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Improving Communication in a Scattered Service Organization

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9 May 2013

Preface

This thesis has been an eye-opening and a rewarding learning experience for me. I had to get to know new people in the case company, and have found multiple new ways to connect with these new colleagues. The theoretical aspect of this thesis has been selected according to the wish of the management of the case company.

I want to thank my main instructor, Dr. Thomas Rohweder for his constructive feedback and guidance. I want also thank Dr. Marjatta Huhta and M.Sc. Zinaida Grabovskaia for their constant encouragement during the writing of the thesis. And the case company I would like to thank for providing me the research topic and the time to carry out the project.

Last but not least, I want to thank my family for providing me their unquestioning love and support, and enabling me to choose the education I wanted. Special thanks go to my lovely girlfriend, who has assisted me with my writing, and without her sarcastic motivation this thesis would not be done.

Helsinki, May 9. 2013

Joni Westman

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This thesis deals with improving communication in a scattered service organization. The case company is a global player in the automation industry. The case company has been growing its service business and is still seeking growth within its sector. Because of the nature of the service business the old communication practices in the inner communication of the case company are no longer efficient enough, and the case company desires to find ways to improve it.

The research approach used in this thesis is action research. The current state analysis is performed by using data collected in interviews and by using data from an employee satisfaction survey that was conducted in the case company in 2012. Based on the current state analysis, best practices are investigated in the literature review of the thesis. Proposals for improvements are made based on the literature and the current state analysis results. These proposals are introduced to selected employees of the case company in Finland and based on their opinions a reviewed proposal is drafted.

The results of this thesis indicate that virtual channels are powerful for sharing information. Still, some information based on its nature can only be communicated through traditional meetings. Employees see that the case company has already too many information sharing channels, and it is hard to find what they are looking for from all the information sharing channels.

This thesis was successful in creating a proposal for the case company to improve their communication practices in their scattered service organization in Finland.

Keywords	Communication, Scattered, Service, Organization, Social Media

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Tämä opinnäytetyö tutkii kommunikaation parantamista hajautetussa asiakaspalveluorganisaatiossa. Työn teettäjä on suomalainen konepajayritys, joka toimii maailmanlaajuisesti teollisuuden eri aloilla. Tilaajayritys on kasvattanut palveluliiketoimintaansa vahvasti ja hakee lisää kasvua kyseiseltä sektorilta. Tämä on nostanut esiin ongelmia tiedonkulussa yrityksen sisällä.

Tutkimuksessa käytetty tutkimusmetodi on toimintatutkimus. Yrityksen nykytilaa analysoidaan haastatteluista saatujen tietojen perusteella sekä vuonna 2012 tehdyn työntekijöiden tyytyväisyyskyselyn tuloksien avulla. Nykytila-analyysissä esiin tulleisiin ongelmiin haetaan ratkaisuja kirjallisuuskatsauksessa. Analyysin tuloksien sekä kirjallisuuskatsauksen avulla pohditaan kehitysehdotuksia yrityksen sisäisen kommunikaation parantamiseksi. Kehitysehdotukset esitellään valikoidulle ryhmälle yrityksen työntekijöitä, ja heidän kommenttiensa perusteella tehdään paranneltu ehdotus kehitysehdotuksista.

Tämän tutkimuksen tulosten perusteella voidaan sanoa että virtuaali- kanavat ovat tehokas keino jakaa tietoa yhtiöissä, jotkut tiedot tosin ovat luonteeltaan sellaisia että perinteiset kokoukset ovat ainoa oikea tapa levittää tietoa. Tulosten perusteella voidaan myös nähdä, että yrityksellä on jo liian monta erilaista tiedon jakokanavaa eivätkä työntekijät löydä haluamiansa tietoja.

Opinnäytetyön tuloksena esitetään suosituksia ja johdollisia päätelmiä, jotka tähtäävät parantamaan yrityksen sisäistä kommunikaatiota logistisesti haastavassa palveluliiketoimintayksiköissä Suomessa.

Avainsanat	Kommunikaatio, hajautettu, asiakaspalvelu, organisaatio, sosiaalinen media

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1 Introduction

This thesis focuses on improving organizational communication in a scattered service organization. Scattered organizations often have more challenges in building working communication compared to more centralized organizations, therefore special efforts are needed to improve communication in these types of organizations. This thesis aims to find improvements for communication practices in a case company with this kind of a problem.

1.1 Case Company Background

The case company is a Finnish enterprise that operates in heavy industry in different locations around the world. It specializes in process automation systems in paper, process, and energy solutions. The case company is one of the world's largest automation system providers and its value proposition for its customers is the ability for them to cost-effectively automate their plants and reduce their production costs. The main customers of the case company represent multiple industry sectors. Paper industry is the biggest market followed by process industry and energy industry.

As a typical industrial company, the case company has service offices on every continent of the world. In Finland alone, the case company has ten offices. The scope of this thesis covers only the organizational communication practices within the customer service organization in Finland.

1.2 Business Problem

The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.
George Bernard Shaw

The above words by George Bernard Shaw, an Irish playwright and a co-founder of the London School of Economics, crystallize in a most relevant way the central problem many organizations, like the case company have with communication.

The case company has been looking for further growth opportunities for their service business and in doing so they recognized a problem in the work environment. To deal with the problem, the company's new management decided to conduct an employee satisfaction survey to determine the level of employee satisfaction in the company. The survey revealed communication difficulties between top-level management and the employees, and some difficulties in communication between the employees and middle management.

The case company management is well aware of the critical nature of effective and efficient communication for leading successful organizations, and is eager to find ways to improve communication throughout the organization.

Mai and Akerson (2003) argue that the stakes have perhaps never been higher for leadership as communication, as organizations are engaged with ever more mobile and demanding workforce. Simultaneously, as never before, organizations strive to gain full value from employee knowledge and expertise. With poor communication these efforts can fail which will have "enormous consequences for the contributions these people make and the likelihood they will choose to stay with the organization" (Mai and Akersson 2003: 1-2).

Communication can be seen in several ways. One person sees communication as verbal interaction between two individuals, another sees it as exchange of text messages via mobile phones. In the work environment tight schedules and heavy workloads can affect communication negatively. Additionally, today's employees differ a lot from their ancestors (Argenti 2007) and want to understand more about the companies they are working for. Even the workplaces are different with tighter staffing, and more emphasis on performance. When adding tight schedules and high workload to a scattered organizational structure, communication can become even more challenging.

Communication in companies has several forms; it can be face-to-face meeting or take place through so called virtual channels and it can be formal or informal. Both formal and informal communication is important in business. The management of companies communicating with its employees about business changes and other relevant problems can be seen as organizational communication. Sharing best practices can also be seen as communication; in sharing best practices employees share their information about projects and problems they have faced. With this information other employees are able to tackle the same kind of problems more efficiently. Sharing best practices can also be called as knowledge transfer.

1.3 Research Questions and Scope of the Study

To develop suggestions for improving organizational communication in a scattered organization, the research question for the thesis is as follows:

How can organizational communication practices be improved to increase employee satisfaction with communication at work?

In this thesis as a request of the case company, organizational communication is approached from the point of view how virtual channels can be used to improve communication within the customer service organization. Face-to-face channels are also mentioned as they also existed in the organizational communication. To get understanding in why communication is important employees' satisfaction concerning their perception of their own organization and its link to customer's perception of service quality is discussed.

This topic is significant since it is not obvious which communication practices can be used to improve communication in a scattered service organization.

The outcome of this thesis is a proposal for the case company to suggest ways to improve communication between the management and the employees that are scattered around Finland. In particular, this thesis proposes solutions for how the employees could share their information with each other more efficiently using the tools available in the 21st century. One of the Finnish customer service offices was selected for a closer study to get a more detailed view on the employee satisfaction concerning the focus of this thesis.

2 Research Approach

This section overviews the data and the research method used in this thesis, and also presents the research design and the data collection process applied in this thesis. Finally, this section finishes with a discussion regarding the criteria for reliability and validity in this study.

2.1 Action Research

The research approach selected for this thesis is Action Research (AR) that is both liminal and hybrid in nature. *Liminal* comes from the Latin word *limen*, meaning a threshold. According to Wolfram Cox (2012), action research is liminal in the sense that it exists in the interstices between research, consulting, social action, and reflection. AR is also hybrid in the sense that new forms of action research combine and supplement earlier approaches (Wolfram Cox 2012: 371).

As defined by French and Bell (1999), action research is:

> *the process of systematically collecting research data about an ongoing system relative to some objective, goal, or need of that system; feeding these data back into the system; taking actions by altering selected variables within the system based both on data and hypotheses; and evaluating the results of actions by collecting more data (French and Bell 1999: 130).*

Coghlan and Brannick (2010) split action research into a cyclical process, which has multiple steps; they call it an action research cycle. The action research cycle is illustrated in Figure 1.

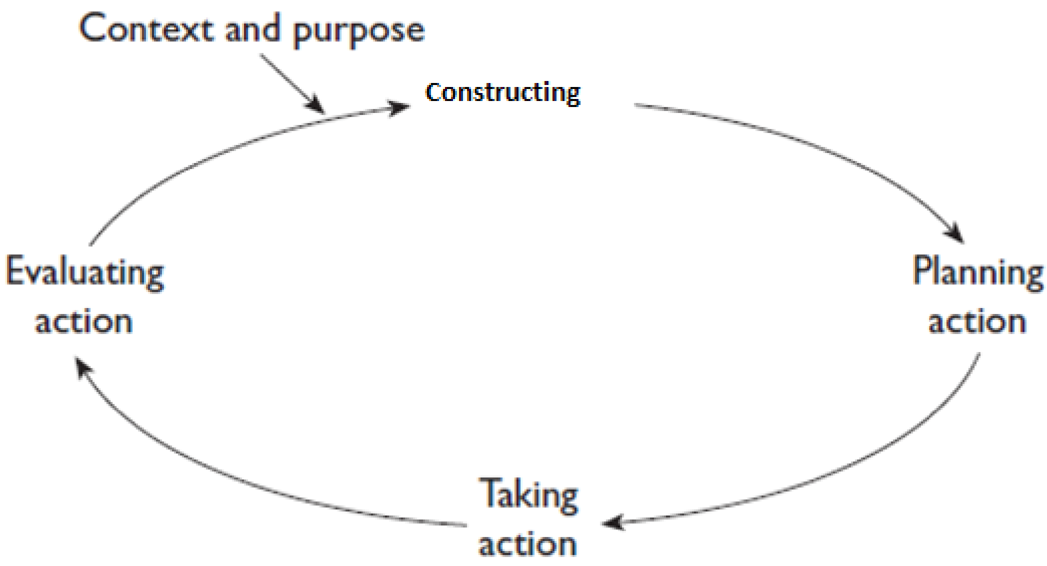

Figure 1. The action research cycle (Coghlan and Brannick 2010: 8).

As shown in Figure 1, the action research cycle has one pre-step and four main steps. The action research cycle begins with seeking understanding of *the context* of the project and understanding its purposes. Once a sense of the need for the project has been identified, the focus of attention moves to the definition of a desired future state (Coghlan and Brannick 2010: 8).

The first of the four main steps in the action research cycle is constructing. In the earlier versions, Coghlan and Brannick called this step also the diagnostic step. In this diagnostic activity, the stakeholders of the considered project engage in constructing/establishing the issues to be handled. Because this step involves the articulation of the practical and theoretical foundations of action, it needs to be done carefully and thoroughly. Since constructing may change in the later iterations of the action research cycle, these changes need to be recorded and articulated clearly, showing how the iterations cycles led to the alternative meaning. The constructing step is typically a collaborative venture with action researcher engaging relevant others in the process, not being the expert who decides apart from others (Coghlan and Brannick 2010: 9).

The second main step in the cycle is *planning action*. Planning action follows from the exploration of the context and purpose of the project, and constructing the issue, and is consistent with that. Coghlan and Brannick argue that action planning focuses on a first step or a series of steps, and that it is important to collaborate (Coghlan and Brannick 2010: 9).

The third step in the action research cycle is *taking action*. In this step, the plans are implemented and interventions are made collaboratively. The fourth step is *evaluating action*. In this step, the outcomes of the action, both intended and unintended, are examined with a view to seeing if the original constructing fits; if the actions taken match the constructing; if the action has been taken in an appropriate manner. These outcomes feed the next cycles of constructing, planning and action as presented in Figure 2 (Coghlan and Brannick 2010: 10).

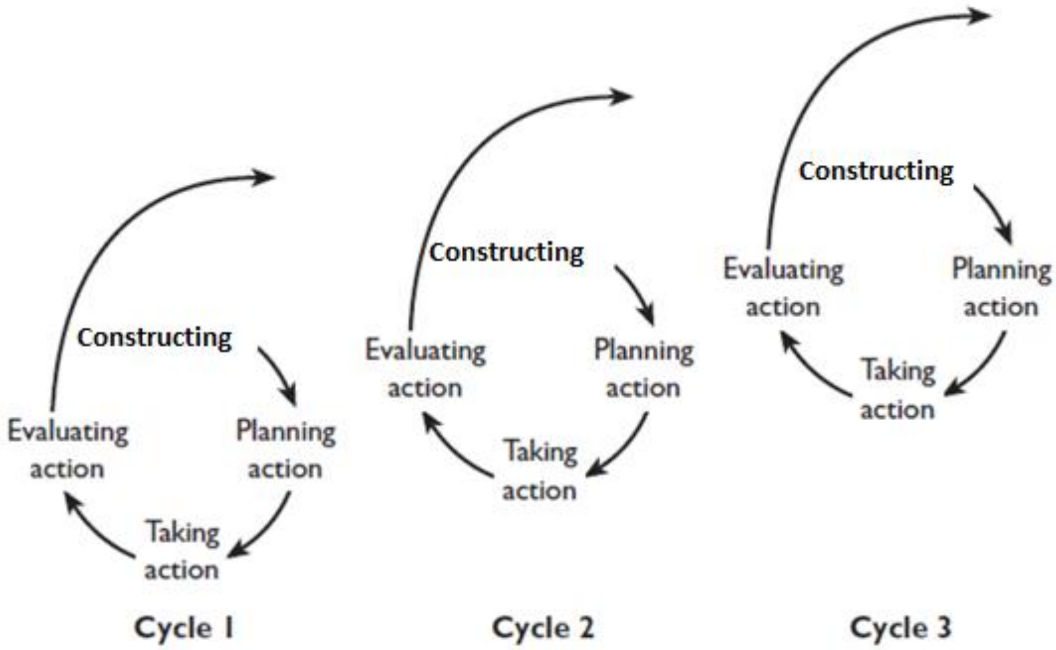

Figure 2. Spiral of action research cycles (Coghlan and Brannick 2010: 10).

As Coghlan and Brannick point out, action research can have several multiple action cycles operating concurrently. These cycles typically have different time spans. While the action research cycle expresses the core process of integrating action and theory, it is important to keep it in perspective and not get too preoccupied with the cycles at the expense of the quality of participation (Coghlan and Brannick 2010: 10). As seen from this overview, there is a variety of perspectives in action research, but the fundamentals of action research stay the same, and include these main steps and their iterations.

In this thesis, the first three steps – 1) setting the research question, 2) conducting the current state analysis, and 3) analyzing best practices – correspond to the pre-step of the action research cycle. The second phase, data collection and analysis, followed by the phase of taking and evaluating actions, represent the four main steps of the implemented action research cycle. Considering the business problem of this thesis, action research was selected as it best meets the needs of the thesis. This thesis differs from the one presented in Figure 2 by having only one cycle. In theory it could have more cycles, but due the tight schedule only one cycle process is conducted.

2.2 Research Process and Design of the Study

The research process in this thesis is based on the action research cycle. The research cycle of this thesis consists of eight steps; it starts with setting the research question, followed by interviews and current state analysis. After that comes the literature review and a second round of interviews to build the proposition. The last phase is the evaluation of the proposition and making a revised proposition with the help of the second interviews. The reason why current state analysis is done before literature review is that the problems are not clear and they need to be mapped out. The research design implemented in this thesis is illustrated in Figure 3.

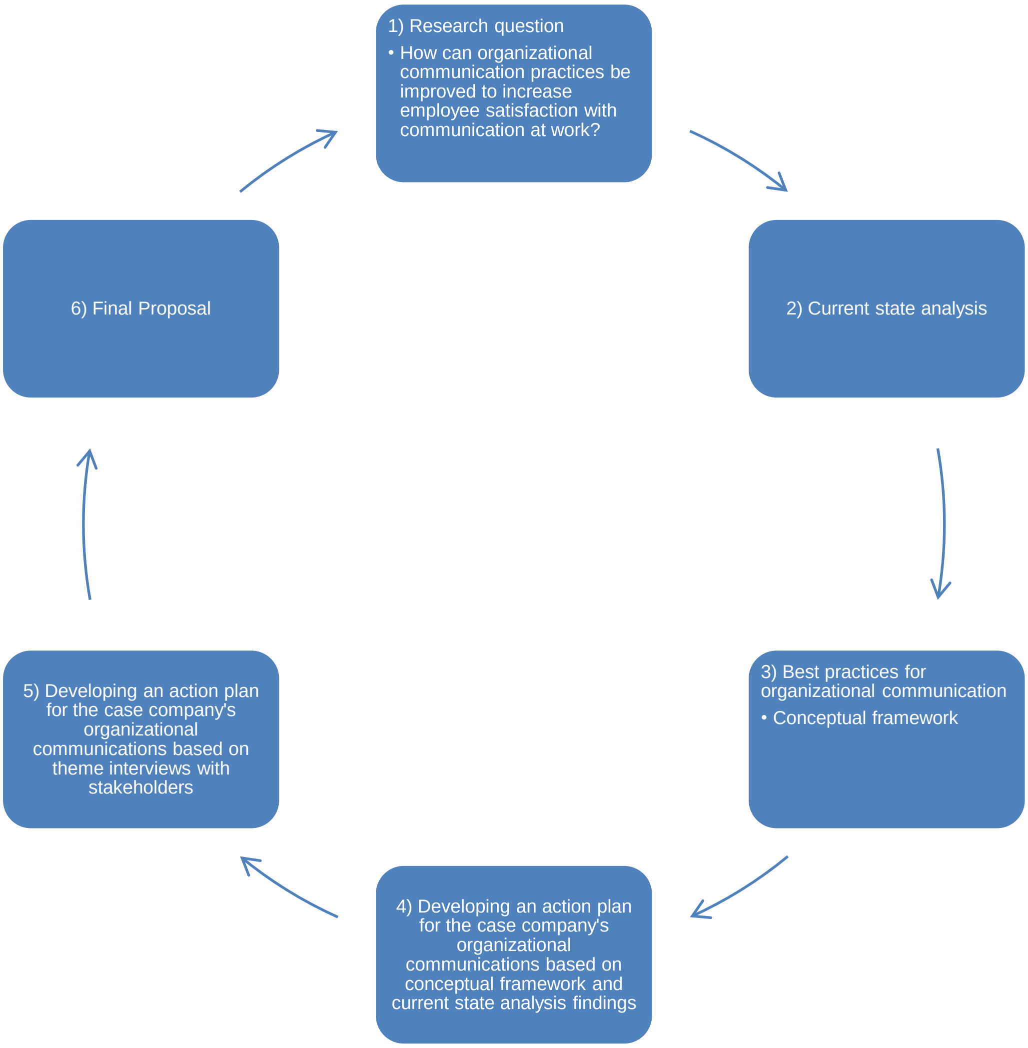

Figure 3. Research design.

As seen in Figure 3, the research starts with setting the research question (step 1), followed by the current state analysis (step 2). The current state analysis is conducted by doing employee interviews and by using an employee survey (later referred to as employee survey) conducted in the case company in 2012.

Step 3, best practices for organizational communications, investigates different approaches to the business problem at hand from the communication point of view. Communication is analyzed from both managerial and employee perspectives. Based on the approaches found in the best practices, and coupled with the results from the second data collection and analysis, the first proposal is formulated, in step 4.

After the proposal development phase the proposal is evaluated for further improvements by introducing the proposal to a selected customer service office in Finland and discussing its strengths and weaknesses (step 5). Improvements to the proposal are made before launching its revised version, the final proposal (step 6).

2.3 Data Collection and Analysis Methods

The data for this thesis is collected from different sources; interviews, an earlier employee survey, and from a learning organization test.

2.3.1 Data Collection for the Current State Analysis

First, the results from an employee survey conducted in the case company in 2012 are used in the current state analysis phase. Second, the interviews are used to gather information of the problem, its origins, and impacts on different stakeholders. The first series of interviews was conducted before the current state analysis phase and were held in the form of theme interviews. This helped to determine the problems. The second series of interviews was conducted after the current state analysis phase and they were in the form of theme interviews, as well. To get the most accurate current state analysis, interviews were selected as the data collection method. The data collected from these interviews was used to build a proposal to improve communication in the case company.

The participants in the current state analysis are all customer service managers in Finland and randomly selected employees from different service offices in Finland. The details of the data collection for the current state analysis are specified in Table 1.

The method of data collection	*The specific method of data collection*	*The target of data collection*	*The codes to identify the targets of data collection*	*The topics and questions in data collection*	*The type of documenting the collected data*
Employee survey	Questionnaire	The case company personnel 3900 employees	-	See Appendix 1	-
Interviews	Theme interview	The case company managers and employees: • 10 Customer Service Managers • 20 System Engineers	Codes for the interviewees: • CM1-10 • CE1-20	See Appendix 2	Field notes

Table 1. The details of the data collection for the current state analysis.

As seen in Table 1, the participants of the theme interviews consisted of customer service managers and randomly selected system engineers. The employee survey was targeted to the whole case company with its 24000 employees, of which 3900 employees work in the service organization.

2.3.2 Data Collection for Proposal Development

The details of the data collection to create the proposal are specified in Table 2. The participants in the theme interviews consisted of customer service managers and system engineers. In the second stage a selected customer service office with all its employees from Finland was selected, and the proposal was introduced to them. To ensure the reliability and validity all stakeholders are taken into account in the proposal development phase as seen in the Table 2. It is important that all the service managers participate in this phase as including all of the important stakeholders in the process could mean the gain of greater acceptance for the proposal.

The method of data collection	*The specific method of data collection*	*The target of data collection*	*The codes to identify the targets of data collection*	*The topics and questions in data collection*	*The type of documenting the collected data*
Interviews, proposal development stage 1	Theme interview	The case company managers: • 10 Customer Service Managers • 20 System Engineers	Codes for interviewees: • PM1-10 • PE1-20	See Appendix 3	Field notes
Interviews, proposal development stage 2	Theme interview	Selected team with it members from the case company	Codes for interviewees: • PDM1 • PDE1-10	See Appendix 4	Field notes

Table 2. The details of the data collection for the proposal.

2.3.3 Employee Survey

The case company conducted an internal employee survey from March to June in 2012. The purpose of the survey was to measure employee engagement within the work community. The survey focused on different aspects of work: work, leadership, safety, strategy, well-being, work community atmosphere, performance, and development. The response rate was record-high in the corporate level, and amounted to 76%. The response rates of the employee survey in each business line (for more specific organization structure see Figure 4 on page 14) are specified in Table 3.

Business line	*Response rate*
Business line 1	78%
Business line 2	74%
Business line 3	77%

Table 3. The response rates in the internal employee survey in the case company.

Table 3 shows that the employee survey response rates are almost similar throughout the case company. The survey maps out the well-functioning areas as well as the areas in need of development by providing a thorough review of the current status. According to the case company, the desire for improvement requires the willingness to face reality with honesty and courage. The goal with the employee survey was to give everyone a chance to participate and have their say through the survey. Since approximately 24,000 employees of the whole company participated, the overall picture of the organization becomes very clear, which means a higher likelihood of improvements in employee engagement, commitment, and performance. The next employee survey will be carried out in 2014 and one of the objectives of this thesis is to prepare the case company for it.

2.3.4 Learning Organization Test

Effective communication is a competence in making business, and effective communication practices make companies work more efficiently. Conducting a learning organization test in this thesis is therefore justified.

Learning organization is an organization with structures emphasizing and supporting the organization to recognize the competences that are most important to its business targets, to acquire the knowledge and competence it needs, to benefit and share knowledge and competence, and to continuously renew itself. Learning organization test is a questionnaire to test these points, and it is used widely around the world (Otala 2013).

One of the Finnish customer service offices was selected to get a more detailed view on the employee satisfaction. The learning organization test was carried out by e-mail. Table 4 presents response rates from learning organization test.

Office	*Responses*	*Overall personnel*	*Response rate*
Southern-Finland	8	11	73%

Table 4. The Response rate in learning organization test.

The response rate was 73%, with 8 out of the 11 employees from the chosen office responding (Table 4). The questions of the learning organization test are presented in Appendix 5.

2.4 Reliability and Validity

According to Quinton and Smallbone (2006), thinking about the validity of research designs in social sciences, of which business research is one, comes from thinking about the validity of experimental research in chemistry and biology. For its philosophical approaches and research methodology, management research also draws on social sciences. As with the experimental tradition of management research, the research methodology tends to be mostly positivist and deductive in its orientation (Quinton and Smallbone 2006: 126). Approaches to validity, reliability, and the extent to which research findings can be generalized to other cases or populations, are typically evident from the research design, and the research methods used.

Yin (2003) defined four types of validity commonly used in academic writing: *internal validity, construct validity, external validity,* and *reliability*. In *internal validity*, the first aspect of validity is whether the research actually measured what was intended to be measured. The key test for internal validity can thus be presented by asking “Was what was found a response to the questions originally asked?” (Quinton and Smallbone 2006: 126-128). As for *construct validity*, which is concerned with the inherent validity of the theory the researcher is testing, the researcher needs to consider the theory and the measure together (Cooper and Schindler 2003). Quinton and Smallbone (2006) argue that *external validity*, is an assessment of whether the results could be applied to other context or situations, and to what extent this may be possible. The external validity could be approached by asking “How transferable the findings are to another context and whether they may even be relevant in another context?” (Quinton and Smallbone 2006: 129).

Reliability is often seen as an assessment of whether the same findings would be obtained if the research were repeated, or if the researcher would be different. Quinton and Smallbone (2006) see this as a problem in business and management research. According to Quinton and Smallbone (2006: 129-131), reliability can be improved by using different data sources and data collection tools, applying an established theory from one area to another, collecting data at different time points, and using different researchers at different points of the research process.

In this thesis, the plan to increase validity is to focus on answering the research question. This is done with a list of action points that need to be taken. In addition, validity will be increased by involving people from across the organization to build both the initial and the final proposals for the case company. The plan to ensure reliability is to involve a range of data from different data sources. Considering different research biases in this research, measurement bias could have an effect on the interviews, as people have a tendency of giving socially desirable answers. Procedural bias could also affect the interviews because the interviewees all come from the company's problem unit. To decrease these biases and the homogeneity of the interviewees they are randomly selected from the case company.

3 Current State Analysis

This section describes and analyses the current practices of communication in the case company based on the research data collected for this study. The sources used in this study are interviews, employee satisfaction survey results, and learning organization test results. In this section the employee survey results are carefully analyzed and explained to better understand the problems at hand. Also the learning organization test results are analyzed and explained.

3.1 Overview of the Case Company Structure

There are different communication practices that are in use in different offices. The case company consists of three main organizations; flow control, process automation systems, and services. The case company's organization chart is presented in Figure 4.

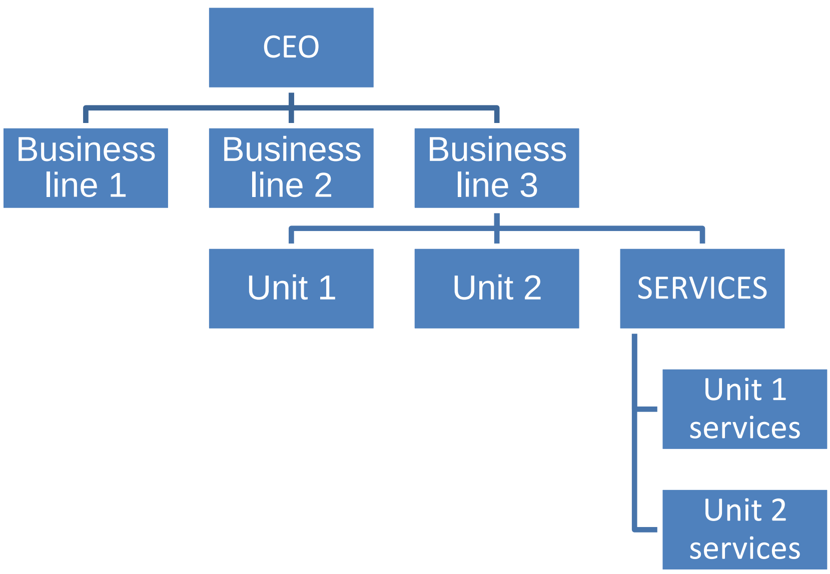

Figure 4. The organization chart of the case company.

This thesis focuses on the service units in Finland, which consists of ten customer service offices. The personnel count differs in these service offices from 3 to 20 people. Each office has one customer service manager, one project manager, and the rest are system engineers.

Currently the case company has a variety of different communication practices: face-to-face meetings once or twice a month where customer service managers go through sales figures and workloads and quarterly meetings where middle management shows figures of how the case company is doing in the markets. On a random basis, the case company has meetings in the main office where product managers are presenting new products and giving some advice about where these new products can be used. The case company has a variety of databases where it publishes information about product fixes, new products, and shares best practices. The case company has collaborative tools for employees to communicate with each other, such as wikis, discussion groups, forums, and blogs. These are presented in Table 5.

Tool	*Description*
Blogs	The case company has several active internal bloggers. Blogs are open for everyone and commenting is enabled. One of the most interesting blogs is the CEO's blog. There the CEO shares his ideas and opinions, and gets feedback from the employees.
Discussion groups	Groups are for employees/managers to connect with colleagues locally or around the world. People can join the existing groups or create their own group, and invite people to join them. Groups can be public or private.
Forums	Forums are for open discussion. Many discussions about different subjects are taking place in the case company's forums every day.
Wikis	Wikis are information sources for the employees concerning for instance specific products and services the company provides. The purpose is to enhance knowledge, collaboration, and sharing of information inside the company.

Table 5. The internal communication tools in the case company.

The case company has a lot of different kind of internal communication tools as seen in Table 5. The CEO's blog opens the discussion path from the employee level all the way to the top management, which in the old days was impossible due to the hierarchical management structure and lack of tools. With these inside tools the case company's management is transparent, and employees and the middle management can feel that even their opinion is heard and valued in the company.

The case company has also some external communication tools. They are mainly for the purposes of marketing, PR and to find right people to join the company and drive it to success. The external tools of the case company are presented in Table 6.

Tool	*Description*
Facebook	Facebook is a popular free social net-working website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues.
LinkedIn	LinkedIn is a social networking website geared towards companies and industry professionals looking to make new business contacts or keep in touch with previous co-workers, affiliates, and clients.
Twitter	Twitter is a very popular instant messaging system that lets a person send brief text messages to a list of followers.

Table 6. The external communication tools in the case company.

The case company's strategy is to be present in different public social media websites, and by doing so lead the conversation of the industry with customers and individuals, and to be seen as a key player in the eyes of the customers.

3.2 Organizational Communication

At the moment communication in the case company service units is according to the current state analysis results actualized by e-mails, through databases, face-to-face conversation, and through an intranet site (CE1, CE2, CM2).

In customer service units the managers who are two steps above the employee level are providing information by e-mail to employees about business related news and future prospects (CM1).

Some parts of the case company have already taken the collaborative tools described earlier in this chapter in use, provided by the case company's IT-department (CM2).
The situation is described from two perspectives, from employee perspective and from managerial perspective, to get an objective view of the situation, and by doing so to increase the validity of this thesis.

3.3 Employee Perspective

The results from the employee survey show that the case company is having difficulties in its communication practices in the service units in Finland. Additionally the results of the learning organization questionnaire consolidate some of the findings of the other sources, as will be seen in the following report of results. Discovering actual problem points will be achieved by interviewing randomly selected people in the case company's customer service units in Finland.

3.3.1 Employee Satisfaction Survey Results

Although the employee satisfaction survey was not made for communication purposes alone, the results reveal facts about communications. Only communication related points are taken into account in this study.

The employee survey revealed that employees on the corporate level of the case company are satisfied with the communication in the case company. 60% of employees are satisfied with the information they are given by the management about upcoming events. 69% of the employees at the corporate level were satisfied with the feedback they are given by their managers. The supervisors' feedback about employee performance and the sharing of information about future changes in the case company is seen as communication. Due to the scale of the thesis only related questions are analyzed in this section. The employee survey results are presented in Table 7.

Question	*The corporate level*	*Business line 3*	*Service Finland*
My supervisor gives me useful and up-to-date feedback about my performance	69% Positive	68% Positive	29% Positive
In my workplace we are informed in time about future changes so that we have time to prepare for the change	60% Positive	59% Positive	24% Positive

Table 7. The findings of the employee survey.

As seen in Table 7, there are three levels of results: the corporate level, the business level, and the unit level. The Service Finland unit results differ from the corporate level and from the business line level. According to the employee survey, only 24% of the employees in Service Finland unit feel that they are given an adequate amount of information about their job performance. Moreover, in the Service Finland unit only 29% feel that the case company informs about future changes in time. Thus, it can be said that Service Finland's employees are dissatisfied with the communication between them and the management.

The new service region manager feels that these difficulties can cause serious problems and can affect employees' work motivation. For an organization where employees are mainly working with their customers at their premises the employees' motivation must be high. The service region manager is therefore keen to know what the problem really is and that is what this study intends to find out.

3.3.2 Learning Organization Test Results

Although the learning organization test is not only for communication purposes there are points that relate to communications.

In the learning organization test the respondents set a target level for different questions and after that estimate the current level of their units. Based on the answers the average values are calculated.

The present averages are calculated with the following formula:

$$p / n = ap$$

where p represents the sum of present values and n represents the number of respondents. The *ap* represents the average result of present values. The target averages are calculated with the following formula:

$$t / n = at$$

where t represents the sum of target values and n represents the number of respondents. The *at* represents the average result of target values.

The gap between the target level and the current level values that equals or is over 1.5 is considered significant. The questions that have a gap of ≥1.5 in the case company's learning test are presented in Table 8.

Question	*Present avg*	*Target avg*	*Gap*
My manager follows up my personal development plan.	2.63	4.13	1.50
Employees are encouraged to lifelong learning. The employer supports continuous learning.	2.75	4.25	1.50
We recognize best practices and distribute them in our department/unit.	2.88	4.38	1.50
I regularly get clear feedback about my performance at work.	2.25	4.13	1.88
I get feedback about sharing my competence and knowledge.	2.63	4.25	1.62
My manager discusses my wellbeing and performance with me.	2.38	4.00	1.62

Table 8. The learning organization test results of the case company.

As seen in Table 8 the biggest gaps concern the same things that were found in the employee survey in 2012. The biggest concerns related to communication in the case company are "*We recognize best practices and distribute them in our department/unit*", "*I regularly get clear feedback about my performance at work*", "*I get feedback about sharing my competence and knowledge*" and "*My manager discusses my wellbeing and performance with me*". As seen in Appendix 5 the case company has regular development discussions. This shows that the case company is going to the right direction, and it is interested in the development of its employees.

3.3.3 Interviews and Discussions

The questions asked in the theme interviews are related to communications. The interviewees were asked to answer questions about the current situation concerning communication in the case company including questions such as; what is the case company doing successfully, and what not in terms of communication. It was also asked if the interviewees' knew about the collaborative tools that the case company is providing. The questions asked in the theme interview are presented in Appendix 6.

The theme interviews revealed that the employees in the case company have a lot of information sharing channels. The employees see that these channels are not so efficient, and it is hard to find the needed information quickly. There is a lot of outdated information found in databases and on the intranet sites. The employees also feel that their communication devices (ICT-devices) are outdated and cannot be used for gathering the needed information from the different information channels. According to the employees the remote connections used are slow, and mobile phones cannot show the desired information because of the limits in the screen size. Younger employees see that the case company's intranet sites are pretty good for all information sharing and they feel that they get the needed information from there (CE2, CE3, CE4 and CE6).

The employees also feel that specialist meetings that take place a couple of times a year are good forums to share information. In these meetings a certain group of specialists gets together and speaks about relevant issues at hand. Some see that too tight schedules do not give them the opportunity to participate in these events (CE1-CE5).

The case company is using e-mail groups for information sharing in technical matters. An employee sees that these groups are useful but there are too many different groups and the emails are filling the e-mail boxes (CE1).

Some employees see that there is no proper information sharing activity in the case company. The company lacks best practices for information sharing in projects, an arena, where they could share and collect information and experiences about problems that other specialists have confronted in different projects, and how they handled these situations (CE4).

Although the case company has several social media tools, almost no one of the employees knows about their existence in the service units in Finland (CE1 - CE6).

Problems that occur based on the employee interviews are presented in Table 9.

Problem	*Respondent*
Too much information scattered in different sources	CE3, CE4, CE6
Information not allocated rightly	CE2, CE4, CE6
The case company expects that everyone reads intranet	CE1
Best practices are not shared	CE4
Communication devices do not meet the 21st century standards	CE4
Information sharing between service offices in Finland	CE4, CE5

Table 9. The problem points in communication according to the employees.

Table 10 on the next page shows some of the solutions the employees proposed for the problems at hand. The rest of the solutions can be found in Appendix 3. The problems shown in Table 10 are from the second phase theme interviews. There were not many propositions for the problems. Some of the interviewees have clearly found the new social intranet site that was launched in 2012, but they are not yet familiar with it.

Problem	*Solution*	*Respondent*
Information not allocated rightly	People could themselves decide what information is vital for them	PE2
Best practices are not shared	Operations and Services units should make some kind of a Forum where they could exchange best practices	PE2
Too much information scattered in different sources	In the current social intranet more precise search function and filtering would be needed so people could filter unnecessary information	PE1

Table 10. Some of the proposed solutions by the employees.

3.4 Managerial Perspective

The theme interviews revealed that meeting practices are mostly the same in different service offices in Finland. The meetings tend to take place once or twice a month. In these meetings people are speaking about current topics taken from the upper managements meetings, billing, and work load matters. Some managers see that these are not enough and because of high workloads people cannot always attend these meetings (CM1 - CM4).

Most of the managers use mobile phones and e-mail to keep in touch with their subordinates in the field. Some have already taken the next step and started using the collaborative tools that the case company provides nowadays (CM1 - CM4).

In some offices the employees are given a task to have information sharing activities in monthly meetings, where they can share their information with others. Managers consider it also very important that they have a bigger meeting three times a year, and after that they have some activities outside the company. This is a less formal way to share information, and it is seen very effective (CM1 - CM4).

Managers also feel that the case company's employees should meet in a bigger get-together meeting once a year. There people from different offices could meet and share their thoughts and other information (CM6).

Although the case company has several social media tools, almost no one of the managers knew about their existence (C1, C3-C6).

Problems that occur based on the managerial interviews are presented in Table 11.

Problem	*Respondent*
Too much information scattered in different sources	CM1, CM2, CM3
Information about trainings for employees etc. are published too late	CM3
Information not allocated rightly	CM4

Table 11. The problem points in communication according to the managers.

Table 12 shows one solution the customer service manager proposed for one of the problems. The rest of the solutions can be found in Appendix 2.

Problem	*Solution*	*Respondent*
Too much information scattered in different sources	Intranet search functions are returning a lot of useless data so a more accurate search function is needed	PM3

Table 12. Some of the proposed solutions by the managers.

3.5 Conclusion from the Current State Analysis

The case company staff interviewed has difficulties to find the information they need from all of the different sources. The variety of sources is so full of information and the search functions are not working properly according to the interviewees, and this combination makes information sharing and finding quite challenging. The case company has introduced a set of collaborative tools, but some of the employees and managers do not know how to use them or where to find them. People see that the case company's new intranet site has a lot of potential, but training would be needed to learn to use it efficiently.

Employee work schedules are so tight that they do not have the time to participate in meetings regularly. Instead, people working in the main office feel that they can build networks and harvest useful information in coffee table conversations. Some managers have been using remote meeting practices, which are cost efficient. These practices need good remote connections, which can be seen as a problem in some locations, where mobile network coverage is not so good.

The case company's strengths and weaknesses as revealed by the theme interviews are summarized in Table 13.

Strengths	*Weaknesses*
Different information sharing channels	Too many information sharing channels
Remote meeting practices	Hard to find what you need
Coffee table conversations in main office	Information sharing in change-management
Networking in main office	Info about training courses communicated too late, people's calendars already full
	Managers' ability to use new tools
	Employees' ability to use new tools
	Devices out of date
	Lack of sharing best practices
	Information sharing about current business situation

Table 13. The strengths and weaknesses of communication in the case company.

As seen earlier in Tables 9 and 11, the case company is providing so much information in different data sources, the employees and even the managers feel that they cannot find the information they are looking for. According to the interviewees information allocation is not working, and interviewees complain that they are receiving information that does not concern them and consider it frustrating. The employee side also sees that there is not a proper channel for sharing best practices between service offices. The employees and managers do not see that face-to-face meetings would be problematic, and none of the interviewees complain about the meetings. The only concern about the meetings was that people did not always have the time to participate.

As a conclusion, the problems are mostly related to information sharing and allocating it to the right people, and these can be seen as communication related problems.

4 Best Practices for Organizational Communication

This section discusses best practices and components of organizational communication that may contribute to finding the solutions the case company the case company is intent to find.

4.1 Organizational Communication

Communication in an organization has various forms and occurs on different levels. Huhta (2000) divides communication into internal and external communication, and sees internal communication as a matter of information exchange between managers and subordinates (downward communication), as well as information exchange from positions lower down in the organization to those above (upward communication). She sees that communication can also flow laterally, between departments on the same organizational level (lateral communication). This information can be seen as formal, as messages are sent intentionally along the official lines of authority and responsibility. It is common, however, that information flows often follow more informal paths (Huhta 2000: 62). The Internal communication chart is presented in Figure 5.

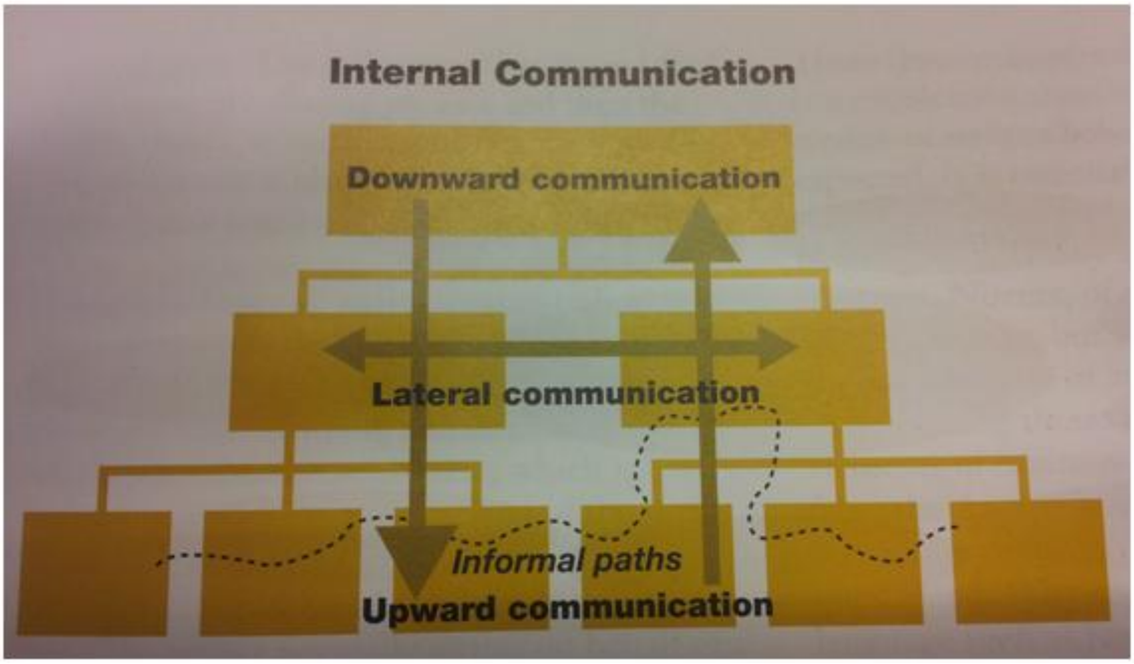

Figure 5. Internal Communication (Huhta 2000: 63).

Huhta defines external communication as communication that happens from the outside world into the company. It can be a supplier's communication or a shareholders' communication about the prospects of the company (Huhta 2000: 63).

Because of globalization, and also because information and communication technologies are developing fast, the content of work has changed. This has changed the working places; the employees have now more than just one location where to do their job (Lönnblad and Vartiainen 2012: 6).

Companies that provide services to customers can have employees around the world, which makes communication even more challenging. When different parts of a company are scattered around the country the employees are naturally not all located in one office, and they tend to spend most of their work time at the customers' premises. Employees working in such circumstances can feel that they are isolated from the company if the communication is suboptimal. This in turn puts even more challenges on organizational communication. The companies have to build an infrastructure where employees can be connected anytime so isolation will not take place.

An example of a scattered organization is presented in Figure 6: the company has multiple service offices around Finland and the main office is located in Tampere.

Figure 6. An example of a scattered organization.

4.2 Communication Practices in Organizations

There are a lot of different communication channels used in corporations nowadays. These communication channels can be divided to face-to-face channels and virtual channels. Meetings and coffee table conversations can be seen as the more traditional face-to-face channels. To work efficiently these communication practices require people to see each other often.

As mentioned earlier in Chapter 4, employees are working more and more in different locations, and do not see each other every day. This sets more requirements for communication and face-to-face channels cannot be used as before. Virtual channels can be used to tackle these problems.

Lönnblad and Vartiainen (2012) define different group and team types by increasing contextual complexity. *Conventional* teams are Face-to-Face, seeing each other every day. *Distributed* teams are physically in different locations. *Virtual teams* are physically in different locations and use electronic communication and collaboration. *Mobile virtual* have characteristics of all other teams plus they are physically mobile, meaning they are working over time zones (Lönnblad and Vartiainen 2012: 12). Lönnblad and Vartiainen (2012) conclude that employees and supervisors need the same kind of general competencies to be able to work in global virtual teams (Lönnblad and Vartiainen 2012: 31).

4.3 Face-to-Face Channels

According to Huhta (2000) meetings are organized for various purposes. Informal gatherings happen when you meet people over lunch. Informal meetings of new people may bring useful ideas, insight, and new networks of people. Informal meeting should not be underestimated. Formal meetings at work are used for pooling ideas together, planning work, reporting the work of some members, or sharing information about the projects with others. Meetings can be also used for evaluating projects, and for monitoring the progress of work or projects. Good meetings end with a clear view of decisions that have been taken (Huhta 2000: 287).

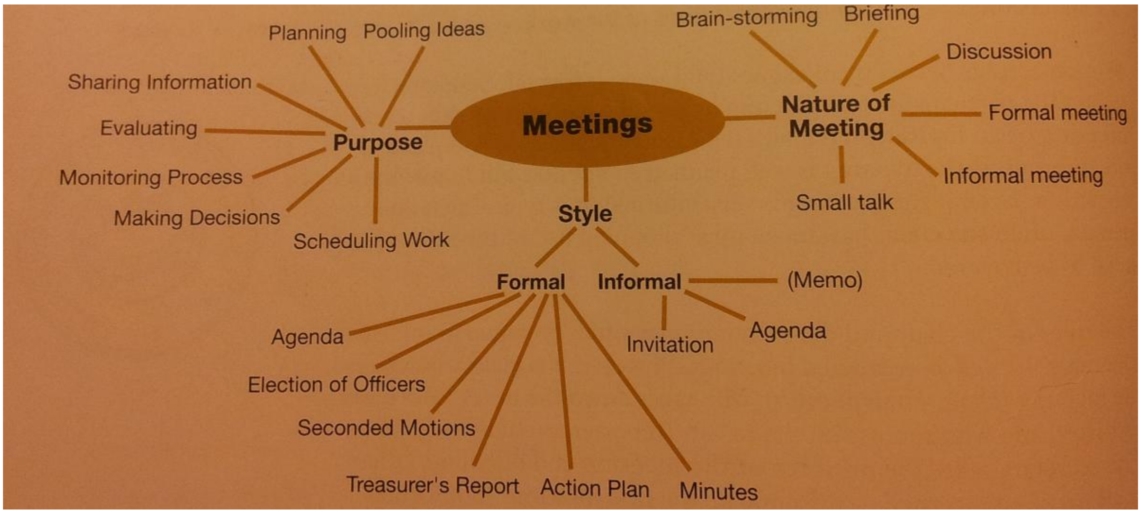

Figure 7. Characteristics of meetings (Huhta 2000: 288).

Meetings have lots of different characteristics depending on style, purpose, and nature of the meeting. These characteristics are shown in Figure 7.

4.4 Virtual Channels

Nowadays there are a lot of different virtual channels for corporations to communicate, share information, and do marketing. Some of the virtual channels available nowadays are presented in Figure 8.

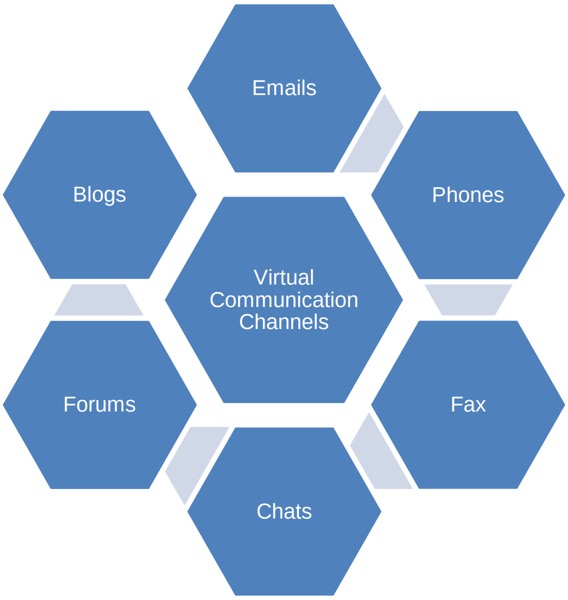

Figure 8. Virtual communication channels.

Phones, e-mails and faxes are more private, whereas blogs, forums, and chats are more open. In the latter, others can see what people are talking about, and join the conversation. This can be seen as a strength of open virtual channels compared to private virtual channels.

4.4.1 Blogs and Discussion Groups

According to Otala and Pöysti (2012) blogs and discussion groups are used for transferring information inside and outside of a company. Inside the company, blogs can be used for example in projects to share their information about the progress of the project. Through discussion groups and blogs, specialists can share information with other specialists. Otala and Pöysti argue that blogs could be useful communication channels to save time, multiple unnecessary e-mails and phone calls. By using external blogs companies can inform their customers about new products and services (Otala and Pöysti 2012: 53).

4.4.2 Wikis

Otala and Pöysti (2012) define Wikis as a web page that several people can modify freely. According to them, wikis could also be described as shared files, but much easier to use and modify. Wikis are powerful tools of producing information together, and that information is easy to find. For example, corporations could upload product manuals and work instructions into wikis. Also best practices, information from retired employees, or orientation guides for new employees could be uploaded to wikis. When someone modifies some information in the wiki, the older versions will be stored and restoring is possible if needed. In the wikis there can be definitions of change management, and changes will be published only after the approval of the management, and not all of the employees have the possibility to change them. This is a vital feature in big corporations with lots of employees. It is also possible to add discussions to wikis. According to Otala and Pöysti this is very useful in best practices as employees can share their point before an upgrade is made in wiki about best practices (Otala and Pöysti 2012: 48-49).

4.4.3 Forums

According to Wagner and Bolloju (2005) forums have been one of the earliest technologies for collaborative knowledge creation and sharing. Forums are web-based applications that allow people to post messages, and share information. In forums, messages are broadcasted to all of the registered users in the forum (Wagner and Bolloju 2005, 3-4). Compared to e-mail and phone calls forums are open for everyone, so everyone can join the conversation, and add value to it.

4.4.4 Social Intranet

Intranet is corporations' internal web page. Intranet contains necessary information for employees' daily work, e.g. a phone book, an address book. In the first versions of intranets, specific people produced information for the corporations' intranet sites. In those days employees could send requirements for change by e-mail. These upgrade processes were slow, and information on the intranet was quite often outdated. While work is changing towards being more interactive between people located around the globe, changes on the intranet are also needed. According to Otala and Pöysti (2012) a social intranet includes all the features of a traditional intranet plus interactive parts, in which different people produce information, or in which information is updated automatically. For example, the intranet's main page could have an automatically updating list of internal blogs or wikis based on the interests of the employee. Social intranet is a virtual place where collaborative tools can be used (Otala and Pöysti 2012: 60-61).

4.5 Social Media

Social media is shedding light on a new way of leading and managing, one that is more humane and more powerful. It is more open, and embraces the decentralization of power away from the centre towards the periphery. According to Gibbons (2009) we are moving from a simple world to a rich, complex, and diverse one, where power is less centralized and more distributed; we are moving from a command and control world to a world where people can do as they please within the boundaries of responsibility.

In his blog Copeland (2008) views that in social media the “media” represents digital places for publications and the “social” represents sharing (files, opinions, etc) and social interactions. Social media is places, tools, and services allowing individuals to express themselves in order to meet and share. The main characteristic of social media is audience fragmentation as well as tools. The different tools and services can be grouped into categories. Blogs and wikis represent publication tools, while videos, pictures, web links, and slideshows are examples of sharing tools. For discussions video forums, instant messaging, and VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) are the right choices. There are tools for social networks/social aggregation, and micro publication. There are also platforms for live cast hosting and social gaming, not forgetting virtual worlds, 3D chats, and virtual universes.

4.6 Employee Perspective

As communication is not a one-way process, there are some requirements from employee side defined by Boswood (1999). Boswood sees that it involves two things: communicating as a professional standard, and communicating to a professional standard. “The professional expertise involves mastery of body knowledge, mastery skills, and the responsible use of this knowledge and these skills - i.e. understanding of, and commitment to, professional ethics” (Boswood 1999: 4-6).

Boswood (1999) has introduced a nine-point proposition of describing professional discourse. According to him a professional applies the body of knowledge (1) by exercising a range of skills in an ethical manner. A professional is able to communicate within and across discourse boundaries (2), and to reflect critically on the working of power through discourse (3). A professional has access to the technical, contextual, and world knowledge (4) necessary for communication within the communities concerned. A professional creatively uses the communicative resources of discourse communities to a standard that is recognized as exemplary (5). A professional applies knowledge and skills in accordance with codes of conduct, which are recognized as ethical by communities (6), and is effective in reconciling and achieving multi-level purposes through communication (7). Additionally, a professional can manage internal and external organizational communication by defining and implementing communication policy (8), and seeks to develop himself/herself through active reflection on performance (9) (Boswood 1999: 8-23).

On the other hand, Hirokawa and Poole (2004) identified six points that communication serves in professional context. (1) *Social information processing;* Combining existing information, generating new information, elaborating and combining information elements. (2) *Analytical functions*; Analysis of circumstances and contingencies surrounding choice making situations. (3) *Procedural functions*; Communications relate to maintaining systems, establishing rules for arriving at a decision. (4) *Goal-related functions*; Establishing group goals and values, or monitoring them. (5) *Synergistic functions*; Coordination and motivation in management situation. (6) *Rhetorical functions*; Persuasio,n, social influence and leadership (Hirokawa & Poole 2004: 12).

4.7 Managerial Perspective

Leadership is always needed in companies and organizations to avoid chaos. In clearly and efficiently lead organizations the targets can be achieved more efficiently and in less time.

We need leaders to steer the organization to work efficiently, but the traditional hierarchic leadership model will not necessarily work in the future. In the fast changing world the requirements for communication have changed, and this is a major factor that is reshaping today's leadership.

According to Mai and Akerson (2003) today's corporations are looking for ways to accomplish three related goals. First, corporations have to find a way to create such a workplace that attracts, engages and retains talented people. Secondly, "Corporations have to maintain an even keel and a steady course through times of transition and difficulties". And last "stay at the leading edge of change in their business through a process of continuous innovation and renewal". Each of these three steps needs well-planned and executed communication strategies. Mai and Akerson see this as a new context for leadership communication (Mai and Akersson 2003: 2-3).

Dutta and Fraser (2009) emphasize that traditionally management models were fitted to vertical, top down organizational structures as shown in Figure 9. Those traditional models focused largely on manufacturing products, marketing brands, and communicating to consumers in a one-way conversation manner inside organizations. In those models the CEOs were regarded as almost infallible leaders whose judgment and decisions were expected to be obeyed and executed. This old style leadership was static system where leaders resisted change, and were more focused on preserving the status quo.

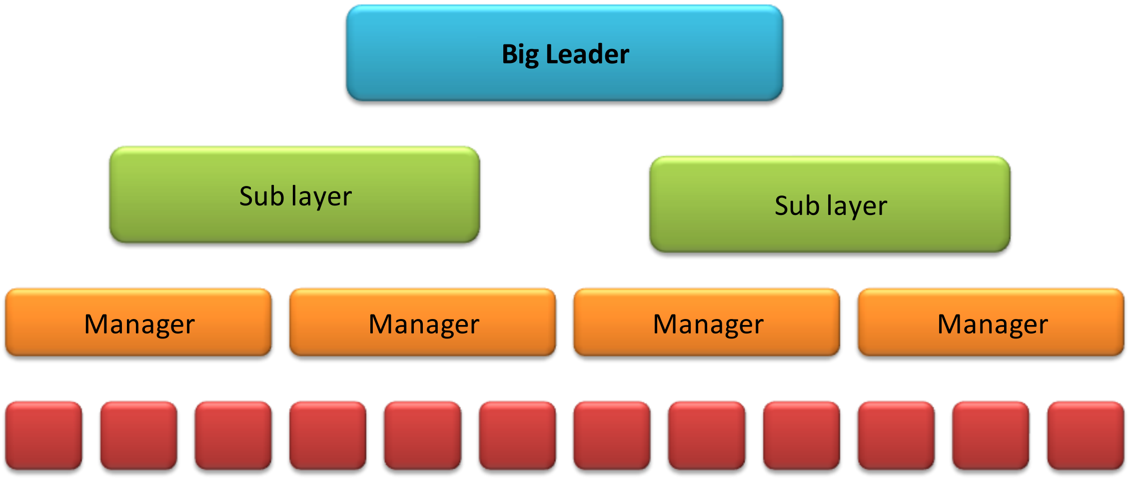

Figure 9. The traditional leadership model.

In the current world, as we are living in economic downturn in many parts of the world with consequences like bankruptcies of banks, insurance companies, car manufacturers, and other earlier everlasting and stabile institutions, it has never been more urgent to change the style of leadership. The old leadership model will not be sustainable anymore, and needs to be renewed.

Zuk (2009) has introduced six straits, which a good modern leader on the social media should have. First it is about knowledge; a leader develops expertise on a specific topic, and shares it freely. Secondly, the leader shall have awareness in order to be on track of the trends in their industry and across business at large so that he/she can insert himself/herself into conversation, or start new ones in a timely and relevant manner. Furthermore the new leadership leader shall be charismatic, and have memorable ways of delivering his/her messages. Not forgetting the innovativeness, he/she shall be able to create new ways of thinking and solving problems, and to highlight his/her ideas in his/her conversations, writings, media interviews, and speaking engagements. Similarly new leadership leader has to be able to start conversations and stick around to facilitate and encourage those conversations, often including a compelling call to action, or raise questions that help to spread the message. Last but not least, the leader shall be accessible. He/she openly makes himself/herself available to media, analysts, prospects, customers, fans and followers so that his/her ideas resonate and can be shared easily across the social media.

According to Otala and Pöysti (2012) companies should move towards Workplace 2.0. They define Workplace 2.0 as a place where people want to share information, answer people's questions freely in the organization, create new innovative solutions, and share their knowledge about mistakes they have made so other people could avoid them. In Workplace 2.0 the organization culture has a big role, which describes the organization's mental structure. It can enhance and support the move towards Workplace 2.0, or it can restrain it. Otala and Pöysti see that in Workplace 2.0 the organization culture is more important than leadership. When organizations are more and more virtual and networked, leaders do not see their subordinates anymore or supervise their work (Otala and Pöysti 2012: 195-198). Typical elements of Workplace 2.0 are introduced in Figure 10.

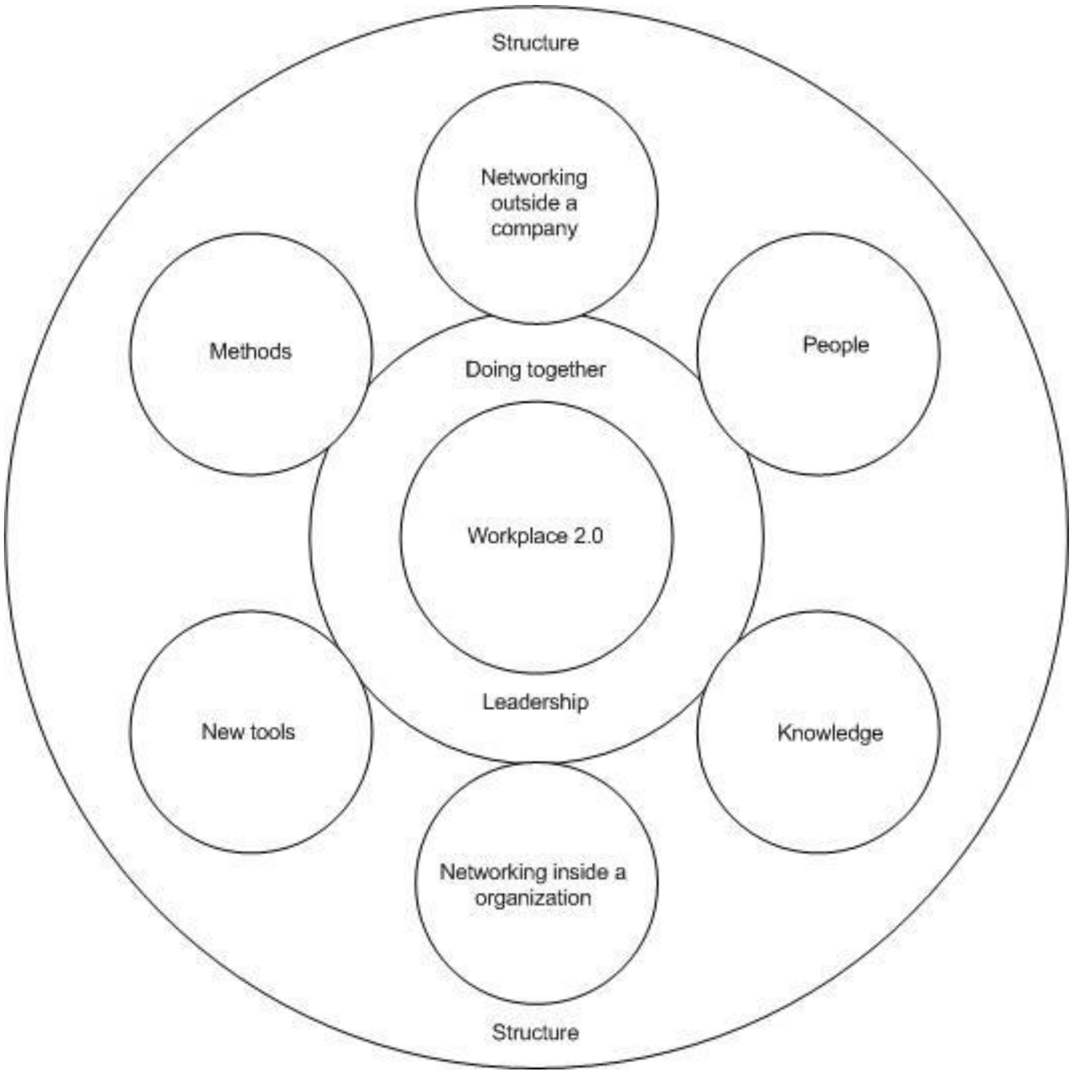

Figure 10. Elements in Workplace 2.0 (Otala and Pöysti 2012: 198).

Otala and Pöysti (2012) maintain that people are in a key position in creating Workplace 2.0. People execute new working methods and provide competitiveness. It is all about people's intelligence resources how efficient and productive they are. Brain and mind handle information, and transform it into knowledge and actions. Workplace 2.0 understands people and its brainpower, and knows how to utilize it. New tools are introduced based on the needs, and learning of new working methods is encouraged. Company strategy heavily emphasizes doing work together and networking, which is promoted by the use of new tools e.g. social media tools. New leadership style emphasizes showing the way, leading people's minds, remote leadership and leading growing networks and communities (Otala and Pöysti 2012: 197-198).

Otala and Pöysti (2012) also see that remote leadership is based on trust. Managers are not able to supervise people's work or time anymore. To be able to remote lead teams the leaders should have competencies to use new social media tools that are needed in remote leadership (Otala and Pöysti 2012: 234-235).

4.7.1 The Ways of Using Social Media by the Leaders

It is not an absolute value for leaders to utilize social media, meaning that social media is not just another platform they have to learn. It is about how to utilize social media's limitless possibilities in the most efficient way, like as a personal toolbox for improving personal practice of leadership. In her article (2012) Alexandra Samuel focuses on the ways and practices in the usage of social media to enhance leadership. She states that the tools are not just for monitoring the intelligence about the company's business and brand, as for example iGoogle, Google Reader, or an iPad aggregator can be utilized like a flip chart to subscribe a range of blogs, columnists, and news searches that offer insights into new leadership models, profiles of high-functioning executives, academic research on leadership, and summaries of the latest business books. The usage of planning and visualization tools, and mind mapping tools help one to stay focused and get organized, for example through a diagram of priorities. Such a diagram can be shared with direct reports or closest team mates/subordinates.

It is nowadays time consuming and frustrating to cope with and prioritize among accumulating urgent e-mails and reminders. A revolutionary solution is to switch communication to Twitter as a preferred channel for high-priority or time-sensitive communication, and simultaneously let the people know that the best way to reach the leaders is via Twitter Direct Message. Reading and replying will be a lot faster when the response is limited to 140 characters.

For a business leader it is required to be in connection with a very large - perhaps even too large - number of people on social networks. The solution for this challenge is to set up a CEO-led network; a set of 5 to 15 respected and trusted executives and leaders whose knowledge and insight have a meaningful impact in the leaders' own professional performance. This could be done by creating a separate private Twitter list, Google+, or/and Facebook friend list.

4.8 Employee Engagement and Motivation

As Argenti and Forman argue enlightened managers know that the more relevant and timely the information they provide is, the more likely the employees are to be highly motivated and do their job better, advance in their position, and even further to the goals of the organization itself. Such thinking leads to a certain atmosphere where employees are respected. This atmosphere can also be achieved in different ways, but according to Argenti and Forman the best way to achieve this is by communication that managers have with employees, most of which should come directly from a supervisor to an employee. In the 21st century companies will have to give the employees a reason to believe that their coming to work is associated with something far grander than just maximizing the shareholder value; it is associated with making an employee to participate in building business, doing things better, and taking on productive roles in the pursuit of a common goal. Managers who are aware of the need of employee care will realize that managing internal communications well requires the same dedication they have typically given to other aspects of running a business. (Argenti and Forman 2002: 139-156).

Fischer presented in 2012 a linkage model that shows that employee perception of their organization has an impact on customer perception of the quality of service. The model is presented in Figure 11.

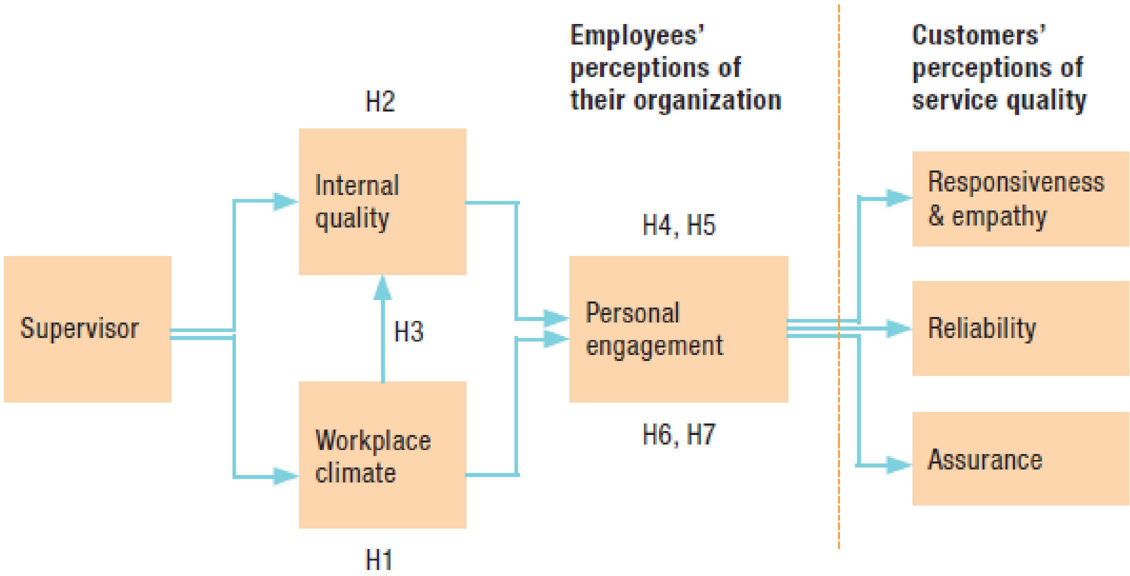

Figure 11. The linkage model, and hypotheses for theory testing in B-to-B context (Fischer 2012: 98).

Fischer defined *Supervisor* as how employees perceive their supervisors. She measured attributes like fair, objective, helpful and trustworthy. Also communication and participation in employees' daily work arrangements affect the supervisor factor (Fischer 2012: 85-97).

Internal Quality represents the service orientation, such as focus and commitment to creating high quality of service for customers. *Workplace Climate* relates to employee perceptions, and they consider it important in their workplace. Employee observations, such as participation in workplace development are encouraged, and those improvement ideas are implemented (Fischer 2012: 85-97).

Personal Engagement relates to employee feelings about their own work; is it meaningful, does one appreciate one's own work, is one satisfied with the present job and does one find pleasure in doing it. It also relates to the employee perception about how their competencies meet the requirements for their job (Fischer 2012: 85-97).

Responsiveness & Empathy presents how the customer feels about the contact person's attitudes and behaviors. *Reliability* presents the feelings of how the customer sees the competencies, performances and behaviors of the service engineer. *Assur-*

ance presents the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence within customers (Fischer 2012: 85-97).

Fischer (2012) discovered that in the service business, where interaction has physical and psychological closeness, the linkage model described above is valid. If there were a limited physical and psychological closeness, a modified linkage model would be more applicable. A modified linkage model is presented in Figure 12.

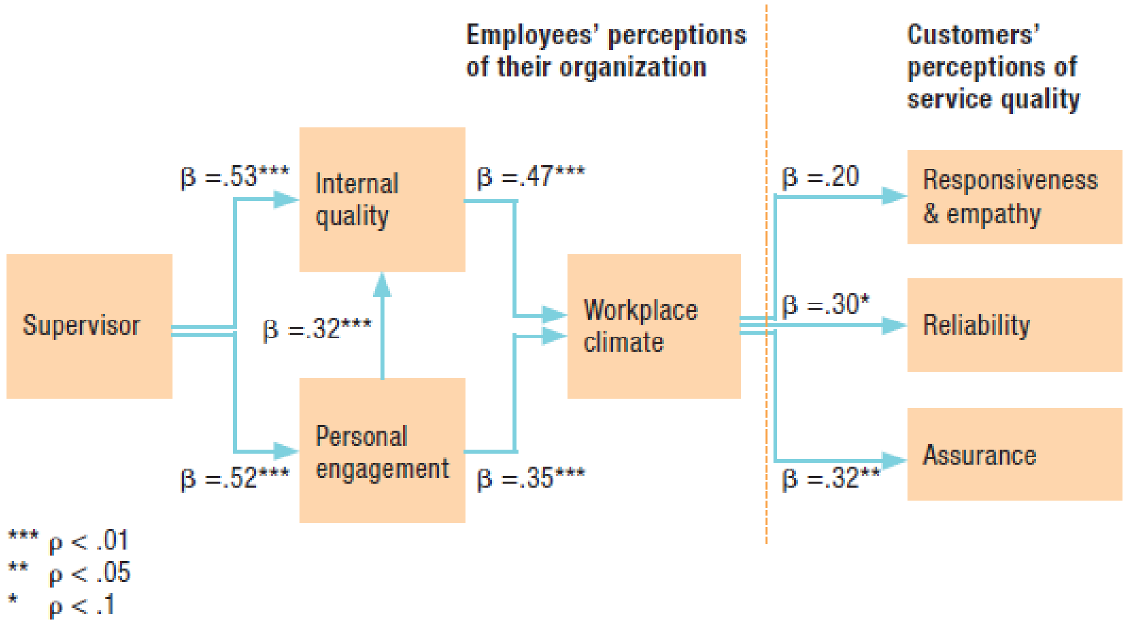

Figure 12. Modified linkage model (Fischer 2012: 116).

The modified model shows that employee perceptions of their *Internal Quality* and *Personal Engagement* impact their perception of the *Workplace Climate*, which predicts the customer perceptions of *Reliability* and *Assurance* provided by the service engineers (Fischer 2012: 85-97).

As seen in the Fischer models, personal engagement and workplace climate have an effect on customer perception of the quality of service.

4.9 Conceptual Framework for This Thesis

For the purposes of this thesis, only a limited number of practices of communication and their relationship to the quality of service were considered. The ones selected after the review of relevant literature and taking the case company's wishes of virtual channels in the communication into account are presented in Figure 13. The practices are described in detail in Chapter 4.

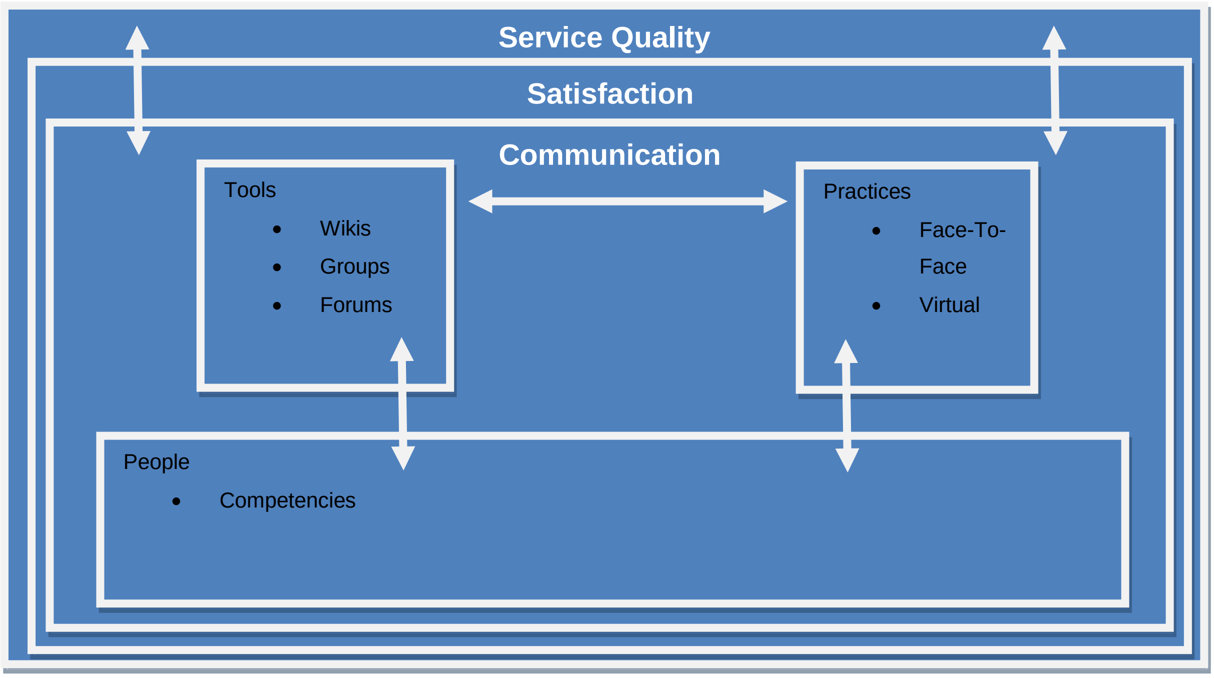

Figure 13. The organizational communication practices selected for this thesis, and their relationship to each other.

Not so often though is employee satisfaction about their own company seen to have an impact on the quality of service as stated in Chapter 4. Communication can be seen as part of this satisfaction, so it would be justified to include them into the same model and to use them in this thesis. People still need to gain some competencies and willingness to use new communication tools, as the tools alone cannot do much, but it's the people that need to utilize them.

5 Establishing an Action Plan Version 1

This section presents a proposal of concrete practices for the case company to consider in the near future to improve its communication. The proposal is divided according to the suggested practices.

5.1 Developing Action Plan Based on Conceptual Framework and Current State Analysis Findings

Problems found in the current state analysis concern mainly communication; how the case company is sharing its best practices, how information is shared, where it is shared, and how people can find it. As seen earlier in Chapter 4 dealing with best practices there are a great deal of different solutions to these problems, and it is seen that communications problems affect the quality of customer service as Fischer has stated. It can be concluded that the problems can be tackled with solutions from the literature review. As Ojala and Pöysti stated virtual channels like blogs, groups, forums, and social intranet sites are powerful communication methods. Although, virtual channels do not take away the need for face-to-face communication, we are still human beings, not robots.

To communicate properly there are competencies needed from both sides as Boswood, Hirokawa, Huhta, Poole, Lönnblad and Vartiainen state in Chapter 4. This study does not provide any suggestions for this area, it only shows that these exist, and that they need to be considered when it comes to communication.

By introducing improvements in the case company’s communications practices, employee satisfaction rates should increase, as should the level of customer satisfaction concerning quality of service. These, in turn, should raise the profitability of the case company and all its stakeholders.

5.2 Improved Organizational Communication

In 2012 the case company launched its new social intranet site. Although the social intranet site includes a lot of information about the case company’s activities and

CEO's blog about the case company's near future, the employees of the service units have not noticed it. A general proposal for this section would be to establish training sessions for the employees with the case company's IT-department concerning the new social intranet site. An ideal situation would be to get the whole service personnel in Finland, both managers and employees, to the training, and by doing so get the whole potential from the new social intranet site in use. The problems, proposals, and the people who the proposals affect are presented in Table 14.

Problem	*Proposal*	*People involved*
Hard to find what you need	Briefing	Whole customer service personnel in Finland
Too many sharing channels	Visual aid	
Information sharing in change management	Written guidelines	
Information about training courses comes too late, people's calendars already full	Launch training program about the new social intranet site	
Personal ability to use new tools		

Table 14. The proposals for organizational communication problems.

By these steps the case company would get more from its new system it has invested in. The new social intranet site would be a good place for sharing information for people working mainly out of the office, the so-called virtual teams as Lönnblad and Vartiainen stated. The requirements for this kind of proposals to work are presented in Chapter 4. People need to have certain competencies to be able to find and utilize information they have found.

Because of the size of the case company, the amount of information is huge. As seen in Chapter 3, the interviewees see this as problematic. Vital information could perish in the mass of information that is generated by the case company. The case company should find a way to allocate right information to the right personnel group. In social intranet people should add themselves to the groups they are interested in, and by doing so get all the information targeted to that group shown on their social intranet front page. This way the people would get only the information they see vital for their daily work.

The organization responsible for the training and development of the personnel should make separate contact groups to the social intranet and through that get their information spread out about upcoming courses etc. in time. This would tackle the problem where course information is lost in customer service manager's e-mail boxes.

5.3 Improved Face-to-Face Channels

As stated in Chapter 3, the personnel are satisfied with the meeting practices in the case company, so there is no need for proposals in this context.

The personnel in the main office see that informal information sharing activities are vital for building networks, and to share knowledge and best practices. In reality, though, these practices are very hard to introduce into other offices that have only a few people working in them. As a proposal for this problem it would be recommendable to have more meetings and training sessions in the main office to provide the same possibilities to a larger group of employees. Organizing these events requires, however, financial sacrifices and in these times of economic hardship this could be hard to do. The problems, proposals and the people who the proposals affect are presented in Table 15.

Problem	*Proposal*	*Involved people*
Best practices are not shared	Arrange a meeting once a year where employees could exchange information about best practices and other issues	Whole customer service personnel in Finland
Information sharing between service offices in Finland		

Table 15. The proposals for Face-to-Face communication.

By following this proposal, the case company could assure that people are sharing vital information that could be easily lost in time, and its value would be lost. Also people's social needs could be fulfilled.

5.4 Improved Virtual Channels

As introduced in Chapter 3 the case company has many collaborative tools. As a proposal for sharing best practices, Wikis are the answer as proposed by Otala and Pöysti. In Wiki the employees could easily share and comment on best practices. Currently best practices are shared in closed databases where they are hard to find and impossible to comment on. Some of the company's personnel have already taken Wikis in use. For a new employee these databases are a nightmare; first they have to find the right database, then ask for a permission to use it, and after that figure out how to use the database. In a web-based Wiki this problem could be tackled very easily because everybody already has the permission to use the intranet. Wikis provide user-friendly interfaces, and everyone in the case company has access to them.

Some units of the case company are already actively using the collaborative tools the case company is providing. The CEO's blog is one of the information sharing channels that the employees could use to obtain information about the business in general. Also there is a great amount of conversation going on every day on the forums. A proposal for these would relate to the proposal for organizational communication earlier; people should be brief, and get trained in using the new information sharing channels if they are lacking these skills. Adding new information channels would not be a good idea as the interviews revealed that people already feel that there are too many channels. The problems, proposals and the people who the proposals affect are presented in Table 16.

Problem	*Proposal*	*Involved people*
Best practices are not shared	Briefing Visual aid Written guidelines Launch training program about the wiki	Employees
Information sharing in change management	Briefing Visual aid Written guidelines Launch training program about the blogs	Employees, managers
Information sharing about the current business situation		

Table 16. The proposals for virtual channel communication.

By briefing and training about blogs the case company could tackle the problems of information sharing in change management situations. People could set their social intranet site to follow different blogs, and see the updates in their social intranet front page. An easy step such as opening the social intranet front page would give the employee the information about upcoming changes.

The current method used in the case company for sharing best practices is not providing the employee with the possibility to comment on best practices. Also, the use of the old system is slow, and the user interface is old fashioned and slow. The Wikis that some units of the case company are already using could help with this problem. In Wikis the employees and the management could share their often very complex best practices, and even comment on or modify them, and by doing so add more value to the knowledge transfer inside the company.

Adding any new tools to the current collaborative set of tools that the case company is providing would be unwise, and the new tools would just disappear among the wide variety of tools that already exists.

5.5 Conclusion

As a conclusion, it can be stated that the case company needs to get the full potential of the already built social intranet site with its collaborative tools. Concrete action plans are described in detail in Chapter 5. It can be said that the case company's IT-department has not succeeded in implementing the new system as seen in the interviews and from the current state analysis in Chapter 3. Many of the interviewees did not even know that the case company has these systems already up and running and were not aware of the capabilities of the system.

6 Establishing an Action Plan Version 2

This section presents a revised proposal of concrete practices for the case company to consider in the near future in order to improve its communication. The proposal describes each proposal separately. Field notes from the interviews in the development phase of the proposal can be found in Appendix 4.

6.1 Developing Action Plan Based on Theme Interviews with Stakeholders

The first version of the action plan presented in Chapter 5 was introduced to the selected team in the case company in the form of theme interviews for evaluation as reported in Chapter 2. The stakeholders shared their opinions freely about the proposal and commented on it. Based on those comments a final proposal was created for tackling communication problems in the case company. By conducting this iterative process this thesis gets more reliability in the eyes of the case company’s staff.

6.2 Revised Improved Organizational Communication

The interviewees feel that the presented proposals concerning organizational communications are realistic. They think that the new social intranet site would be effective if everyone knew about it and if they knew how to use it efficiently. System engineer 1 sees that the new site should have good localization opportunities so everyone could get it to show what is relevant for them (PDE1).

6.3 Revised Improved Face-to-Face Channels

The interviewees conclude that the once-a-year having meetings with the other offices is a good proposal, but the meetings should not be 100-percent management driven. They see that some of the topics handled in those meetings should come from the employee side. PDE2 sees that these meetings are very good places for new people to meet other people, and thus ideal for lower the threshold of contacting them later on. PDM1 sees that these events are expensive to conduct so a meeting every year would not be possible.

6.4 Revised Improved Virtual Channels

All interviewees agree that the proposal for moving towards wikis is vital for the case company. PDE2 also emphasizes that best practices from old information systems should be moved to the new system so no vital data is lost. The search functions in wikis should be based on key words, so searching would be easy.

6.5 Final Proposal for an Action Plan for the Case Company Communication Improvements

The case company already has superior tools for organizational communications, but with a little briefing and training they could be fully introduced. The new social intranet site is seen as a very powerful tool to share information across the company, and not only inside the customer service unit. Localization should be made easier so people would not feel they are drowning in the information flood.

The case company had a big service meeting in January 2013, and people saw this as a very powerful tool to share best practices and to network with new people. Although this year’s meeting was a success, people see that these kinds of meetings should be even longer than the 2 days it lasted now, and some of the topics discussed should come from the employees. Due to the high costs of big meetings it seems justified to organize the meeting every two years.

The case company has already a powerful system to share best practices, although no one is using it in the customer service unit. The case company should start moving best practices from the old system to the new one, and by doing so ensure that no vital information is lost. People see that the opportunity to comment on best practices would be fantastic, and would add value to them. The case company should brief everybody about wikis, blogs, and forums so that people could start using them. Almost none of the interviewees knew that the case company already had these tools.

The final proposal for the case company is presented in Table 17.

Type of communication	*Done before*	*Proposal*	*Person/Authority responsible*	*Action to be taken by the person/authority responsible*	*Problems to be tackled*	*When*
Organizational Communication about upcoming events and business situations	Through email, intranet, Lotus Notes databases and through face-to-face meetings	Through new social intranet site and trough CEO's blog	Customer Service Managers	Brief employees about the capabilities of the new social intranet site. But employees to training concerning new social intranet site	Too many sharing channels, Hard to find what you need, Information sharing in change-management, Information sharing about the current business situation and Personnel ability to use new tools	Immediately
Information about upcoming training courses	Through email, intranet, Lotus Notes databases and through face-to-face meetings	Through new social intranet site	Training unit	Inform employees and customer service managers where to find information about upcoming training	Training courses are informed too late, people's calendars already full	Immediately
Searching necessary information	Through email, intranet, Lotus Notes databases	Through new social intranet site	ICT Unit	Build up working search functions and migrate necessary information from old data sources	Too many sharing channels, Hard to find what you need	Immediately
Large scale	Every 5-10	Arrange a	Middle	Active planning	Information	2015

meetings	years	meeting every second year	Management	and executing of these meetings	sharing between service offices in Finland, Best practices are not shared, Networking of the new employees	
Sharing best practices	Through email, intranet, Lotus Notes databases and through face-to-face meetings	Through new Wiki system	Customer Service Managers, ICT Unit	Brief employees about the capabilities of the new wiki system. But employees to training concerning the new wiki system. Transfer information from old wiki system to the new	Best practices are not shared	Immediately

Table 17. The final proposal to improve communication within the customer service organization in Finland.

Table 17 presents managerial implications that can be used to improve communication in the case company, and addresses who should do what and when to improve communication. As seen from the final proposal, the number of communication channels is decreased as a solution to the problem of too many information sharing channels. The final proposal also allocates a responsible author/person to the different tasks, and a timeline when these steps should be taken.

By conducting these steps the case company should be able to improve its communications, and by doing so increase the level of satisfaction concerning communication in the next employee satisfaction survey in 2014. As mentioned in Chapter 4 by Fischer, increasing employee satisfaction in their organization also customer perceptions of service quality will increase.

7 Conclusions

This section summarizes this thesis, evaluates the results, and considers the reliability and validity of the research done.

7.1 Summary

This thesis concentrates on improving communication in a scattered service organization. The improvements are needed to improve employee satisfaction in the case company, and thus positively affect the quality of service the customer’s receive.

The case company in this thesis is a Finnish enterprise that operates in heavy industry around the world. The case company is one of the world's largest automation system providers. In 2012 the case company conducted an employee survey that revealed that the customer service department in Finland is facing significant communication difficulties. The management of the case company sees that these difficulties could affect the quality of service the customers are receiving.

The research approach applied in this thesis was action research. The proposal development was done in two cycles. The first revision of the proposal was made based on relevant literature, and this proposal was discussed with a selected customer service team in Finland. The revised proposal was drafted based on these interviews. The data used for the development of the proposal was collected in theme interviews in the case company.

The thesis started with a current state analysis which includes the description of the organization model of the case company, and the description and analysis of the current state of communication practices in the case company. The current state analysis also overviews the communication capabilities the case company already has, and the problem areas in the current communication practices based on the interviews. The analysis ends with some discussion about proposals for improving the communication.

The results of the current state analysis are used for a focused search on best practices in literature and a best practices review. This review includes the investigation of communication practices used in the 21st century. Also the impact of communication on the quality of service was investigated.

The outcome of the thesis was a proposal of communication practices for the case company to enhance its inner communication. The first proposal is based on best practices from literature. A revised proposal is an iterated version of the original proposal, drafted with the help of the interviews among selected customer service team members in Finland.

7.2 Managerial Implications

The following managerial implications have been surfaced in the course of this thesis. In the following list, the proposals and implications are divided among the recipients in the organization.

Management:

1. Provide the resources needed for creating the culture of sharing information and best practice.
2. Reward active sharing of best practice.
3. Provoke information sharing in the virtual channels by your own example.
4. Meet your employees on regular basis and talk to them. Speaking to the bosses highlights their importance and your support to them. Virtual world is important but everything cannot be done there.
5. Start a project to move best practice from the old best practice system to the new wiki system.

As for the employees, IT-department and training department following practical implications have been surfaced in the course of this thesis.

Employees:

1. Show pride of your work, you are experts and share your expertise.
2. Share your best practice. Demonstrate expertise to colleagues and management. Knowledge keepers may lose their position.

3. Read current company news from the new intranet, show that you are up-to-date.
4. Participate in upcoming training courses published in the new social intranet site.
5. Customize your own social intranet site that keeps you updated.

IT-Department:

1. Create system for moving best practices from old system to the new wiki system.
2. Consider of creating working search functions to the new social intranet site.

Training Department:

1. Be active informer of upcoming training courses in the new social intranet site. And make it well before the course if possible, so people can make time for the training course.

To summarize, these practical implications would ease the implementation of the proposals of this study. In addition, these proposals provide opportunities for further improvements and serve as a basis for continuous improving what comes to organizational communication practices.

7.3 Evaluation

This thesis proposes new communication practices to the case company. During the writing of this thesis, a lot was learned about the communication and its relationship to the quality of service as a relevant factor. One of the successes of the thesis is that some of the people have already found the new tools and see their potential.

An interesting result of the literature review was that the communication difficulties can have a negative impact on the quality of customer service. If employee perception of their own organization is poor, it can affect customer perception of the quality of service equally.

The thesis was evaluated by two dimensions, reliability and validity, to measure the results of the thesis.

7.3.1 Outcome vs. Objective

As stated in Chapter 1 of this thesis, the objective of this study was to improve communication in the case company, and to find out if the 21st century collaborative tools could be used to this end. The research itself and the results obtained provide practices to reach this objective. Adding any more new channels of communications would be philosophically and economically unwise as communication is based on trust from both sides. If trust if achieved, the need to communicate in too detailed manner is unnecessary.

The research question set for this thesis in Chapter 1 was: *How can organizational communication practices be improved to increase employee satisfaction with communication at work?*

The results of the research provide answer to this question in the form of recommendations and practices to introduce to the case company. The proposed practices in this thesis can be considered directly applicable to the case company, and developed into an action plan level in chapters 6.

7.3.2 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity described in Chapter 2.4 were considered during the writing of this thesis. Section 2.4 presented Yin’s (2009) four points of reliability and validity. Here they are considered in the context of this thesis.

Construct validity was covered by using multiple sources of data; theme interviews, questionnaires, and employee satisfaction survey results. *Internal validity* was assured by answering the research questions. Looking at the current state analysis, proposal, revised proposal, and the summary of the thesis, we can conclude that the research question was answered. The proposals for communication can be easily taken in action in the case company. *External validity* is measured by addressing the question "How transferrable the proposals are for the other parts of the case company?" Since this study was not taking all parts of the company into account, it can be concluded that external validity was not fully achieved. Still, the proposals are in some level transferable throughout the whole company. *Reliability* concerns were managed by using leading academic articles and books for best practices.

Additionally, extra internal validity was achieved by including interviewees' opinions to the proposal development phase, and by revising the first proposal with the selected customer service team. Selecting interviewees randomly also increased validity. As the researcher has been working in the case company organization for five years it can be seen as a positive driver concerning validity and reliability of this thesis.

According to the case company's requests and due to the fact that the researcher is an ICT engineer, the focus was mainly on tools that can be used in modern communication. The approach could have been different with a different researcher background, and the focus could have been perhaps included communication promotion culture. For the case company, one interesting topic for further development would be a research on knowledge-sharing, because it is a powerful way to transfer information between people and thus people leaving the company for various reasons would not leave without passing on valuable information before they leave.

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Results of The Employee Survey

Interviews ;Current State Analysis Phase

Research Interviews

vs Sept 2013

Theme Interview Current State Analysis Phase

TOPIC: Improving Communication In A Scattered Service Organization

Information about the informant (Interview 1)

Table 1

Details	
Name (code) of the informant	CE1
Position in the case company	System Specialist
Date of the interview	18.2.2013
Duration of the interview	
Document	Field notes

Field notes (Interview 1)

Table 2

*** Think of formulating your own questions; these are suggestions for you to start**

	Topic(s) of the interview	Kerro aiheista	FIELD NOTES *<Your brief accounts of their answers>*
1		Mitä xx tehdään hyvin kommunikaatioon liitty-en?	Intra on ihan hyvä... Teknisiin tiedotteisiin xxx postiryhmä on hyvä ja muutenkin on paljon postiryhmiä... ehkä liikaakin?!?

2		Mitä xx olisi vielä parannettavaa kommunikaatioon liittyen?	Infojen kohdistus ehkä.... ei tänne ns. haalarimiehille tarvitse valua kaikki info, joka ei todellisuudessa kosketa lähellekään...
3		Minkälaisia kommunikaatio käytäntöjä teillä on käytössä? Viikko-, kuukausi- tai vuosi-palavereja? Mitä niissä pääsääntöisesti käydään läpi? Mitä pitäisi käydä läpi?	Ennen oli osavuosipalavereita jokunen vuodessa... sitten enää yksi vuoden alussa, nyt ei ole mitään... säästetään... Viikkopalavereita pidetään xx ja xx, mutta me ei siitä kostuta xx... Notesissa on otsikkotasolla käydyt asiat, mutta se ei kerro monesti yhtään mitään käydyistä keskusteluista.
3			
4		Tunnetko xx online- pohjaisia niin kutsuttuja sosiaalisen median työkaluja?	Jotain olen katsonut, mutta en perehtynyt... taitaa olla lasten kengissä vielä...
5			

Interviews; Proposal Development Phase 1

Research Interviews

vs Sept 2013

Theme Interview Proposal Development phase

TOPIC: Improving Communication In A Scattered Service Organization

Information about the informant (Interview 1)

Table 1

Details	
Name (code) of the informant	CE6
Position in the case company	Project Manager
Date of the interview	
Duration of the interview	
Document	Field notes

Field notes (Interview 1)

Table 2

*** Think of formulating your own questions; these are suggestions for you to start**

	Topic(s) of the interview	Kuinka ratkaisisit seuraavat ongelmat	FIELD NOTES
1		Informaatiota on liikaa ja se on liian hajautettua eri lähteisiin. (Notes kannat, xx, sähköpostit)	-> informaatio on hajallaan, en tiedä onko sitä liikaa, mutta tarvit-taessa sitä on vaikea löytää

2		Ilmoitukset esim. koulutuksiin tulevat aivan liian myöhään tai niitä ei löydetä ennen kuin on liian myöhäistä.	- > pitää paikkansa, lisäksi koulutusta " pantataan " kustannusmielessä, eikä niistä aina tiedoteta avoimesti.
3		Tiedotukset ovat huonosti kohdennettuja	-> jakelut ovat laajoja, pitäisi olla mahdollisuus konfata lähetyslistaa omalta osaltaan (haluan tätä postia jatkossa / en halua)
4		Yhtiö olettaa että kaikki lukevat xx kokoajan	-> tämä on totta, mutta koska sieltä ei löydy olennaista työtehtäväkohtaista tai työyksikkökohtaista tietoa sen lukeminen "rämettyy"
5		Kokemuksia projekteista ja toteutuksista ei jaeta tarpeeksi 7.3.2.1.1	- > Ehkä xx ja xx voisivat luoda foorumin missä toteutusprojektit voivat vaihtaa/saada tietoa totetutetuista projekteista ja hyödynnettävästä tiedosta. -> samoin voivat tehdä aluekonttorit, tosin PM-tasolla näin jo tehdään -> kysellään oletteko tehneet tällaisen / vastaavan.
6		Uudet ihmiset eivät tiedä keneltä kysyä ja mistä etsiä tietoa	-> tämä on totta,mutta henkilöriippuvainen asia, persoonallinen aktiivisuus vaikuttaa, -> aiheuttaa paljon "kyselykuormaa" kollegoille

7		Kommunikointi välineet eivät vastaa tämän päivän tarpeita	-> kyllä nää läppärit on kohdallaan, mutta älypuhelimet pitäisi olla kaikilla, tällaiset "pomo-puhelin" rajaukset pitää saada pois, siis, että hienoin malli vain pomoille.(vanhakantaista ajattelua) -> työkalut pitää olla viimeisintä ja parasta tekniikka -> ne eivät maksa mitään. -> hienoin malli suorittavalle portaalle.
8		Konttorien välisen kommunikaation vähyys ja puute	-> tämä on henkilöriippuvainen asia, kysyvä / soittava ei tieltä eksy -> aina voi soittaa. Tosin tällöin yhteystiedot ja henkilöstön osaamisalueet on oltava hakijalle näkyvillä.
9			(FYI ;-) suurin ongelma servicessä ei ole tiedonsiirto/vaihto tai kommunikaatio, vaan xx:n palkkapolitiikka, xx pääjohtaja xx lausui aikanaan "Voittajan käsikirjassa", että asiakaspalveluun on valikoitava parhaat henkilöt ja heille on maksettava organisaatiossa parasta palkkaa -> tätä ei ole ikinä toteutettu xx, eikä xx, tämä aiheuttaa "mitäs tässä vaivaa näkemään"-asenteen).

Interviews; Proposal Development Phase 2

Research Interviews

vs Sept 2013

Theme Interview PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT PHASE

TOPIC: Improving Communication In A Scattered Service Organization

Information about the informant (Interview 1)

Table 1

Details	
Name (code) of the informant	PDM1
Position in the case company	Customer Service Manager
Date of the interview	18.3.2013
Duration of the interview	30min
Document	Field notes

Field notes (Interview 1)

Table 2

*** Think of formulating your own questions; these are suggestions for you to start**

	Topic(s) of the interview	Kerro aiheista	FIELD NOTES *<Your brief accounts of their answers>*
1		Organisaatio kommuni-kaatio Kertoa tästä uudesta sosiaalisesta intranetistä ja tehdä käyttöohjeet	Hyvä ehdotus

		koko suomen service henkilöstölle	
2		Kasvotusten tapahtuva kommunikaatio Järjestää kerran vuodessa tapahtuma missä voidaan jakaa toimintatapoja	Liian kallis joka vuosi. 2 vuoden välein. Interwise pohjainen käyttöön.
3		Virtuaali kanavat Kertoa uudesta Wikistä, Blogeista ja Foorumeista	Hyvä ehdotus

Research Interviews

vs Sept 2012

Theme Interview PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT PHASE

TOPIC: Improving Communication In A Scattered Service Organization

Information about the informant (Interview 1)

Table 1

Details	
Name (code) of the informant	PE1 & PE3
Position in the case company	System Specialist
Date of the interview	18.3.2013
Duration of the interview	30min
Document	Field notes

Field notes (Interview 1)

Table 2

*** Think of formulating your own questions; these are suggestions for you to start**

	Topic(s) of the interview	Kerro aiheista	FIELD NOTES *<Your brief accounts of their answers>*
1		Organisaatio kommuni-kaatio Kertoa tästä uudesta sosiaalisesta intranetistä ja tehdä käyttöohjeet koko suomen service henkilöstölle	Sitä pitäis yksinkertaistaa Avenue. Hyvä ehdotus Lokaali näkymä paremmaksi - itse muokattavuus

2		Kasvotusten tapahtuva kommunikaatio Järjestää kerran vuodessa tapahtuma missä voidaan jakaa toimintatapoja	Hyvä väljemmällä aikataululla 2-3päivää Näkee naamoja uudet jätkät
3		Virtuaali kanavat Kertoa uudesta Wikistä, Blogeista ja Foorumeista	Wiki on jees, sitä pitää käyttää. Siirtää valmis tieto sinne. Sulkea toinen. nykyinen tech notes van r&D:lle Key word pohjainen haku Wikissä, kommentointi käyttöön.

Research Interviews

vs Sept 2012

Theme Interview PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT PHASE

TOPIC: Improving Communication In A Scattered Service Organization

Information about the informant (Interview 1)

Table 1

Details	
Name (code) of the informant	PE2
Position in the case company	System Specialist
Date of the interview	18.3.2013
Duration of the interview	30min
Document	Field notes

Field notes (Interview 1)

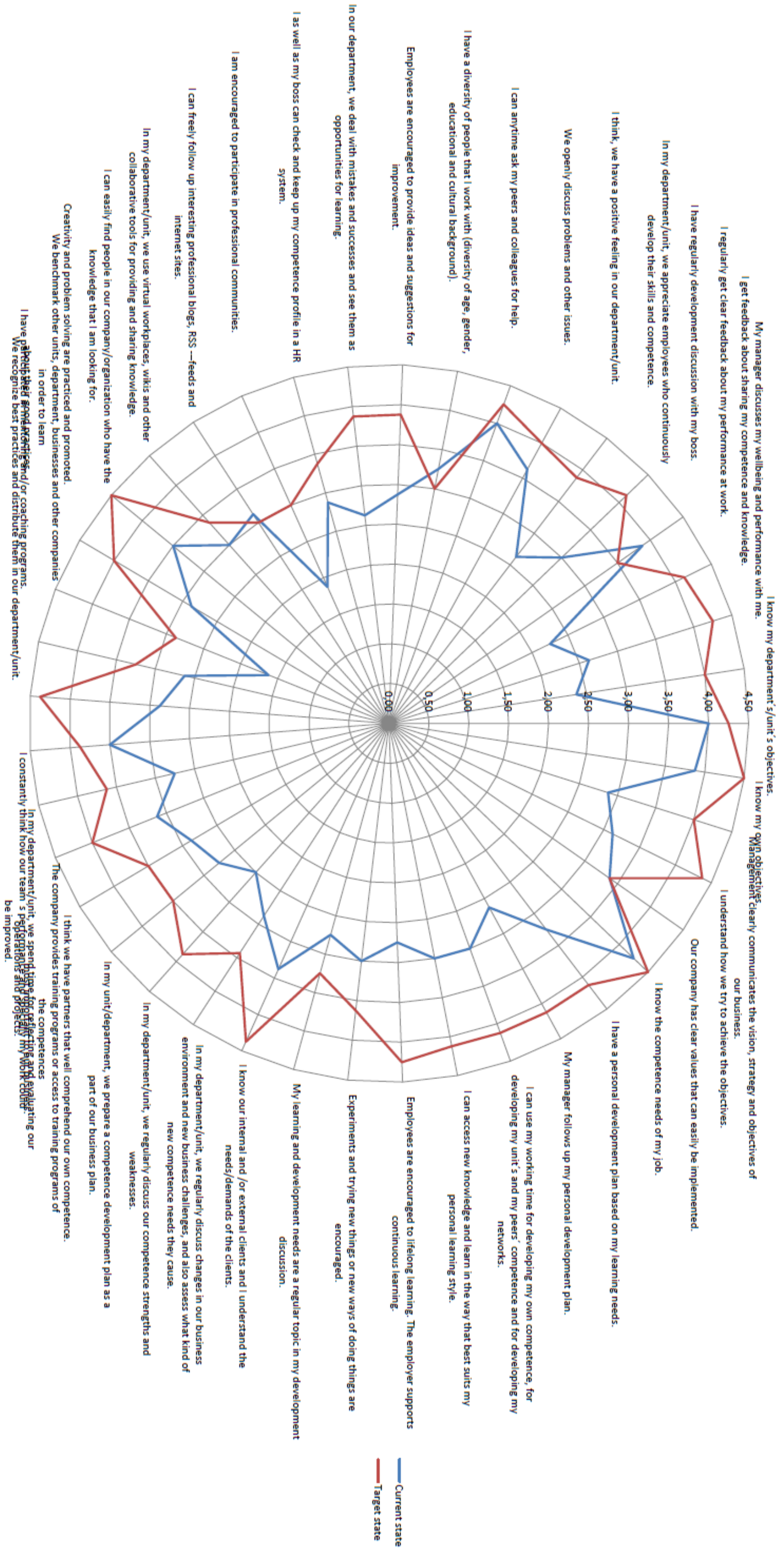
Table 2

*** Think of formulating your own questions; these are suggestions for you to start**

	Topic(s) of the interview	Kerro aiheista	FIELD NOTES *<Your brief accounts of their answers>*
1		Organisaatio kommuni-kaatio Kertoa tästä uudesta sosiaalisesta intranetistä ja tehdä käyttöohjeet koko suomen service henkilöstölle	xx pitäisi käyttää jos kaikki käyttäis olisi tehokasta Hyvä ehdotus

2		Kasvotusten tapahtuva kommunikaatio Järjestää kerran vuodessa tapahtuma missä voidaan jakaa toimintatapoja	Enemmän sisällöstä kyselyitä henkilöstölle ei management vetoinen Hyvä ehdotus Ei viinan juonti foorumi muttei kuivin suin
3		Virtuaali kanavat Kertoa uudesta Wikistä, Blogeista ja Foorumeista	Wikit on nykypäivää Servicellä keskitetty ettei joka toimistolla omia foorumeja/wikejä Foorumit käyttöön. Notes roskiin Ei oo halusta kiinni jakaa tietoa meillä

The Learning Organization Test Results



Theme Interview Letters to The Interviewees

Hyvä vastaanottaja,

liittyen tuotantotalouden ylempään insinöörin tutkintooni teen xx tutkielman kommunikaation parantamisesta hajautetussa organisaatiossa.

Työntekijöille kohdennetussa xx -tyytyväisyys kyselyssä tuli esiin tyytymättömyyttä kommunikaatioon Suomen asiakaspalvelu yksikössä, minkä johdosta xx antoi minulle mandaatin tehdä aiheesta tutkimusta.

Työni ensimmäisessä vaiheessa olen kiinnostunut kuulemaan, mitä meillä xx tehdään kommunikaatiossa hyvin ja mitä vähemmän hyvin, mitkä ovat xx vahvuudet ja heikkoudet.

Olisin kiitollinen, jos uhraisit hetken kallista aikaasi tähän kyselyyn.

Kerro vapaasti omin sanoin.

1) Mitä xx tehdään hyvin kommunikaatioon liittyen?

2) Mitä xx olisi vielä parannettavaa kommunikaatioon liittyen?

3) Minkälaisia kommunikaatio käytäntöjä teillä on käytössä? Viikko-, kuukausi- tai vuosi-palavereja? Mitä niissä pääsääntöisesti käydään läpi? Mitä pitäisi käydä läpi?

4) Tunnetko xx online- pohjaisia niin kutsuttuja sosiaalisen median työkaluja?

Vastauksen voi lähettää vapaamuotoisena tekstinä minulle joko sähköpostitse tai perinteisellä kirjepostilla.

joni.westman@xx.com

Joni Westman

xx

Kaikki vastaukset käsitellään luottamuksellisesti eikä vastauksia julkaista siten, että niitä voitaisiin käyttää vastaajaa vastaan.

Ohessa vielä TellUs -kyselystä esiin tulleita kohtia:

- Työpaikassani meille kerrotaan tulevista muutoksista ajoissa niihin valmistautumista varten. 24% vastauksista myönteisiä.

- Esimieheni antaa suoritustani koskevaa ajantasaista ja hyödyllistä palautetta. 29% vastauksista myönteisiä.

Myöhemmin tutkimuksessani tulee kyselyn toinen vaihe, jossa esiin tulleisiin kipukohtiin pyritään hakemaan ratkaisuja teidän avullanne. Tämä koskee Suomen Service Managereita, jotka voivat keskustella alueillaan ratkaisuista ja ehdottaa niitä kun aika koittaa.

Kiitos jo etukäteen.

Terveisin,

Joni Westman

Hyvä vastaanottaja,

liittyen tuotantotalouden ylempään insinöörin tutkintooni teen xx tutkielman kommunikaation parantamisesta hajautetussa organisaatiossa.

Työntekijöille kohdennetussa xx -tyytyväisyys kyselyssä tuli esiin tyytymättömyyttä kommunikaatioon Suomen asiakaspalvelu yksikössä, minkä johdosta xx antoi minulle mandaatin tehdä aiheesta tutkimusta.

Työni toisessa vaiheessa olen kiinnostunut kuulemaan, miten TE parantaisitte kyseisiä kipupisteitä mitä tuli esiin työni ensimmäisessä vaiheessa.

Olisin kiitollinen, jos uhraisit hetken kallista aikaasi tähän kyselyyn.

Kerro vapaasti omin sanoin parannusehdotuksia kipupisteisiin.

1) Informaatiota on liikaa ja se on liian hajautettua eri lähteisiin. (Notes kannat, xx, sähköpostit)
2) Ilmoitukset esim. koulutuksiin tulevat aivan liian myöhään tai niitä ei löydetä ennen kuin on liian myöhäistä.
3) Tiedotukset ovat huonosti kohdennettuja
4) Yhtiö olettaa että kaikki lukevat xx kokoajan
5) Kokemuksia projekteista ja toteutuksista ei jaeta tarpeeksi
6) Uudet ihmiset eivät tiedä keneltä kysyä ja mistä etsiä tietoa
7) Kommunikointi välineet eivät vastaa tämän päivän tarpeita.
8) Konttorien välisen kommunikaation vähyys ja puute

Vastauksen voi lähettää vapaamuotoisena tekstinä minulle joko sähköpostitse tai perinteisellä kirjepostilla.

joni.westman@xx.com

Joni Westman

xx

Kaikki vastaukset käsitellään luottamuksellisesti eikä vastauksia julkaista siten, että niitä voitaisiin käyttää vastaajaa vastaan.

Vastauksia kaivattaisiin 22.3.2013 mennessä.

Kiitos jo etukäteen.

Terveisin,

Joni Westman