the business unit personnel, but it could be also more specific coaching about how to communicate about the strategy and how to motivate people.

5.1.5 Middle managers, superiors and their role

The role of middle managers, or superiors as referred in this thesis, and their role has been acknowledged in the literature (for example STRADA). The business unit should define and share, at least internally, a common understanding the role of superiors in the strategy communication. If the role of superiors in the strategy communication is agreed, it is important to ensure that they have the skills and materials to communication.

The theoretical tool presented by FitzPatrick and Valskov (2014, 119) can be utilized to plan the strategy communication including the attention to the superiors' role and supporting

them to in the strategy communication. Supportive questions have been included to elaborate the use of the tool.

Theory	Do they know it's their job? →	Who's talking to them? →	Are they trained? →	Have they got the right tools? →	Is anyone listening? →
	Have they been told to do it? -In general On specific topics	They can't add value if it is dumped on them without briefing	Are they getting more than presentations skills training?	Do they get materials that actually work with their teams?	Who cares if they don't do it or gather feedback?
Application for strategy communication					
Modified for business unit	Are expectations for superiors re-defined? Do superiors know these expectations?	Are the superiors themselves receiving enough information about the topics they are expected to do? Have they the other skills to do what is required from them?	If superiors lack information, how they can access the additional skills	The tools should be defined in cooperation with the superiors	Do superiors get any feedback if they have or haven't accomplished what they were expected to do?

Table 7: Modified five questions, (FitzPatrick and Valskov 2014, 119)

5.1.6 Execution - communicate, communicate and communicate

The strategy communication should not be just planned, but the well drafted plan has to be executed or in the other words; communicate the strategy. It is important to understand that the communication requires time and resources. The time for communication has to be reserved and the communication should be prioritized at least to some extent. Often tasks like communication are postponed or ruled over by other more urgent tasks.

It is important to keep in mind the benefits of the communication as considered already during the planning phase the communication; efforts are worth of using the resources. The set targets may facilitate the communication and execution of the plan, especially if the targets are based on the outcome, for example changed behavior.

Besides the plan and official communicate, the business unit participants should communicate in all possible situations. Kotter (2012, 96-97) emphasized the amount and times of the communication; one time is not enough, the main messages should be communicated over and over again.

5.1.7 Remember two-way communication!

The strategy communication should not be only about sending messages; it should be also receiving messages and interacting with the stakeholders. The secret for successful strategy implementation is to allow also the critical upward communication to the top management. There should be arranged possibilities for discussion and interaction, especially with the superiors. Superiors can contribute by giving valuable input for the strategy formation process and also provide feedback of the potential critical items on the strategy execution.

The working culture should encourage the interaction, but special attention should be paid for the critical feedback. There has been examples in literature how the working culture discriminating the negative news can cause major troubles for the business.

5.1.8 Measure, evaluate and improve

To assess the success of the communication and improve it further, it is vital to evaluate results, both outputs and outcomes. The targets and measures have been agreed in the planning phase which is facilitating the assessment execution in this phase. The set targets should be reviewed and the points for improvement should be notified and the communication plan for next strategy communication cycle could be modified also in this phase.

Besides the target follow-up the quality of the communication should be evaluated. The evaluation could be carried out in any other phase of the communication process, for example in the beginning of the process, but the main point is to evaluate the communication and communication processes in some point.

The framework for communication quality evaluation created by Vos and Schoemaker (2004, 42-44, 62-66) could be utilized for the assessment. The framework has been slightly modified and adapted by the researcher for the business unit strategy communication evaluation and assessment.

Internal communication			
Theory framework			Results
Clarity	Information to staff is clear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information is available, complete and understandable Information is available on time or easily accessible and found Tools e.g. Intranet is userfriendly Bulletins contain up-to-date information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy presentations are clear and complete and understandable Information is available on time, but access and finding the presentations could be improved in the intranet Tools in general are user-friendly, but there is always room for improvement in the intranet Information is up-to-date, but information could be provided more frequently, on regular basis
Environment Oriented	Communication reinforces commitment and supports change management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication support commitment Communication encourages two-way communication and discussion Special focus on communication in change situations Couraging to use communication experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficult to evaluate communication's support for commitment Two-way communication is possible, but this could be improved further Not information about the change situation, this could be discussed further to define what are change situations Communication expert use is minimal
Consistency	Coherence with HR and with other communication domains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coherence with other departments e.g. HR and communication Clear procedures and responsibilities of communication content and timing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication is coherent with the other department information, same visual image and processes followed in the organization Procedures within the business could be clearer Role of business unit could be discussed
Responsiveness	Communication contributes to internal views on external changes and communication skills encourage internal responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasize of communication skills of managers to promote responsiveness Internal communication reflects the external and contributes employees awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need for improvement about the external environment changes The possibilities of communication could be emphasized in the organization

Effectiveness and efficiency	Internal communication audits cost efficient methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal communication and internal communication tools are assessed Internal image is assessed (can be part of staff satisfaction surveys) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The selection of the internal information tools could wider Company image is part of the survey, business unit image has not surveyed
Organization of communication			
Clarity	Communication vision is clearly defined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defined communication vision Defined how communication contributes to organization's success Communication is used as management tool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication vision will be defined with emphasis on how the communication could contribute to the organization success and communication as management tool could be included
Consistency		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication policies and responsibilities are agreed between corporate and business unit level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role of the business unit should be defined in more detail

Table 8: The dimensions for internal communication assessment (Adapted and modified from Vos & Schoemaker 2004, 42-44, 62-66)

5.2 Case business unit strategy communication; results and improvement steps

The results of the research conducted in the case business unit are presented in the following chapters with emphasis on the actual improvement steps in the organization. The answers to the research questions will be also presented in the following chapters. The model for business unit strategy communication process was presented already in the last chapter and some aspects are merely mentioned in the following chapters.

The emphasis of the case business unit results will be on presenting the current practices and concrete improvements, but the strategy and communication theories are combined with the findings. The more theoretical implications will be presented first and thus allow the attention to move to the more concrete practices and improvements. The order is justified also as the theoretical finding lay a basis for the made changes and further development.

5.2.1 Theoretical understanding about the strategy

One of the support questions in this thesis was: 'What type of communication is included to the strategy communication?' and 'What kind of information is needed to implement and exe-

cute the strategy?' The questions are actually more concrete and at the same time more extensive than the researcher realized.

All the interviews were started with the request to define the term 'strategy'. As stated in the strategy theory chapters, there is not explicit or unanimous definition for the strategy. This understanding prevailed also in the answers. Even there is no undisputed definition for the strategy; there is at least some level of agreement about the main elements included to the strategy. The answers from the interviews reflecting and presented well the key elements of the various theoretical strategy definitions, but there was also some aspects absent that are closely related, or even the core of the strategy, in the literature. Almost only commonly recognized aspects of the strategy is competition; if there is no competition, there is no need for the strategy (Kamensky 2010, 13, 16). Competition nor market environment were not highlighted in the strategy definitions. Maybe these are so obvious that there was no need to state them. But on the other hand the interviewees described that they did not receive much information about competition, external environment or competitors from the case business unit and main sourcing of this information, if not available through their roles and responsibilities, was connected to superior's own activity and interest, even on their spare time. There is of course variance between organizations and their responsibilities and for example connections to the market and customers. Some of the superiors did at the same time also ponder that how much information about external environment they actually do need in their daily work or what would be the benefit of receiving more information. The superiors trust that business unit is analyzing the external environment and competition and the outcomes will be shown as strategies and strategic decisions.

Other strong definition related to strategy is making choices (Porter 1996). The case business unit management emphasized the trade-offs and made choices in the interviews, but the stakeholder interviews did not include this part of the strategy definition.

Other strategy definitions mentioned in the interviews were for example; the main purpose of the organization's existence, direction and focus for all the activities and also a guideline to support the daily decisions. These were defined as the organization's basic requirements to have the strategy in the first place. Also a vision for the future and long-term planning were mentioned as well as structure and relationship of business unit strategies and line functions' action plans. Furthermore the targets and key performance indicators have very important role in the strategy definition, but they also have significant role in guiding activities. Besides these dimensions included to the strategy, answers included also aspects stating 'what is not a strategy'; for example the operational effectiveness solely is not strategy, was also mentioned in the interviews. (For example Johnson et al 2012; Kamensky 2010; Juuti & Luoma 2009; Mintzberg et al 2009; Montgomery 2008; Porter 1996.)

Here is presented a few exhibits of the strategy definitions from the interviews:

“All the work should support strategy and there should not be any work that is not contributing to the strategy execution”

“Basic answer to question ‘what we are doing here’”

In addition the language used for communicating the strategy was mentioned as part of the strategy and strategy definition. This supports the view presented also in literature that strategy statements and the used language should be understandable and they play important role in the strategy communication.

“Strategy should be short and simple, not too difficult and fancy words”

Maybe these differences in defining the strategy could be utilized in the strategy communication and the made choices, trade-offs and external environment could play more visible role in the strategy communication and background and alternatives could be included to describe the basis for the common understanding about the strategy. (Lindroos & Lohivesi 2006, 161.)

5.2.2 Role of the business unit strategy communication

One of the main questions the researcher was eager to find an answer was how the different levels of the strategy have been communicated and understood by supervisors in the stakeholder organizations; “What are the roles of corporate strategy communication and business unit strategy communication?” and ‘What is the role of communication in the business unit strategy implementation and execution?’

Vision is important part of the strategy architecture (Kamensky 2010) and in some strategy and communication literature (for example Åberg 2006) the importance of the vision and its role as guiding ‘paradise island in the horizon’ is highlighted but it is not that much underlined in all the strategy literature. Case organization has strong mission but no vision. In the interviews the absence or need for vision was not mentioned, but the answers showed that the corporate mission was very strongly adopted by superiors and all the interviewees had clearly linked the company’s mission to their own work and it acted as important source of motivation. These results could indicate that company’s strategy elements like mission and vision do have important role in the organizations and they could be part of creating the corporate identity (Juuti and Luoma 2009), but the importance or role of the vision cannot be evaluated based on these results.

In the case organization the business units do not have own mission or vision and it could be considered that business units do not need separate strategy elements if the business unit's activities support and are aligned with corporate vision and mission. This could be seen as part of the deeper consideration about the corporate and business unit strategy communication and their roles. At least in the case business unit the corporate strategy is creating the identity and major guidelines and the business unit is guiding the development of the business and focus of the everyday work. But this should not be interpreted nor read that there is no need to communicate about the business unit strategy besides on the level related to everyday activities. The interviews showed that superiors and their subordinates were enthusiastic to hear more about the business unit strategy to understand why the choices were made and to which direction the activities were going and to see the 'big picture' from the business unit point of view, not only the responsibilities and tasks for one department. This reasons the need for business unit strategy communication.

In the case organization the line functions are serving all business units and executing their strategies. All the business unit strategies are based on the corporate strategy. Besides the corporate and business unit strategies, there is also strategic development projects mainly focused on the line functions, local strategies, department strategies and product related strategies. According to the interviews these several strategies were not contradicting each other's. Often the best known strategies were corporate strategy and the strategy closest related to own work. The relationships of the strategies were understood based on the interviews so that for example that the local or departmental strategies have been derived from the business unit or corporate strategy. Based on the knowledge about the organization and about the content of these strategies, they are well aligned. But if the alignment of the strategies is not confirmed in an organization, there may lay a risk of disorder and different contradicting strategies might defer the execution of the strategies and the achievement of the common targets.

The main learning during this project is that corporate strategy communication, general internal communication and business unit strategy communication are not synonyms and they have their own unique roles in the organization and in the strategy implementation; focusing and emphasizing only one of these is not enough.

5.2.3 Communication processes and responsibilities

The need for business unit strategy communication has been identified earlier and in this point it is good to evaluate further the communication processes, responsibilities and com-

munication skills. This chapter tries to answer to the question; “What are the main communication processes and who is responsible for them?”

The corporate level strategy process including timelines is common for all the business units and the visual identity and strategy document templates are same throughout the case organization. Within the limits of corporate level strategy and strategy process the business units can freely formulate the strategy, carry out the best strategy process and select the participants for the strategy process. Part of the corporate strategy process is a strategy communication event for the management, mainly consisted of management teams from different levels and parts of the organization. The communication of the corporate level strategy to the whole organization is sufficiently organized already in the case corporation by corporate communication unit and strategy process organization. Main communication channels for corporate strategy, besides the strategy event for the managers, are face-to-face meetings with top management representatives, strategy communication via own superiors and the communication with written strategy documentation and presentations via emails and intranet. Organization’s intranet and staff magazines are also utilized to communicate the corporate strategy to the whole personnel. Besides these fundamentals of the corporate strategy process, the business units are free to arrange the strategy communication for own their stakeholders. This was noticed in the interviews and there are differences between business unit strategy communication practices. Of course also the significance of the different business unit strategies for the interviewees varied between roles and responsibilities and between the line functions and departments and affects the perspective.

One of the main outcomes of the interviews and other research is that corporate wide communication of the business unit strategy is not required, but the general communication about the business unit could be increased to raise overall understanding of the complex business within the case organization. The understanding about the business unit strategy communication is, at least based on the case under evaluation, that business unit strategy communication is more pragmatic and work oriented then corporate strategy communication. The business unit strategy communication is not about the ‘guiding start’ nor vision, the main role of the business unit strategy communication is about guidance for every day work; what are the processes that need renewal, what are the business critical issues, what are the targets, how co-operation and coordination between departments and teams is functioning and what are the responsibilities. Besides this practical information, motivation and commitment play important role also in the business unit strategy communication. For example if there is increasing demands for efficiency, it is important that the employees understand the reasons behind this. It is important for the superiors to understand the field of business and external environment, because without this information they lack understanding about the big picture and about the reasons behind the made choices. This kind of information should not be taken

for granted; it is the responsibility of the business unit to provide the relevant information about the company and about the field of business and external environment to their stakeholders. In general, if the superiors do not understand the changes or if they themselves do not believe in the message they are supposed to communicate further, there is great risk that they do not communicate the strategy further nor commit their own departments (FitzPatrick & Valskov 2014, 117).

To answer these communication needs the communication should be planned and executed. Stakeholder analyses should be made before communication planning and drafting the messages for the communication.

5.2.4 Interaction, participation and two-way communication

All the interviewees stated that they have possibilities to give feedback directly or indirectly to the business unit and also direct interaction with the business unit management was possible. All business units and organizations should develop the two-way communication to be able to utilize the wisdom and ideas of their line-management and employees to develop best possible strategies to succeed and also receive the critical feedback from their organizations which has been proven to be critical success factor in the organizations (Vuori & Huy 2015; Kauppalehti 2014; Mantere & Vaara 2008). The interviewees also said that their feedback was heard and it had an impact, nonetheless there could be considered improvement for example by creating a system to ensure the important two-way communication reaches business unit management.

Some of the interviewees had possibilities to participate to the business unit strategy process, but many also hoped for more opportunities to contribute to the strategy formation. The opportunities to participate to the strategy process were motivating to the interviewees. Main obstacle preventing the participation was that superiors felt that they did not have enough information to participate to the strategy process.

The business unit has a yearly strategy event and one of the easy ways to ensure the participation to the strategy formation is to review the participant list and invite more people to the event. Participation to the event was considered very highly among the interviewees. Also from the practical point of view this is easy to modify.

5.2.5 Communication satisfaction; channels and areas

Additional and more pragmatic support questions were: 'What are the main sources of information?', and 'What areas of communication require improvement?'. The answers related

to the communication channels and areas of the strategy communication are collected under this section with emphasis on the communication satisfaction.

Hämäläinen and Maula (2004, 31) have divided the strategy communication to three categories and there should be communication about the strategy process, content of the strategy and the communication supporting the strategy execution. Together these communication areas form a base for successful strategy communication and in the end, as expected, for the successful strategy implementation. The interview results were analyzed to evaluate the current status of each strategy communication areas but keeping the main focus on communication about strategy content of the strategy with the strategy process communication.

The interviewees were in general satisfied with the case business unit strategy communication and they felt that there had been already made improvements within the communication. All together the interviewees felt that the business unit is communicating about the strategy, but also areas for improvement were pointed out and several improvements ideas to further develop the communication were presented and specified during the interviews. All the improvement ideas were collected and the implementation will continue with thorough consideration in the planning phase. Some improvements were implemented already during this thesis projects. It is difficult to evaluate and distinct the impacts of the changes and improvements made on the early phases of the thesis project to the result, but the researcher does not feel that the distinction would benefit the thesis and after all the main focus is on whole communication process and the main idea of the thesis has been to improve the strategy communication.

Based on the interviews, there should be more communication about the strategy process. Several interviewees stated that they do not have clear understanding about the strategy process and about the participants to the strategy process. It is notable, that most of the interviewees had relatively long carriers in the case organization and they were members of management. Based on the interview results the suggestions is to communicate more about the strategy process.

The main communication channels were already partly presented earlier as the corporate level strategy communication event and other face-to-face meetings with top management strategy presentations were mentioned as important source of strategy information and the corporate level strategy communication channels were presented earlier. Besides the top management own superior was important source of information. Some strategy information was also received through staff magazines and intranet, but mainly superiors relied on the top management presentations, meetings by business unit, their own superiors and the strategy materials as the main sources of strategy information. Also the email was mentioned as

source of information. In addition videos as back-up materials were mentioned as possible communication tool.

When discussing about the strategy communication, one aspect has to be stated clear out loud. This feature was declared both on the literature and during the interviews; Superiors are busy! Hämmäläinen and Maula (2004, 112) have noticed the time constraints as hindering or even preventing factor in the strategy communication. Same was noticed during the interviews in the case organization; superiors do not have time to spend on looking for the information. It was clearly stated, that some of the superiors do not have time to read intranet or search information from there. The information should be easily available for them.

The general communication of the case business unit has been improved in parallel with this thesis project including news flow in the intranet and by emails. Also the strategy presentations materials have been renewed earlier. Also the working processes and organization structure of the business unit were recently changed. Several workshops have been arranged to improve the processes and these were also mentioned in the interviews as a way to influence the strategy. Workshops, new organization structure or the work processes were not part of this thesis project but they could have impact on for example on the communication satisfaction.

5.2.6 Expectations and constraints of superiors' role in the strategy communication

Before going in to the communication planning the role of superiors needs attention. One of the support questions was: "What is the role of superiors in the strategy communication?". The superiors are in a key role to implement the strategy. In literature the line managers' and superiors' role has been a rising theme. For example Suominen et al (2011) encourages paying attention to superiors and their role during the strategy process from drafting the strategy to implementing the strategy.

The top management role in the strategy process is undeniable and all the interviewees emphasized the role of top management in strategy communication. The top management visits have great informative, but also motivational, affect for the teams. Some of the superiors stated that they do not have role in the corporate or business unit strategy communication because often they have the same information as their subordinates have thanks to the top management presentations. On the other hand these superiors may have stated, that they have important role in communicating local strategy and key performance indicators. The targets and key performance indicators have significant role in everyday management. Alternatively, superiors felt great need to share the strategy information to their teams. Many regularly presented and updated the strategy to their departments; some arranged special

strategy sessions to communicate the strategy to their departments as there has been interest to learn more about the strategy, but no access to it.

Department meetings were most popular communication channel to communicate the strategy to their teams in superior's strategy communication. Åberg (2006) mentions appraisal discussion as tool for strategy communication. According to this study, appraisal discussions do not have important role in strategy communication.

The business unit should consider how they see the role of superiors in the strategy process. What are the expectations; should they have information about the strategy, should they tell it forward to their teams, should they participate during the strategy process, should they give feedback about the strategy and its implementation or none of the above. The tools supporting the superiors' role in strategy communication were presented in the theory chapters could be utilized in the planning and improvement section.

The previously presented model 'five questions' by FitzPatrick and Valskov (2014, 119) could be utilized as support to design the communication to the superiors. It forces the business unit to consider their assumptions of superiors' role in the strategy communication.

5.2.7 Areas of improvement

This chapter will be further presenting the strategy communication areas requiring improvement in relation to the earlier presented communication quality assessment tool by Vos and Schoemaker (2004). The tool was presented earlier in detail and also in the business unit communication model and it will not be repeated in this chapter. The tool has been used here as reference to evaluate the case business unit strategy communication by reviewing the results of the interviews and other research results to find and emphasize the areas for improvement. This could be a guiding tool for communication non-professionals to consider the different aspects of the business unit strategy communication and the framework and the findings can be used as support material for the communication planning.

The dimensions of the communication evaluated within framework by Vos and Schoemaker (2004) are; 1) clarity and availability of the information, 2) communication reinforcing commitment, change management and possibilities for two-way communication 3) communication consistency with other departments communication (e.g. HR) , 4) responsiveness of the communication enforcing connection of internal views with the external changes, 5) efficiency of the communication, 6) vision of the communication and 7) consistency and alignment of the communication responsibilities and policies. The initiatives to improve the communication have been collected and summarized to reflect the communication quality evaluation and

research results. The improvement of the communication can be best assured by planning and better defining the communication processes and targets and the tool can assist also with these.

Clarity and availability

The first area to be evaluated is communication clarity and availability. The strategy communication is available through face-to-face and online meetings, strategy presentation materials, reports via email and also to some extent via intranet. Main channel for the case business unit to communicate the strategy information is through team meetings and the membership of these teams had a substantial effect to the access of the strategy information. This is something that should be considered carefully; how to ensure the sufficient information flow to all important stakeholders regardless of team memberships. The access rights and distribution lists has been evaluated and updated within the project. There could be also more follow-up communication about strategy proceeding and targets; how the plans have been implemented and how the targets have been reached.

The superiors' time constraints have to be considered in the communication planning. Several superiors stated that they do not have time to spend on searching in intranet and looking for information and as communication channels they prefer meetings (preferably face-to-face, but also video and teleconference), emails for written communication and clear strategy presentations. In additional videos as back-up materials were mentioned. But on the other hand for some superiors intranet was important information sources. The use of communications channels could be over-all reviewed. Company intranet and magazine are available, but they might not be the best channels for business unit strategy communication, but they could be good tools for general information about the topics related to the business unit and its strategy. Emails and reports directly send to superiors received good feedback; no need to look for the information. Still access to information should be ensured in intranet as the access rights might be restricting, even searching information from intranet is time-consuming.

Several improvement ideas were raised during the interviews, but according to the researcher the main challenges of the strategy communication are lack of stakeholder approach, uneven flow of communication to the stakeholder groups and lack of strategy communication plan.

Communication reinforcing commitment, change management and possibilities for two-way communication

The communication should be creating and enforcing the commitment and facilitate change management. Good ways to embrace the commitment are top management communication, especially the face-to-face communication and communication in general.

The commitment could be at least partly related to two-way communication, but two-way communication is itself very important part of the successful strategy process. The meaning and possibilities of two-way communication in the strategy process has been presented already earlier.

Communication consistency and alignment to policies and responsibilities

The communication consistency within the corporation and between different departments was not focus area of this work, but it is good to be aware of the other departments communication for example HR's target setting, education for superiors, appraisal discussion role, work atmosphere surveys and particularly about the other business units communication practices. Special emphasis on the business unit strategy communication has to be on the corporate communication and corporate strategy processes and the corporate strategy processes and templates have to be followed. The communication is well aligned and the corporate strategy and communication practices could be utilized even more.

Communication responsiveness to external change

Business unit communication could be more reflective and responsive to the external change. Based on the interviews there was not much communication about the external environment or competitors and this should be improved.

The business unit strategy communication plan could also include the general communication about the business unit based on the strategic themes to generate understanding of the business unit and its critical success factors. The understanding about the external environment and changes in the field could be connected to the general communication.

Communication efficiency

The concept of ROC highlights the abstract nature of the communication and difficulties to evaluate the efficiency or even made investments. The concept of ROC (Return on communication) which refers to following questions: 1) what benefits should and could be received

with communication, 2) what harm or dangers can be prevented or minimized and 3) what current state or status can be preserved with communication? (Juholin 2010, 54.) These questions should be used to facilitate the communication planning in the business unit. The ROC could be used also as mental guiding tool to evaluate how much time and effort should be used on communication in the business unit.

In the case business unit, there are not dedicated communication resources or communication experts. The strategy communication is executed mainly according to the corporate strategy communication processes and through face-to-face meetings. Separate strategy communication plan does not exist. The face-to-face communication by top management was stated as very good communication mode by interviewees, but the face-to-face communication is rich communication tools requiring lots of resources (Åberg 2006, 160) and it is not possible to use only face-to-face communication to reach all shareholder groups. Thus the communication planning would facilitate the efficiency and reach of the strategy communication. Well formulated communication plan can be used also in the following years, which also saves resources and effort.

Vision of the communication

The communication targets are not defined or there is not stated vision what should be achieved by strategy communication. Defined targets would help to plan the communication; if the target is just to reach as many listeners as possible, this is numeric and easy target to reach and monitor. If the target is to increase the understanding or change behavior, it is more difficult to reach and evaluate and it requires more effort. This could be also linked to the core messages; the clear core messages also facilitate the communication as the main messages are defined and the vision could be that stakeholders understand and know the core messages.

To answer the questions above and to ensure the implementation of the collected improvement ideas, it is important to plan the communication. But before entering the planning few steps could be executed and one of these is stakeholder analyze.

5.2.8 Stakeholder analyze

The stakeholder analyze is in this thesis divided to parallel paths; one part of the stakeholder analyze is define the roles superiors and second part is to define the separate departmental stakeholder groups. The superiors' role has been presented in detail earlier and this chapter will focus on departmental stakeholder groups. Even within one organization, there are dif-

ferent stakeholder groups and audiences and it is important to understand the needs of different groups.

One of the support questions was 'What are the main target groups for strategy communication?'. The results of interviews has been collected and summarized to a table to present the differences between each line function and it presents the current level of communication and highlights the possible improvement areas. The summary gives a basic understanding and partially explains the made improvements. The improvement steps are based on the results of interviews and other research conducted in the case organization.

The stakeholder groups are based on the activities of the functions, but also to the access of the information varies between functions and even between superiors. Not everyone have same access to information for example via forums, events or responsibilities at work. Also the organizational level influences the available information; if the stakeholder is in close collaboration with the business unit or top management the access to the strategy information is better secured. These differences should be taken into account when planning the strategy communication. Also during this project there were clearly noticed different needs of information in the different line functions. The assumption of the researcher is that the different needs are reflecting the existing visibility of the business environment and also the possibilities to influence the own targets; for example not all the line functions have the same visibility to the competition environment. Also the level basic understanding of the business may greatly vary. The different stakeholders and their different needs should be taken better into account during the strategy communication and the communication and messages should be tailored.

	Fine function 1	Line Function 2	Line function 3
Strategy definition (theoretical)	Ok	Ok	ok
Corporate strategy	Ok	Ok	ok
Business unit strategy	+/-	+/-	+/-
Own organization strategy	+	+	+
Strategy process	-	-	-
Mission	+	+	+
Communication satisfaction	+	+	+
Possibilities to give feedback	Ok	Ok	Ok
Possibilities to participate to the strategy formulation	+	-	-
External information	+	-	-
Amount of the received communication and information	+	-	-
Quality of the received communication	+	+	+
Target and strategy follow-up	-	-	-
Strategy communication support for superiors	-	-	-

+ = *Good level*

- = *Needs improvement*

Ok = *Acceptable*

Table 9: Summary of current status and possible development areas in the case organization

5.2.9 Better communication through planning

Based on the results and discussion in the previous steps the actual communication planning could be started. Based on the literature and knowledge about the case business unit communication the best way to improve the communication is to plan the communication. The tool by FitzPatrick and Valskov (2014) to facilitate the planning has been presented in previous chapters and will not be repeated here. The business unit management should be defining the targets for the strategy communication including the target level of strategy knowledge in the stakeholder groups. This thesis presents the current status of the communication and knowledge.

A detailed plan and processes for strategy communication will be formulated based on the evaluation to support the on timely strategy communication. The written communication plan also verifies comprehensive strategy communication to the stakeholder groups and the in-

cluded stakeholder analyses ensure that all the key stakeholder groups are included to the strategy communication. The planning will guarantee the access to communication for all stakeholder groups and it also forces the case business unit to think about the communication and main messages targeted for that particular group. One of the main improvements after this thesis study and related discussions in the case business unit is to better exploit the existing structures and processes to the strategy communication.

5.2.10 Improvements and next steps in the case business unit

Already during this thesis project business unit strategy communication has been improved and the improvements will continue also in the future. This chapter is summarizing the concrete improvement made and planned in the case organization.

The interviewees were mainly satisfied with the business unit strategy communication, but one of the main findings was that not all stakeholders receive same amount of the communication, the information flow is not equal throughout stakeholders. One of the main improvements steps is to ensure the sufficient strategy communication flow to all stakeholders. This will be tackled with the stakeholder analyzes and efficient communication planning covering all the stakeholder groups. Easy cure is to invite more people to the strategy process and strategy events and this has been already done in the case business unit. Already in preliminary stakeholder analyze more important stakeholders have been defined and they will be included to the strategy process in some way. The more detailed stakeholder analyzes will be continued also in future and needs of different stakeholder groups will be better utilized in the ways of how the strategy will be communicated, but also about what will be communicated. One of the findings in the research was that different stakeholder groups and departments have different points of interests and needs for the communication depending on their own activities but also based on the access to external environment information based on their role and activities in the organization. Besides the information need business unit strategy communication is required also to motivate the teams, to show them that they are important part of the business unit success. The strategy communication content should be planned to fulfill all these different needs; motivate and increase commitment through enthusiasm and inspiring, providing information to ensure the same view point for all the stakeholder departments and providing them with the information about the future guidance and strategic targets and their role in the process.

The strategy communication plan will be integrated with yearly corporate strategy process timelines and the existing communication practices which will be exploited better. This will be also efficient communication on resource-wise as to existing materials and reports will be evaluated and utilize for broader communication purposes. Part of this thesis was to analyze

the overall strategy communication processes and practices in the case organization. As a result of the thesis project and the strategy communication discussions in the case organization, the existing strategy processes will be utilized to full potential. The exploitation of practices including existing reports will be extended with little modifications to strengthen the strategy communication. Also the yearly strategy process cycle will be utilized better for communication planning.

The regular meetings arranged by business unit were identified as important channel for strategy communication. The information flow should be secured also to stakeholders who are not members in these teams and the stakeholder analyzes will be tackling this challenge. With the current teams the best practices could be benchmarked and employed throughout the case business unit to ensure the similar internal processes in the business unit. The best practices have been also benchmarked between business units in the case organization.

Also the corporate strategy image was renewed during the strategy. The new strategy image links better the different aspects of the strategy which have been presented also in strategy literature. There is a great potentiality to improve the overall strategy communication in the corporation and at the same time business unit level strategy communication. The new materials encourage defining and explaining the business unit strategy and the strategic targets in detail, but also helping to align the business unit strategy business unit strategy with the corporate strategy.

In addition the content of communication will be evaluated and improved. The core messages will be defined. The business unit strategy presentation materials have been further improved with utilizing the renewed corporate strategy materials. The new materials already help to facilitate the core message formulations as they guide to define these on the materials. The core messages of business unit strategy will be further evaluated and analyzed. The need of additional materials could be evaluated if the materials would provide a benefit for the superiors in strategy implementation and further communication. Besides defining the core messages the content and the messages of the strategy communication will be also tailored for the stakeholders needs. Also possibilities of using wider range of communicational tools including pictures and other visual elements, paying more attention to the vivid use of language with simple vocabulary without too much business jargon and even utilizing the possibilities of storytelling and its sense making capacity should be exploited in the strategy communication.

The superiors could be also encouraged to communicate more in their own departments. This could be done by providing superiors more events to hear about the strategy but also possibilities discuss about the strategy. Also the 'five question' model facilitates business unit to

coach the superiors for the communication by questioning what is expected from them. Also the additional information, materials and concrete support about the content of communication might encourage communication, but the role of superiors should not be only to transfer the messages, but their feedback and ideas should be also considered as valuable feedback to the strategy content and the possibilities to participate and discuss about the strategy should be ensured.

6 Conclusions

The strategy is agreed to be important basis for the success of the business both on the literature and in the practice as strategy or even several strategies can be found from almost all companies. Communication is equally present in our everyday life and in business activities. Both concepts are so broad that there is no unambiguous definition for either of these terms, but both are very significant for success of the companies and well-being of the employees. In this thesis the basic aspects of the strategy were presented to ensure the solid basis for strategy communication by providing understanding about elements included to the strategy. The emphasis on the theory and the literature has been on the communication as part of the strategy implementation. Due to pragmatic nature of this thesis strategy and communication theory is not alone sufficient to secure the good communication and thus the internal communication practice was included. Before entering to the further conclusion it is good to summarize and rephrase the role of these concepts for business; Communication is a necessity in organizations; the organizations cannot function without communication and there cannot be management and leadership without communication (Åberg 2006, 12). Communication is essential to solve and prevent problems within complex world with increasing number connections and dependencies (Vos and Schoemaker 2004, 19) and it is important recourse in work organizations (Åberg 2006, 12). Strategy on the other hand gives the direction for the organization, helps to focus and integrate the consistency and coherence of the activities, and helps to build an identity for the organization (Juuti and Luoma 2009).

Besides the challenges of theoretical definitions and hypothetical considerations of these concepts, the other side of the phenomena is the pragmatic side and the actual practices of the strategy communication in the business unit. The guiding idea was to understand in depth the business unit strategy communication; the needs, current practices and improvement possibilities. Furthermore the profound understanding of the tasks and roles of corporate strategy and business unit strategy communication in the case organization were presented with the key aspects of the strategy like targets, communication, and participation to the strategy process, external environment and decision making. The ultimate goal of the strategy communication is the successful implementation and execution of the strategy. The main emphasis of this thesis is to present and combine the strategy theory, communication theory and results of the thesis research project including current communication practices in the case organization. The researcher's motivation in this thesis relies on the assumption that prerequisite for the successful strategy implementation and execution and thus on the success of the organization requires well-organized and sufficient communication.

The strategy communication limited only to business unit strategy communication is relatively little studied research area within strategy communication. The researcher's main curiosity

was to specifically learn more about the role and possibilities of business unit strategy communication in a corporation. The scarcity of the strategy communication literature focusing explicitly on the strategy unit level strategy communication has led to the need to adapt the existing strategy communication and internal communication literature and research to business unit needs and circumstances.

6.1 Study

The study for this thesis was conducted as abductive action research combining theory and practice. The researcher works in the case organization and the ambition behind this thesis was to improve the strategy communication in the case business unit. The researcher is not a communication expert nor is in decision making position in the organization, but can influence the improvements in the communication processes.

Qualitative research method with interviews was selected as the research method instead of quantitative method to gain in depth first hand understanding of the current state of the communication. The research was started with familiarizing to the case organization strategy process and available materials related to the strategy process and strategy communication. The study was conducted in two parts; first interviews concentrated on understanding the overall corporate strategy communication and related processes and responsibilities with the top management and strategy process representatives. After gaining the understanding of all the levels of strategy and strategy communication existing in the case organization, actual research interviews were conducted in the case organization.

The second phase with the actual research interviews included several interviews with the selected key stakeholder representatives. The interviewees were selected in co-operation with the business unit management to provide a comprehensive display of key stakeholders but at the same time trying to exclude the participants of the strategy process. These defined criteria and interviews provided excellent material to understand the needs and the current practices. Altogether more than 20 interviews were conducted to get a clear picture of the current status and practices in the case organization. The interviews were conducted both on phone and face-to-face and in English and in Finnish. The main focus in the interviews was on how to improve the strategy communication.

6.2 Key findings

The detailed research results and improvement actions were presented in the previous chapters. The overall satisfaction to the business unit strategy communication was good and the communication had already improved during the past year, but the communication flow was

not uniform to all key stakeholders. Also the communication could be better tailored for the target audience and the role of line managers and superiors could be better defined. Besides these the information needs about the business unit strategy were on quite practical level; the most clearly was emphasized the up-to-date information about products and processes. But besides the detailed practical information the wished for leadership communication and communication about the 'bigger picture' and guidance to understand role and relevance of the department's daily tasks were mentioned. Moreover the interviews indicated that targets have important role in strategy communication and the implementation. Interviewees also mentioned their employees' interest to know more about the strategy. The role of superiors as strategy communicators varied, but more emphasis could be focused on encouraging the superiors to communicate and discuss about the strategy in their departments.

The role of business unit communication was one of the main considerations for this thesis. Based on the interviews and research in the case organization, the unique role of business unit strategy communication in organization was defined. The business unit strategy communication is related to the corporate strategy communication but it has separate focus and target audiences; the business unit strategy communication is more related to practical everyday work, but it is also about the setting the horizon, motivating and reasoning the made changes and choices. The corporate strategy communication is on higher level and it is targeted for whole organization. The corporate strategy is usually setting the corporate identity with visual image, values, mission and vision. These are often the most visible part about the strategy and they are communicated throughout the organizations. The understanding after the research is that there is no need to communicate the business unit strategy to the whole organization, only as part of the corporate strategy communication. The main focus of the business unit strategy communication is on the work related communication to support the daily activities. But between these two levels of strategy communication, there is a need for additional strategy communication. The key stakeholders working for the business units require also encouraging and motivating communication about the strategy and the opportunities to understand their role in the business unit success.

The nature of the business unit strategy communication is comparable to internal communication by the methods, tools and arrangements. A suggestion for process to plan and improve communication has been presented earlier in this thesis. The main focus on the presented model and findings is on one-way communication about the strategy content even the two-way communication is distinguished as an important part of good communication and a part of successful strategy execution and formation.

The main suggestion for any business unit and organization is time to time discuss and analyze the used practices of strategy and other communication. Already the discussion improves the

understanding of the state of the communication. Optimizing the utilization of the existing communication and business processes is an easy and efficient way to improve the communication. Lots of improvement can be accomplished already with little discussion, consideration, asking questions and planning. If there are not enough resources to be used for communication, already by sharing the best practices in the organization could be helpful. Better utilization of the existing strategy processes is also an easy way to improve communication with little effort and adding that with for example an hour of discussion about the most important departments for the business unit and its success could result to understanding about the stakeholders of the current communication and strategy practices. Already this could ensure the basic flow of information throughout the organization. Also considering the strategy messages is easy as the business units are experts on the content of the strategy. Often heard tip for any communication is 'explain it as you would explain it to your grandma', the idea is not to underestimate the audience, but recommend to consider the communication and messages also for someone who is not expert on the field. Define the core messages in plain language and remember that everyone does not possess the same basic knowledge about strategy theory or field of business or vocabulary.

The other finding related to used communication tools and practices and the business unit's strategy communication could be more structured with use of wider selection of communication tools and considering the different needs of stakeholder groups. Both the quality and quantity of the strategy communication could be always further improved even several good strategy communication practices already exist and are utilized. Especially the detailed layers of communication planning and new communication tools and ways of communication can be exploited to improve the successful delivery of the strategy messages. Greatly recommended is also making a communication plan; it is helpful and simple tool to facilitate the stakeholder analyses, scheduling the activities and utilizing the existing communication processes and practices.

These results may not be directly applicable to other companies, but they can be beneficial as a reference or starting point for business units and people responsible for strategy implementation and strategy communication. The presented tools for communication evaluation and planning could also be valuable for strategy communication in other organizations. Naturally all the models require tailoring to suite the target organization.

6.2.1 Possibilities

As a result of the theoretical research and the interviews, the understanding of current state and role of the strategy communication and possibilities of the internal communication were gained. One of the identifications of this thesis was the importance of internal communica-

tion expertise for the organizations and business units; internal communication appears to be untapped resource, especially for the business units. Often the corporate communication concentrates on for example external communication, HR communication and internal communication, the business unit strategy communication is not in focus. The business unit could benefit from the internal communication resources greatly, but the prerequisite is to combine understanding of the content of business and its strategy with the expertise of internal communication. The main goal and purpose of internal strategy communication is not to produce merely outputs but the focus should be on outcome - how the internal strategy communication is facilitating the business activities and overall success of the company. This view and combining these two expertises might be under-utilized and lacking in the organizations, especially on the business unit level.

Other general improvement area is the overall communication competence in the business organizations; communication experts are not utilized to their full-potential at least in the case organizations. It could be due to the fact that successful communication requires understanding about the business and daily activities might be lacking and thus challenge. Also often the full potential of internal communication has not been realized and the communication might be considered too time consuming or with too little benefits. Good suggestion is to use corporation's communication experts to consult and facilitate the communication. But it is important to understand that communication experts should be familiarized to the business unit's strategic and operative needs. Too general approach maybe does not benefit the organization enough. If possible, business unit should conduct a nominated 'business partner' from communication department. That would be beneficial approach.

Besides the communication planning the researcher has identified other possible areas for communication improvement in organizations and business units. The possibilities for interaction, two-way communication and opportunities to participate the strategy process should be ensured. Hopefully the Nokia headlines encourage free two-way communication in organizations.

It would be recommendable to also ensure enough support for the superiors and line managers to communicate the strategy further. In addition the interaction and ensuring the communication are important not only for communication but also for developing the business further and enhancing the strategy formulation with best possible insights. Also the internal communication should be included to the training palette for the managers to ensure that the practices and importance is understood, but also to provide tools for better strategy implementation through knowledge, commitment and changes in the activities.

6.3 Evaluation

The thesis focused on the business unit strategy communication and the journey has been really rewarding and educational. Several ideas to improve the business unit strategy have been raised during the project and the implementation of these has been already started but also several ideas for future studies were identified.

The thesis project was conducted with action research and abductive research approach combining theory and practice. The researcher thinks this has been a right decision as the knowledge has increase during the project with interaction of theory and practice. The drawback of the approach with combining the theory and practice sequentially has been quite time-consuming.

It is advisable to start with evaluation of the selected research methods and the research project; the qualitative research method with interviews proves to be the correct method to gain understanding in depth about the business unit strategy communication in the case organization and also selected interviewees were representative sample of key stakeholder departments' line managers. But if there would have been more resources the interviews could have been conducted with even wide-ranging sample of line managers. It would be interesting to hear more opinions and learn how the superiors at the lower levels of the organization receive strategy information and how they evaluate their possibilities to participate to the strategy process and their opportunities to give feedback. The next step in the business unit could be a broader communication satisfaction research. In general it would be advisable to conduct a survey about the made improvements. The survey could be conducted with questionnaire to enable views of wider sample of superiors with reasonable efforts.

During the interviews the business unit management was also interviewed to understand their views about the current status of strategy communication. Considering afterwards these interviews could have been conducted as one group interview to enable the discussion about strategy communication and its role in the case organization already from the beginning and even the improvements could have been started at this point. Other possibility could have been to focus in the interviews more on the role of line managers and superiors in the strategy communication and managements' expectations for their role. Also the existing support practices for superiors could have been possible emphasis in this research.

Food for thought - something to be considered: the theories of complex world by Juuti and Luoma (2009) and strategy-as-practice were briefly presented in this thesis and if this is the future of the strategy, the desk drawer strategies are not enough and the importance of

communication upsurges more. Communication with emphasize on interaction is the most important and efficient way to influence the processes.

6.3.1 Recommendations for further studies

The results of this thesis are applicable to the practice and the implementation is ongoing, but there is always room for improvement in the communication also in the case business unit and the development should not be stopped to these improvement initiatives.

Further study ideas would be to gain even deeper understanding of the role of strategy communication in the organization, for example impact on the culture and commitment. Even the made interviews excluded the top management and participants to the strategy process, the interviewees still remained on quite high level in the organization. To gain understanding of the actual strategy communication and information needs of the middle managers and floor level superiors, more interviews would be needed and the similar research could be conducted amongst the blue collar superiors.

Additional study suggestions are in depth research on the corporate culture and its effects on the strategy implementation, strategy formulation, interaction, two-way communication and their patterns and practices. The culture was not in the scope of this study, but the literature of communication and strategy emphasize cultures effect on organizations success. Also one of the main tools to effect culture is communication.

Hämäläinen and Maula (2004, 31) stated that the strategy communication consists of three areas; communication about the strategy process, content of the strategy and the communication supporting the strategy execution. The communication supporting the strategy execution was not in the scope of this thesis as it is understood as the daily work related communication and this thesis focuses more on the communication about the strategy content. The daily work related communication was part of the discussions during the interviews, but explicit conclusions were not made about the status of communication supporting the daily activities as the interviews were not designed for that purpose. The everyday communication and its improvement would be excellent subject for further studies or separate development project in the case business unit. The researcher sees that prerequisite for strategy execution is the understanding about the strategy content.

For further studies, also the targets and their role in the business units strategy communication and implementation and their effect on the success of the business could be interesting topic. Targets have important role in guiding employees' activities but the practices and es-

pecially the pragmatic side on target setting, follow-up and superiors' role with connection to communication could be interesting to learn more.

The researchers would warmly welcome all additional studies about the business unit strategy communication from other organizations on practical level even further preferably with matrix structure, several business units and shared line functions executing all the business unit's strategies with special focus on target setting which seems to be main driver for strategy implementation. It would be interesting to learn the employees' views and possible challenges with several business unit strategies to be implemented on the daily work.

6.3.2 Final remark

Before finishing this thesis it is good to summarize once more the importance of communication via an example. This is not the reality in the case organization and hopefully not in any other organization either, but this fictional story vividly describes the possible challenges caused by poor communication.

"But Mr Dent, the plans have been available in the local planning office for the last nine month."

"Oh yes, well as soon as I heard I went straight round to see them, yesterday afternoon. You hadn't exactly gone out of your way to call attention to them had you? I mean like actually telling anybody or anything."

"But the plans were on display ..."

"On display? I eventually had to go down to the cellar to find them."

"That's the display department."

"With a torch."

"Ah, well the lights had probably gone."

"So had the stairs."

"But look, you found the notice didn't you?"

"Yes," said Arthur, "yes I did. It was on display in the bottom of a locked filing cabinet stuck in a disused lavatory with a sign on the door saying Beware of the Leopard."" (Adams, 1979.)

Strategy communication nor any communication in the organizations should not be as above description; the information should be available without intensive searching, there should not be technical obstacles to find and access the information and the information should be available on time. Communication should not be planned to distract the receiver, nor should the strategy be treated as well-kept secret.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1: Interview structure

Appendix 1: Interview structure

- Role and responsibilities of the interviewee and his/her departments role and responsibilities in the organization
- Strategy definition
- Corporate strategy and business unit strategy
- Other strategies
- Mission
- Strategy process
- Possibilities to give feedback and participate
- Targets
- Communication channels
- Information needs as superior
- Strategy communication practices as superior
- Communication practices that function well
- Strategic thinking
- Information about external environment
- Encouraging communication
- Possibilities to improve communication