Internal communication in organizations undergoing change

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INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN ORGANIZATIONS UNDERGOING CHANGE

A Case Study of WM-data AB and Manpower AB

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Preface

In exception of our work effort, there have been several people contributing to the quality of this study.

First of all we would like to pay a special attention to our supervisor Rickard Wahlberg for his unlimited devotion, support and advice during our work. Also we would like to express our gratitude toward our contact person and friend Henrik Kleist and others at LUVIT AB who provided us with valuable empirical insights to the knowledge of the problem area. Finally, additional acknowledgements to the interview respondents Crister Stjernfelt at WM-data AB and Veronica Lysell at Manpower AB, for their shown interest and time set aside.

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Abstract

Doing business and managing change makes effective internal communication a critical success factor needed to create a common understanding of what the organization is trying to achieve in the marketplace. The purpose of this study is hence to increase the understanding of how internal communication is performed in organizations undergoing change. It was conducted through a case study of WM-data AB and Manpower AB, based on one telephone interview with each company. The results from our research showed that although utilizing a blend of oral, written, and electronical channels, the Intranet has grown to be of primary use in order to communicate effectively, as it makes information easily accessible to employees, regardless time and physical distance. Yet, this new innovation provides the disadvantage of information overload, with a risk of loosing vital material. Moreover, considering criteria such as the purpose of the information are essential when selecting appropriate communication channels.
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1 Introduction

This first chapter presents a background that emphasizes why internal communication is so important to organizations, especially to those that undergo change of rapid growth. Furthermore, a Mini Case is presented, as an empirical example of communication problems within a rapid growth company. Finally, a problem discussion considers issues of internal communication, followed by a purpose as well as a set of research questions.

1.1 Background

Change has become a constant phenomenon that must be attended to and managed appropriately in order to ensure organizational survival according to Church and McMahan (1996). They assert that changes in technology, the marketplace, social values, work force demographics, and the political environment all have a significant effect on the processes as well as the products and services produced. The culmination of these forces reflects an external environment that is dynamic, unpredictable and often devastating to those organizations that are unprepared or unable to respond, they add. Many companies have fallen victim to such pressures, they continue, but those companies that have survived have been relegated to the role of playing “catch-up” to their competitors, while others have been absorbed into larger entities via mergers or acquisitions, or simply dissolved into a series of corporate assets and liabilities.

Interestingly enough, although the adverse impact of change is most often associated with organizations in a state of decline or stagnation, companies that experience rapid growth are particularly sensitive to pressures as well (Church & McMahan, 1996). Burns and Dewhurst (1996, pp. 60-61) state that managing growth means managing change and the more rapid the growth, the more difficult it is to manage. As the firm grows, they continue, the application of the functional disciplines of marketing, accounting and people management changes and, with them, the role of the owner-manager. Hence, from now on, companies who experience rapid growth will be considered equivalent to organizations undergoing change. Rapid growth is according to Ahrens (1996, p. 22) not the result of a deliberate strategic choice. It usually occurs simply because the opportunity becomes apparent from the result of a unique offer or just having the right product at the right time, he explains. Moreover, Ahrens (1996, p. 70) argues that the differences between rapid growth and stable companies all stem from the pace of change. Stable companies need to emphasize continuity and conformity he elucidates, and by contrast, rapid growth companies have to exist in a climate of constant turbulence and lack of time. Permanent structures and responsibilities are an impediment to rapid market response, which is why people in these companies rarely spend much time discussing peripheral things he adds. Along with this, Ahrens (1996, p. 9) claims that many small companies do not want to grow, or do not have the ability to grow their product into volume production and distribution. Church and McMahan (1996) consequently argue that those organizations that choose not to consolidate, but to embrace rapid company
growth, not only are exposed to a highly volatile and competitive environment, but also to a constant motion of the internal dynamics and processes.

D’Aprix (1996, p. 17) claims the false sense of security and “hard work well done” that comes with success can serve as blinders both to emerging internal and external problems. According to Church and McMahan (1996) organizational growth and expansion have always been some of the primary recognized indicators of success in the corporate world. It is often considered an honor, as well as a marketing advantage, to be one of the fastest growing firms in any given industry and year, they continue. Financial investors appreciate the returns, employees enjoy the recognition and customers have an additional reason to investigate the company’s products and services. Yet, many of the firms that find themselves in this position one year are absent the next, they declare, proving once again that immediate success does not always translate into long-term viability. Thus, they finally argue, given the turbulent nature of the environment, it has become increasingly important that managers and executives are prepared to respond appropriately to the external forces, and the subsequent changes that result internally to their own systems and processes.

Ahrens (1996, p. 70) states that there have to be some elements of stability within the rapid growth company or it will drift haphazardly with every wind. He further argues that the key of being a successful rapid growth company lies in having internal rules and procedures that help employees to obtain essential goals. According to Burke (1995) nothing is more important than competent leadership under circumstances of change. Grönroos (1996, p. 80) and Arndt and Friman (1983, p. 14) emphasize the importance to lead and motivate co-workers to the extent that their contribution to achieving the external goals become more effective. Moreover, Grönroos (1990, p. 244) states for this to occur, leaders must understand and actively support internal marketing. Gummesson (1998, p. 214) explains the concept of internal marketing as a management strategy, where a company’s external marketing knowledge is applied on the internal market, being the company co-workers. Grönroos (1990, p. 240) puts emphasis on attracting and keeping competent personnel to enable success. In agreement, Ahrens (1992, p. 186) asserts that co-workers constitute the most essential base of resources in rapid growth companies. Gummesson (1998, pp. 215-216) further claims that internal marketing concerns creating relations between management, employees, and different functions within the organization, thus becomes a necessity for efficient external marketing. In addition, he asserts that traditional activities to reach the internal co-workers often have shown to be routinely accomplished without any deeper thought, in contrary of being based on professional knowledge about internal communication.

1.2 Mini Case of LUVIT AB

The purpose of this Mini Case is to provide an example of internal communication problems within rapid growth companies, or in other words organizations undergoing change. This example, hence lead us towards asking and discussing more relevant
questions further on to this thesis. It should therefore be seen as a guide for defining an interesting problem and not to be confused with our research strategy of collecting and analyzing empirical evidence. This Mini Case begins with a short presentation of the company, followed by a review of the current problems within LUVIT AB. The information has been provided by the following company representatives: Henrik Kleist – Business Manager, Jonas Haraldson – Vice President Marketing, Charlotta Thollin – Project Manager/Product Communication, Karin Martell – Business Manager, Caroline Fredberg – Vice President Partner Network, and Ola Badersten – Business Manager.

1.2.1 Presentation of LUVIT AB

The Luvit system derives its origin from a project held by the University of Lund during the year of 1997. The purpose of the project was to develop an Internet based platform for educations. Important aspects to consider were that the system should be easy to use, even for people that lack of computer practice, and it should further be applicable on a wide range of subject fields. By offering an interactive education via electronic media, so-called e-learning, education could be both cost efficient and provide high flexibility for the educational participants. The University of Lund discovered that the system had qualities that involved a possibility to commercialize the project, and since March 1999, the business is pursued by LUVIT AB.

LUVIT AB foremost offers their services to medium sized as well as large companies and organizations that have identified the need for competence development through e-learning. The increasing interest in e-learning has been powerful and since the start, the number of people held by LUVIT AB has grown from being only a few individuals to around 60 co-workers today, where the initial entrepreneur still is one of the driving forces of the company. With the rapid expansion that LUVIT AB is being exposed to, the company is expected to nurture a maximum amount of 170 employees in a near future. A high degree of digitalization enables LUVIT AB to expand in the same pace as today, yet with relatively few employees and limited costs. LUVIT AB is currently active on the Swedish market as in about ten European countries. At this moment, the main office is situated in the central city of Lund, while minor working teams are circulating both nationally as well as internationally. However, the goal is to be established in 30 countries by the year of 2002, whereas the next step is to evaluate the opportunities to succeed in the United States and China.

1.2.2 Problems within LUVIT AB

There is a great demand for LUVIT AB’s services, which has resulted in the rapid expansion of the company that exists today. However, a high growth rate can be strenuous on the business, thus puts the management, the employees and the administrative system to a severe test. In addition, competent and motivated co-workers must be recruited to be able to respond to the rapid growth. Yet, the competition concerning knowledgeable people is rather high at the moment. Still, LUVIT AB employs new co-workers rather frequently, which has lead to a structural reorganization. As a result of the fast movements within the company, an uncleanness regarding the
assignments has grown among the employees. This has become an issue, as it leads to overlapping of work and difficulties in knowing who to turn to when problems occur. Along with this, managers and executives become involved in issues that do not concern them thus could be solved on a lower level in the hierarchy. To discuss the right matter with the right person will save time, an essential factor in such a fast moving environment.

LUVIT AB aims to maintain a flat and flexible organizational structure that is decentralized. Nevertheless, it seems like the organization oscillates between top-down management to a more extreme decentralized structure. This creates confusion among the employees, as they sometimes feel the loss of clear directions from the management as well as lack of obligations. Even in a decentralized organization, it is important to have guidelines to keep the co-workers on the right track. In this matter, it becomes a necessity that the management has the ability to communicate company vision, goals, and strategies to its co-workers. However, the employees of LUVIT AB feel that this is not always properly enforced. Yet, the problem with internal communication does not only lie in the hands of the management. Each co-worker must strive to make it work. However, the current organizational structure does not simplify this matter, whereas three important questions arise: what information is important to communicate, for who is the information valuable, and what communication channel is suitable? Since some of the employees are having difficulties in knowing their assignments, it is not easy for others to decide for whom the information is useful. As a result, many people are possessing important facts that could be of interest to other co-workers.

Another contributory cause to the internal communication problems is the separation of the different departments of market/sales, product development and computer programmers. Today, they are situated at different floors in the company building, which makes the interaction between them more difficult. This has entailed a problem within LUVIT AB, as they recently sold a product, promising features that did not exist at the delivery date. As e-learning is a rather new innovation, where there is no unitary opinion among the employees of what it actually is, it is highly important to distinguish between today’s product, what it will look like in three months and what the vision of it is from a long-term perspective to prevent mistakes. Another example confirming a lack in communication is that products have been sold at different prices in different countries. This mismatch of company objectives that have become apparent due to lack of communication, could affect LUVIT AB negatively as it creates mistrust among the customers.

Today, there are no holistic guidelines on how to communicate information between the employees, yet telephone and e-mail are two frequently used tools. Sending e-mail is a fast and effective way, yet this channel is unfortunately not always used for its primary purpose as the mailbox becomes overloaded with insignificant information. LUVIT AB has further developed an Intranet, with the aim to improve the communication among the co-workers. However, many employees find this tool being rather complicated, thus do not use it for information search or storage of valuable facts. Along with this, the sales department has its own reporting system. Yet, due to insufficient involvement from the
management and lack of feedback, many co-workers lose their interest in providing the reports. Other ways of communicating are via meetings, breakfast seminars, and team building days, which motivate and enable the employees to exchange experiences and information in a more relaxed environment. However, being deficient in time, these meetings do not occur too often. Furthermore, it is not always possible to gather everybody at the same time, leaving some people without the knowledge about what has been discussed.

1.3 Problem Discussion

Sanchez (1999) asserts that doing business and managing change makes effective internal communication a critical success factor. Market volatility and the need for skilled business planning in the face of competitive forces can, and often do, create disconnects between the goals of the organization and the implementing processes that touch employees, he further argues. Moreover, he claims to succeed in such an unforgiving environment, it is essential that organizations form comprehensive, internal communication programs.

What is striking about the characteristics of effective internal communication is according to Sanchez (1999) the formal acknowledgement of communication as a critical process necessary to the overall business strategy by senior management. The success of internal communication comes from a clear and unwavering focus on the need to communicate information about business objectives and the role employees play in achieving these objectives, he continues. A further and more deep going explanation regarding effective internal communication is presented in section 2.1, p. 8. However, Strid (1999, pp. 11-12) asserts that the concept of information can be viewed as a message, while communication is the flow of this message between at least two individuals. He further argues that as the communication occurs internally, it includes a transfer of information within a social entity or organization. Therefore, he states that internal communication is the flow of information between people having relations that are durably structured to achieve specific goals. Moreover, in organizations with successful communication programs, Sanchez (1999) adds, senior management has clearly taken the time to articulate and support communication philosophies and strategies that flow from the organization’s values. Thus, internal communication becomes an essential tool to create a common understanding of what the organization is trying to achieve in the marketplace D’Aprix (1996, p. 3) elucidates. In relation to this, the identified problems within LUVIT AB show a lack of an articulated internal communication program that clarifies business objectives and strategies.

Geijerstam (2000) explains the success in creating effective internal communication depends on generating communicative leaders, where not only the top-management takes on this responsibility, but delegates it to middle-managers as well, who in a continuous dialogue with the employees define critical problems, suggestions, and solutions. Having a two-way communication philosophy is indispensable in effectively aligning employees with the business interests of the organization, Sanchez (1999) argues. Furthermore, he
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states it is essential to listen to what the co-workers have to say and to use this upward information in the decision making process. Letting the employees know that their voices have been heard and considered makes them more committed in their work for company success. Downward communication is equally important, as it will help the employees to gain a better understanding of the organizational goals and their part in achieving them, he continues.

As simple as it may sound, the complexity of a rapid growth company presents challenges to the achievement of effective internal communication. Ahrens (1996, p. 71) explains that the rapidity itself will force the management to introduce the rules of the rapid growth game to be able to handle the biggest bottleneck of them all – time. Believing that they do not have the time, and bombarded with conflicting pressures and demands, many of them tend to communicate poorly, D’Aprix (1996, p. 29) adds. As a result, D’Aprix (1996, p. 3) claims it confuses the employees, it makes them angry, and it feeds whatever skepticism or cynicism they feel about the motives of the people who lead them, thus making the employees more indifferent or even resistant to change. Such confusion is evident within LUVIT AB, as the employees often feel the loss of clear directions from the management. D’Aprix (1996, p. 30) further asserts that the co-workers are increasingly counted on to produce quality products and supply quality services to demanding customers, which makes employee dissatisfaction something not to dismiss lightly.

That internal communication is a necessity to make companies and organizations work is hardly deniable, Strid (1999, p. 21) discusses. The questions are rather how much, from whom, about what, in what way, and for whom the information is important, he continues. Burke (1995) further suggests timing to be a crucial factor in the communication process. Many employees simply do not always know when to communicate he stresses. These issues all constitute important criteria when selecting a suitable channel of internal communication and at this moment, LUVIT AB find themselves in a situation where these questions have become crucial for a successful expansion. Yet, not only the sender of information has realized the need for communication, Strid (1999, p. 21) adds, the receiver makes great demands upon a well functioning communication as well. Moreover, he states, the employees expect to obtain information from the management regarding what to do, how to do it, why it is important to do it, and what the outcome will be. However, Ahrens (1996, p. 72) addresses that the lack of time in rapid growth companies also forces their staff to take risks by defining the rules of the game in ways that leave them no option. For example, he argues that the management obliges people to find the information they need rather than wait for someone else to provide it. Still, he claims that management must point out a clear direction, forming standards that create a communicative environment. Nevertheless, Geijerstam (2000) asserts that management sometimes has a tendency to overestimate the employees’ knowledge and access to information, and at the same time underestimate their capacity to interpret the information they actually find.

Under present conditions, Johansson (1998) asserts that information can be pushed or pulled through various communication channels. A push behavior occurs when
information is aimed towards a specific receiver she elucidates. On the contrary, information characterized by a pull behavior means that each individual must seek the desired information on his or her own initiative she continues. Strid (1999, p. 53) presents a further categorization into indirect- and direct channels of communication. According to Erikson (1992, p. 42) indirect channels involves written or electronical methods such as personnel magazines, e-mail and Intranet. The popularity of e-mail and Intranet has dramatically affected both personal and business communication, Sanchez (1999) declares. However, Johansson (1998) explains such means to unfortunately cause problems if not properly used. This is currently visible at LUVIT AB, as some coworkers experience information overload on their e-mail, as well as lack the habit of using the Intranet as a communication channel. Direct channels are on the other hand characterized by a two-way communication, face-to-face, between the people in the organization, Johansson (1998) adds. Additionally, Wood (1999) argues that such methods are considered to be most effective as it allows immediate interaction, but Ahrens (1996, pp. 133-134) stresses that they become more problematic to perform in an effective matter, as the organization is growing.

According to Ahrens (1996, p. 8) much research still needs to be done into the rapid growth phenomenon, not least because so many of these companies either collapse or fail to fulfill their potential. Sanchez (1999) claims that managing change makes effective internal communication a necessity for achieving company success.

1.4 Purpose of This Study

Based on the problem discussion, the purpose of this study is to increase the understanding of how internal communication is performed in organizations undergoing change.

In order to reach this purpose, two research questions have been formulated:

1. How do organizations achieve effective internal communication?
2. How do organizations select communication channels?
2 Internal Communication

This chapter involves a presentation of the literature review, starting out with an explanation of how to create effective internal communication. Difficulties in achieving effective internal communication will further be examined and elucidated. A discussion about communication channels and the selection criteria will finally end this chapter. The structure of this chapter is formulated to correspond to the previously stated research questions, where the first two sections answer to research question number one, and the following sections are connected to research question number two.

2.1 Effective Internal Communication

In today’s information-based organizations, a good communication process is the lubricant that keeps the organization running, D’Aprix (1996, p. 121) asserts. However, Andrews and Herschel (1996, p. 10) stress that communication cannot be viewed simply as an important organizational component, rather as the lifeblood of every organization. To succeed in such matter, Sanchez (1999) asserts the internal communication to be effective.

*If you are communicating effectively, you will get positive recognition from the audiences you are trying to influence, which means people will think what you are doing is right and that you are doing it in the right way. When you get positive recognition your influence grows. You are perceived as competent, effective, worthy of respect – powerful.*

Grunig (1992, p. 38)

2.1.1 Categorization of Internal Communication

How to perform the communication effectively depends on the kind of information that is to be presented, Erikson (1992, pp. 40-41) declares. There are five different concepts that can be used to separate the content of internal communication, he adds. Having these concepts in mind, he further explains, will help to decide what communication methods to utilize.

1. Work communication. Communication necessary for each co-worker in order to pursue his or her daily work. This communication involves for example facts regarding what and when a certain product should be assembled, or an agenda for a meeting. The majority of the oral communication concerns practical issues that continuously emerge.

2. News communication. Informing about the latest issues in the organization enables the employees to perform more efficiently from a long-term perspective. This dialogue usually occurs via personnel magazines, internal radio, department meetings, or other regular channels. News communication usually touches upon
several departments, whereas information about the organization is presented in its entirety.

3. Manage communication. To guide the business towards the stated goals, long-term plans and short-term measures are formulated. Such communication contains budget issues, company policies, and memos that regulate the business. Manage communication further includes manuals for production, quality regulations, and working environment regulations.

4. Change communication. An organization often needs to separate the dialogue that concerns the regular business from the unexpected and drastically. Change communication is based on particular incidents, within the company or the world around it, which occurs beyond the normal news flow. Information about altered business goals, visions, and strategies are such examples. When an organization undergoes a larger change, the ordinary channels often must be supplemented with other channels or methods that are to be used during a certain period of time and offered to a specific target group. The choice between ordinary and supplemented channels will influence the employees’ apprehension of the importance of the communication.

5. Culture communication. Facts that touch the company values, its ethics, and attitudes towards people are not always obvious. These issues are more or less invisible in the internal communication. However, they appear in CEO’s comments for a new business deal or an accident, for example. Culture communication further involves attitudes towards leadership, equality matters, environmental questions, and company responsibilities in general. There are seldom any printed documents, describing an organization’s culture and the influence it has on the information work. Nevertheless, it may be a good idea to analyze and clarify the company culture in order to obtain a better understanding of what kind of internal communication works and what does not work.

2.1.2 Criteria for Effective Internal Communication

According to Engquist (1994, p. 46) the outcome of the communication depends on several factors, such as culture, physical work environment, and regulation systems. He further claims no conversation to be the other alike, as different people possess separate knowledge, qualities, and personalities, thus realizing that the combinations of external circumstances and human qualities are eternal. It is of course not possible to regulate how each conversation should be constituted in order to be optimal, he explains. However, Erikson (1992, p. 38) suggests the internal communication to meet a number of criteria to be effective.

First of all, Erikson (1992, p. 38) argues the communication to be concrete in order to be understandable for the receiver of the information, with regard to each co-worker having different backgrounds in knowledge, language, culture, and assignments. Each individual has created his or her own language with personal expressions, he states, which may be
understandable if other co-workers have the similar background or function within the organization. For others, the message might become unconceivable, he stresses. Moreover, to increase the understanding, he asserts it could be appropriate to let several people form an opinion regarding language, selected communication channels, and possibilities to create a dialogue. This could be performed via a co-worker, he explains, who does not posses expert knowledge about the particular area, or through an external adviser. Lewis (1999) suggests another way of increasing the understanding of the audience. If it consists of one executive only, he highlights the importance of determining the executive’s key motivators, personal and organizational goals, as well as likes and dislikes. If the audience is a small group, analyze each member, and if it is a large group, divide it into categories and profile each category, he continues.

Erikson (1992, p. 38) further suggests to keep the information *concentrated*, as focusing on issues that are essential for the receiver will simplify matters. A communication containing a mix of different kinds of information will appear as disturbing to the receiver, compared to a message where only relevant issues are being discussed, Andersson (1971, p. 20) states. In agreement, Lewis (1999) emphasizes the importance to resist the temptation of presenting all the found facts and recommends the sender to choose no more than five key messages. Yet, if this is not possible, he advises to pull back into a higher-level perspective. Additionally, Erikson (1992, p. 38) claims that it is allowed to question memos that are more than two pages long. Are all the presented facts really necessary, does a copy of it actually need to be sent to other people, and if so, who will find the information valuable, he discusses.

The communication must also be *coordinated*, Erikson (1992, pp. 38-39) asserts. It is not rare that two managers choose to present a message for the co-workers in two separate ways, he argues. This will not result in effective communication, he claims, rather confusion among the employees as they discuss with each other. An important aspect is therefore to formulate a unitary picture of what the message is, he explains, which will make it coordinated. A simple list of questions and answers may ease the concordance, he suggests. By making a checklist over potential questions and answers will also prepare the managers mentally for unexpected questions, he stresses, thus increasing the possibilities to provide suitable answers.

According to Erikson (1992, p. 39) the provided information must also be *consequent* over time. If the CEO claims one thing in April and something else in June, neither he nor the company will appear as reliable, he declares. Due to this, he asserts it is important to pay attention to what consequences the information delivery may have later on. If there is an uncertainty regarding the organization’s position in a few months, he argues, it must be declared to the co-workers. It is better to communicate defective facts continuously, rather than being forced to take back what has been said previously due to changes in reality, he adds.

The communication must moreover form *contrasts*, according to Erikson (1992, p. 39). Effective communication affects people’s knowledge as well as feelings, he states. Lewis (1999) claims that when communicating face-to-face, the vocal intonation and body
language deliver as much information as the words spoken. In memos and reports, he continues, intonation and body language are not available to the receiver. Along with this, Erikson (1992, p. 39) argues, all too often the information is solely founded on facts, thus becomes dull and uninteresting for the receiver. Such information will hardly motivate the employees nor stimulate them into creating dialogues, he elucidates. Nevertheless, he underlines the use of pictures and to present the information in a pedagogical way, which will make it more interesting for the reader. According to Lewis (1999) deciding what to put in a bulleted or numbered list, what to separate into a sidebar, what to illustrate through a chart or graphic will also help to think the message through instead of just blurt everything out. This will send a good message to the receiver of the communication, he adds. It is not forbidden to include feelings and to use all senses in creating effective communication Erikson (1992, p. 39) clarifies.

The information must of course strive to create contacts that lead to a dialogue, Erikson (1992, p. 39) explains. If the receiver does not invite to further exchange of ideas, he argues, the attended process has not been reached, rather just begun. Unfortunately is the communication often performed on the sender’s conditions, without taking the receivers interests into considerations, he continues. When selecting communication medium, Lewis (1999) claims that the key messages and knowledge about the audience’s preferred communication styles should determine what channel to use. As an example, he mentions if the audience is an executive who wants to have eye contact, make sure to present the information face-to-face. An effective communication requires a mutual commitment from both the sender and the receiver Erikson (1992, p. 39) stresses.

To pursue communication on a continuous basis is crucial when creating credibility among the employees. Moreover, by planning the dialogue in advance, it will be easier to respond to the continuity. (Erikson, 1992, p. 39)

2.2 Challenges to Effective Internal Communication

The complexities of organizational life make miscommunication inevitable, which may occur at all levels and all areas of companies, according to Eisenberg and Phillips (1991, pp. 244-250). Miscommunication is the failure in social interaction, and in balancing individual creativity against the coordination and control that makes organizing possible, they explain. In addition, they state that most managers and organizational theorists view communication as extremely important in organizations, but difficult to address in any systematic way.

2.2.1 Organization and Internal Communication

D’Aprix (1996, p. 119) claims that developing an effective communication strategy and executing it well is a challenging task. He further explains that the shape and character of organizations are changing from the old, hierarchical chain-of-command structure to something much flatter, much more organic in character, and certainly much more dynamic. Moreover, he declares the purpose of hierarchy is order, whereas the purpose of
the new organizational forms is to provide organizations that are welcoming cross-functional collaboration, and are gathering people and resources quickly to serve customer needs. In addition, he claims the orientation of the new-age organization to be more collaborative than individualistic, and more fluid than rigid. The flexibility that comes with this kind of organization and the taking charge of human resources, makes it no longer necessary to follow a vertical communication path in the organization, thus shifting the focus to a more horizontal perspective, Strid (1999, p. 24) declares.

According to Andrews and Herschel (1996, pp. 144-145), messages flowing from upper to lower organizational levels constitute downward communication. In addition, they assert through this kind of communication, organizations direct the activities of employees, instruct them in proper behaviors and work methods, as well as persuade them to adopt certain ideas and attitudes. The other vertical channel of formal organizational communication is upward communication, the communication flowing from subordinates to superiors, they further stress. Moreover, they claim that such communication usually assumes employees’ comments about themselves, their performance, and their problems. The horizontal direction of communication entails messages between and among individuals on the same organizational level, Andrews and Herschel (1996, p. 147) argue. Additionally they claim that groups of peers may communicate to coordinate a task, or to share their problems. Indeed, group members often develop collective perspectives about their problems, which can affect both morale and performance, they add.

D’Aprix (1996, p. 119) claims that the single most difficult kind of communication to strategize is the horizontal communication. Along with this, Höström et al (1999, p. 30) underline horizontal communication to be overlooked. In agreement, Andrews and Herschel (1996, p. 147) explain that the traditional bureaucratic organizations have done little to encourage it, and in some cases have actively discouraged it. The conventional wisdom, they claim, was that information should pass vertically through the organization, carefully progressing up and down the hierarchy. By following such vertical flows, they argue, each message would touch all appropriate points of authority. D’Aprix (1996, p. 123) states the question is how to break down this mentality that continues to impede both teamwork and the horizontal flow of information. The most starting point for facilitating the flow of information horizontally is the individuals who sit on the top of the various silos, he adds. Moreover, he asserts their example, their shared focus, their ability to work with one another, and their continued insistence that the whole is more important that any parts of the organization, are critical.

According to Andrews and Herschel (1996, p. 145) downward communication is plagued by several problems, particularly in highly bureaucratic organizations. For instance, sometimes the messages simply are not received: Subordinates may not read memos or announcements carefully, they may ignore bulletin boards or posted messages, and they may fail to listen at meetings, they clarify. In addition, they stress that subordinates may be overloaded with downward messages, - saturated they stop paying attention. Finally, they argue filtering and distortion can result in problems in downward communication, especially when messages are communicated orally and must work their way through
several layers of hierarchy. Managers that blindly rely on oral messages can intensify the problems with downward communication, they elucidate.

In hierarchies, issues of status, power, rank, and prerequisites often cloud the form and content of upward communication, Andrews and Herschel (1996, p. 146) claim. Because many aspire to higher-level positions in the organizational hierarchy, they add, there may be multiple agendas that affect and alter communication patterns. In particular subordinates may be reluctant to communicate negative feedback, or to share information that reflects negatively on them and their work, they assert. In addition, subordinates may not realize that they are expected to offer their opinions, ideas, or especially criticism. Thus, managers must clearly communicate their desire for such messages, and mean it, they finally argue.

2.2.2 Conflict and Internal Communication

According to Andrews and Herschel (1996, pp. 235-241) conflict is an inevitable part of organizational life, especially during times of change. Those involved in conflict situations are interdependent in that they cannot reach their goals alone, thus each has the power to interfere with the other’s goal accomplishment, they further argue. Moreover, conflicts often grow from disagreements over the acquisitions and use of resources and usually reflect perceived underlying differences in values and goals. Consequently, an individual’s perceptions, whether or not they are accurate, begin to shape conflict, they add. D’Aprix (1996, p. 123) claims what should be of concern are when those disagreements do not get aired and resolved, and when there is lack of common direction and commitment to common goals. He additionally asserts it is imperative that the senior staff function as leadership role models and that they make it their business to insist on collaboration among the organization’s functions. Their influence as communication role models in this regard is profound, he finally stresses.

2.2.3 Leadership and Internal Communication

D’Aprix (1996, pp. 131-132) declares the dark side of organizational life to be the misuse of power and the abuse and devaluation of employees. There is however, nothing wrong with hierarchical structures, he adds. Some of them are very effective and even efficient in their ability to concentrate solutions on serious problems, he explains. In an emergency there is no substitute for a strong authority figure who can mobilize the co-workers into action, he continues. Yet, most of organizational life is not an emergency, rather an effort to lead the employees in the accomplishment of group objectives in support of the organization’s larger objectives. It calls for teamwork and integration of individual and group efforts, he elucidates. It further calls for the exchange of information regardless of personal ego or agendas, and it therefore calls for an open communication without fear of personal consequences, he finally argues.

According to Geddie (1994) failure to communicate hard issues is another barrier to effective communication. In agreement Engquist (1994, pp. 209-210) claims that this involves for example conversations with employees who do not perform well in terms of
their work, or their relations to other co-workers, and customers. Moreover, he explains it could also concern issues such as personal problems, and firing of personnel. Of course this matter can be of an upward character, as employees are having difficulties with their management. The outcome of the conversation is dependent on the relation between the people involved in the dialogue, and the way the problem is presented, Engquist (1994, p. 79) finally declares.

2.2.4 Physical Distance and Internal Communication

Moberg (1997, p. 82) mentions physical distance as another challenging factor for effective communication within organizations. The physical distance does not only refer to long distances between organizational units, she explains, but distances between buildings or within the same building, and between individual co-workers as well. The physical distance may lead to changes in the communication in several ways, she argues, with regard to frequency and technical use. The geographical distance reduces the likelihood of making contacts with other units since the costs that come with that are increasing, she elucidates. Consequently, the contacts within these units may increase. The reasons for making such contacts are mostly time and cost related, or of a social character, for example it might be easier to associate with people with the same background. Other changes in communication is that the lost external contacts, involved in transferring to another location, are replaced with new contacts at the new place, she finally states.

The internal communication is also affected by shorter distances, for example between buildings or within a building, Moberg (1997, pp. 83-88) stresses. The communication between different departments is by that expected to be more spontaneous, she declares. Physical nearness, that is communication face-to-face, creates increased communication intensity compared to people situated in a long distance from each other, she explains. However, the desired degree for communication is determined by the individual’s personal style and previously experiences, relationships to others and different situational factors. If the employee experiences too little communication, she asserts, a feeling of isolation will occur. On the other hand, if the co-worker has too much contact, a feeling of closeness or even crowding may arise, due to environmental over stimulation. The distinction between the required and the actual amount of communication creates stress to the employees she clarifies. Erikson (1992, p. 34) underlines too much information to be just as bad a too little information. The difficulty in the internal dialogue is to find the optimal level on the information flow, he claims.

2.3 Communication Channels

Thorson (1997, p. 23) distinguishes between two methods when distributing the information, and claims it can be done via a push- or a pull communication. According to Erikson (1992, p. 42) there are several different channels and methods available when communicating information to the employees, and each organization must choose their individual combination based on their own qualifications and resources. Along with this,
Strid (1999, p. 53) divides these channels into two categories: direct and indirect communication channels.

2.3.1 Push versus Pull Communication

Push communication drives the information to the receivers, leaving them no option to influence the information flow, Thorson (1997, p. 23) states. In addition, Carr and Folliard (1999) stress that such communication is suitable for dissemination of information needed and/or wanted by a large number of people. Moreover, they claim push communication not to be effective for information that constantly changes, and requires frequent updates. The biggest caution with using this kind of communication is that it quickly overwhelms the audience, having a negative impact on an employee’s ability to perform his or her job, they add.

In contrast to push communication, Thorson (1997, p. 23) refers to a pull method that require each co-worker to seek relevant information on his or her initiative. He further argues this to improve the interaction with the user, as he or she becomes a part of the information process and presents his or her criteria of selection as well as preferences. Carr and Folliard (1999) assert the advantages with this kind of communication to be that information can be made immediately available and accessible, and that it can be segmented in many ways to support various applications and needs simultaneously. There are however a few disadvantages with using a pull method, they stress, whereas the biggest is the inability to monitor the receipt of information. While a communicator can be assured that a targeted audience has at least received push communication, there is no similar certainty for pull communication. On the other hand, when organized well, pull communication can offer a wide range of information at multiple levels of detail without overwhelming the audience, they finally claim.

2.3.2 Direct Communication Channels

Wood (1999) explains direct communication channels to involve a face-to-face communication between managers and their personnel. According to Högström, Bark, Bernstrup, Heide and Skoog (1999, pp. 92-93) this kind of communication channel has by far the greatest penetrative power, as it invites to a dialogue where all parts involved have the opportunity to exchange thoughts and opinions. In agreement Wood (1999) declares face-to-face communication to be the most effective channel, as it allows for immediate interaction. Pursuing a dialogue is not only a system for recording and exchanging practical and useful information, it also represents a major vehicle for expressing feelings and emotions Kallinikos (1996, p. 24) adds. He further states that oral communication and speech are vital means to the co-workers’ everyday work. Yet, there is a downside to this communication channel Thorson (1997, p. 42) argues. He explains it to be rather time-consuming and resource demanding. Some information may further be difficult to present orally, as it contains a large amount of numbers or figures, he discusses, thus calls for a need to use pictures etcetera.
Manager or Supervisor

The manager or the supervisor is the natural communication channel concerning information about employees’ work assignments according to Strid (1999, p. 55). Wood (1999) mentions a research on methods of communication showing that the immediate supervisor was a major source of information, and that the communication from senior management was highly regarded among the employees. However, Högström et al (1999, p. 30) state as the organizational structure is changing in terms of decentralization, the manager’s role as communicator is altered. Yet, all too often managers lack the ability to communicate effectively, thus should need to be educated in order to understand the importance of internal communication, Strid (1999, p. 55) stresses. Since the managers constitute the link that brings the organization’s units together, the efficiency of the communication is dependent on how well they understand and perform it, he adds.

When the organization is in some kind of trouble or going through massive change, D’Aprix (1996, p. 75) argues communicating with the manager becomes especially important. Meeting in small groups with the manager, or having a personal conversation with him or her, enables the employees to raise their concerns and complaints, or simply receive answers to everyday questions, he further states. Strid (1999, p. 55) emphasizes the main problem in a situation like this to be the credibility of the sender of information. The most important aspect to consider is that the information is correct as things stand, he asserts. Managers who provide untrue facts will lose their trustworthiness regardless of charisma or other qualities, he explains. Wood (1999) declares what will drive the communication is the quality of the relationship between the managers and the employees.

Co-worker

According to Strid (1999, p. 57) using co-workers as communication channels brings both benefits and disadvantages. The information provided by the management may not always be up-to-date; it may concern tasks by routine, or be too general in its character. Co-workers that possess knowledge or experience within this particular area, compose a great help in interpreting such matter, he argues.

Although communicating information via co-workers may be a positive measure - not least due to its social function - there is a downside to using this channel, Strid (1999, pp. 57-58) declares. A given problem closely related to this communication channel is the risk for rumors, which includes information that has not been confirmed by the management, circulating among the co-workers, he continues. This is a common occurrence when there is great interest for a certain topic, he claims, and there is a lack of information about the specific area. In order to prevent rumors from occurring, Petersson and Petersson (1992, p. 126) suggest the official information to be fast and easily accessible so that only a minor number of employees will miss it. Furthermore, they recommend the information to build a trustworthy base, as well as supply full coverage facts that leave the receivers with no gaps.
Meeting

According to Högström et al (1999, p. 92) a meeting is the most effective direct communication channel. In concordance, Lindström-Myrgård (1984, pp. 5-6) argues that meetings involve an enormous possibility to increase the capacity of work. The gathered knowledge and experiences, the ideas and thoughts that exist in a group of people are usually vast, especially if the group is compounded of individuals carrying different angles of incidences, she argues. To not take advantage of these abilities is a waste of time and human resources, she adds. However, Strid (1999, p. 62) stresses it is not always easy to make the employees participate in meetings. Depending on how the meeting is named it will create a certain reaction among the co-workers, he further discusses. For example, calling the personnel to an information meeting, they expect to receive information that may be of interest. Yet, calling them to a work meeting may result in a high absence, as these often lack of important information and are viewed as a bit fuzzy, he adds. Yet, personal meetings do not have to be of such formal character, according to Högström et al (1999, pp. 92-93), but could also consist of an informal conversation in the company cafeteria for instance.

2.3.3 Indirect Communication Channels

The foremost benefit of written channels is according to Petersson and Petersson (1992, p. 130) the ability to communicate the same messages to a great number of receivers regardless their location. They further argue that written channels enable the receiver of the information to go back and read what is stated whenever needed. In agreement, Kallinikos (1996, p. 29) claims it can even be stored and retrieved for later use. Erikson (1992, p. 42) emphasizes, given the information is correct, the risk for misinterpretation and misunderstandings is reduced. Yet, there is a downside to this channel he further explains, as it reduces the opportunities to a two-way communication. Although the information of an article reaches the receiver rather fast, it will take some time to obtain feedback and comments. Written channels are therefore suitable in terms of communicating and documenting facts, but not in a situation that requires immediate response, he finally argues.

Mass Media

According to Strid (1999, p. 65) mass media with the meaning of newspapers, radio, and television are important factors in the society, thus should not be neglected in terms of internal communication. Moreover, he asserts companies and organizations are often involved in some kind of mass media when having problems. It is vital that the employees receive information of such kind from the management rather than reading about it in the newspaper. However, he claims mass media to have a legitimate interest in covering organizations’ or companies’ activities and performances. This entails a relation with the mass media that should be considered as an important part of the internal information activities, he adds.
**Personnel Magazine**

Personnel magazines are usually published once a month, sometimes more frequently depending on the amount of information, the content, and the execution, according to Strid (1999, pp. 69-70). Högström et al (1999, p. 96) claim this kind of communication channel to be suitable when carrying out longer articles that are of a more complex character, as well as information regarding the organizational culture. Along with this, Strid (1999, p. 70) mentions two additional aspects that could be worth notifying. The first one is the need for fast information. From a motivation and policy point of view it is important that this kind of information is presented internally to the co-workers. If the information cannot reach the employees fast enough via personnel magazines, complementary channels such as newsletters or internal messages can be used. Petersson and Petersson (1992, p. 144) suggest sending a two to four pages long newsletter once a week, as it has shown to be a useful complement within many organizations. The other aspect presented by Strid (1999, p. 70) concerns the news value of the information that the receiver experiences. The more value the information provides the receiver, the higher degree of reading, he adds. Personnel magazines should of course be adjusted to employee requests in order to increase the use of this communication channel, he discusses.

The frequency of the reading of personnel magazines also depends on how they are distributed, Strid (1999, p. 72) explains. The more personal the distribution is, he argues, the more personal expression it gives. If the magazine is delivered to each co-worker individually it will make him or her feel selected and important. Moreover, he suggests distributing the personnel magazines to the homes of the employees will make the co-workers’ families more involved and supportive of their work as well, as for handing them out at the place of work. The primary purpose of personnel magazines, to maintain the solidarity among the employees, becomes more difficult as the organization grows and is divided into subunits, Petersson and Petersson (1992, pp. 145-146) argue. In a situation like this, Strid (1999, p. 77) asserts personnel magazines to often turn into several, focusing on different units with the result of a shattered communication.

**Bulletin Board**

To make the bulletin board a successful communication channel, Strid (1999, pp. 80-81) suggests it to be situated in a place where people can see it, and every time they look they will find new information. This is a valuable advice. Placing the bulletin board in a place where the employees can see it may not be so difficult, he argues, yet this also provides a problem. Things that always have been put in the same place will not be noticed unless it changes in some perspectives. It may probably be asserted that this is why some research shows bulletin boards to be the most effective communication channel, as some companies regard it as a less preferable channel of information, he further argues. The bulletin board may probably be very well replaced with the new information technology, he adds.
Video and Cable Television

According to Erikson (1992, p. 43) the benefits gained with video and cable television are that they make live to facts to a greater extent than written channels do. Thus, the employees can more easily understand information that is of complex nature, he explains. In addition Strid (1999, p. 82) claims video to be a useful and cheap method for storage of information that can be viewed as many times as needed. He further stresses that research indicates this channel to be of best use during circumstances of education and employment situations.

Cable television is the other source of information, Strid (1999, pp. 82-83) argues, which has its advantages in the ability of providing many people, situated in different geographical areas, with facts at the same time. The negative aspect with this communication channel, he asserts, is that the information must be sent to places that are settled beforehand, unless each co-worker is equipped with a portable cable television. This system further allows a two-way dialogue, as it enables both parts to see and hear each other, he adds.

Information Technology

Strid (1999, pp. 86-87) states that the new information technology, such as Intranet and e-mail, has provided an opportunity to send messages in form of text, pictures and sound to one or several individuals, with an almost unlimited possibility to store the information. The receiver can further choose when, where and how to actively take part of this information, either if it is on paper or on screen, in the room next to the sender or on the other side of the globe, he further discusses. Högström et al (1999, p. 97) assert that an Intranet is an organizational network adjusted to develop and strengthen the internal communication, ease the existence and exchange of knowledge or data within an organization, and function as an interactive communications tool to support processes and work situations. However, there is a disadvantage of information overflow connected to both the Intranet and e-mail, Strid (1999, pp. 86-87) argues. D’Aprix (1996, p. 75) consents claiming that people do not like that such technology sometimes can deluge them with more raw information than they can handle.

Gezelius (1997, p. 91) states that a large number of Intranet projects fail, or do not fulfill its potential and one of the most important reasons for this is that only a few people tend to use the information available at the Intranet. Therefore, he claims that it is important to be aware of a number of factors that could increase the probability of an Intranet success. Fundamentally, Gezelius (1997, p. 91) and Johansson (1998) argue that the Intranet has to support some of the more important processes of the organization’s business strategy. Gezelius (1997, p. 91) asserts that it is important to identify and create a number of key-utilities, which makes the Intranet a preferable channel of information. Johansson (1998) further argues that it therefore is important to eliminate any parallel channels of the specific utility that could diminish the incitements of using the Intranet. Gezelius (1997, p. 92) and Johansson (1998) further stress the importance of creating a key group of people that are spread within the organization. This key group should possess the
knowledge of using and developing functions on the Intranet so that they can establish the usage of the Intranet among other people within the organization, they finally argue.

Strid (1999, p. 88) states that information technology can be of much use to the internal information, but it has to be put in relation to other available communication channels. He continues that creating good relations with a new co-worker will probably not be done successfully via e-mail, whereas this medium rather suits better for answering questions under stressed conditions. Högström et al (1999, pp. 96-97) take this matter even further stating that information technology works very well for simple information, where there is less opportunity for enlarged interpretations.

2.4 Selection of Communication Channels

To achieve the required effectiveness, Erikson (1992, p. 46) puts emphasis on choosing a suitable combination of different types of communication channels. He additionally suggests a mixture of oral, written and electronical channels that complement each other to give the management a possibility to raise the knowledge of the employees, and at the same time allow them to speak their mind (see figure 2.4). Wood (1999) agrees as she claims that written communication followed by an open meeting provides efficiency. However, according to Strid (1999, p. 90) how to select communication channels are dependent on the messages that are to be communicated, as well as the target group and its previously knowledge. Erikson (1992, p. 46) further adds time as an important factor when selecting communication channels.

Figure 2.4: Effective Communication (Erikson, 1992, p. 45)

2.4.1 Routine

Petersson and Petersson (1992, p. 97) stress when selecting communication channel, it is of course not necessary to make an inventory of every existing channel. If a certain kind of information is received on a continuous basis, it should probably be sent in the same way. As a result, making a choice between different channels thus no longer become an issue, they discuss. However, it might be a disadvantage to work in a routinely way, Peterssson and Petersson (1992, pp. 97-98) argue. The vast amount of information may hide issues that are somewhat different and require an unconventional choice of communication channel, they state. Although making a consciously selection of channel,
they further assert several alternatives to disappear automatically, as some of them are not accessible, or there is not enough time to use others. The personnel for instance may be situated in different places making it impossible for them all to attend at a meeting or conference they add.

### 2.4.2 Select With Regard to the Receiver

Excluding some communication channels only makes the rough job, whereas the next step is a bit trickier Petersson and Petersson (1992, p. 98) explain. They further suggest a decision to be made, taking the following questions into consideration.

- Which channels can be used in a qualified way?
- What is the purpose of the information?
- Who and how many are to take part of the information?
- How much may it cost?

In general, Petersson and Petersson (1992, p. 98) declare the possibility to select a suitable channel with a rightness of judgment rather fast. As an example can be mentioned that a meeting is an appropriate method if all personnel have the opportunity to attend at short notice, and there is a necessity to communicate information in a fast way, they further elucidate. Yet, it may be essential to seek other channels if the manager does not have the ability to perform under these circumstances. This situation becomes aggravated if the manager himself believes that he possesses the capacity to perform well, they argue, while it is obvious to everybody else that he does not.

Strid (1999, p. 91) provides another common problem connected to management and claims that they often overestimate the power of written channels, such as personnel magazines and other written messages. Managers often forget that the information must be interpreted and put in a relevant context to make sense for the receiver. In addition, claiming that the personnel magazine did include a specific message is no excuse when co-workers end up uninformed about essential issues, he states. No written messages can replace the direct communication; rather just serve as a complement, he discusses.

Grönroos (1990, p. 248) presents a third example and states that although most managers realize the need for communicating new strategies to the co-workers in order for them to understand and accept the changes accompanying, not all of them know how to do this. In addition, he emphasizes the importance of developing supportive methods that can be used in such situations. Video films, internal memos, and brochures that focus on relevant issues are excellent supplementary channels during meetings for example, he argues.

According to Strid (1999, p. 90) there is no best communication channel. Högström et al (1999, p. 30) agree stressing that the communication must be formed by the purpose of the information flow. If the purpose is to disseminate knowledge, they explain written channels or information technology to constitute reasonable channels. On the other hand, if the aim is to communicate changes in attitude and behavior, they suggest a well-prepared dialogue to be a better option.
3 Methodology

This third chapter involves discussions and justifications of the methodological issues connected to this study. It further presents a chosen research approach, results from the literature review, evaluations of research strategies, and a discussion about the sample selection. In addition, issues concerning the Mini Case are clarified, followed by descriptions of our data collection and data analysis. Finally, we will discuss the validity and reliability of this investigation.

3.1 Research Approach

When determining what research approach to conduct, there are several options for an investigator to take under consideration. He or she must decide whether to pursue a deductive or inductive approach, as well as make a choice between qualitative or quantitative studies.

A deductive approach is according to Eriksson and Wiedersheim-Paul (1999, p. 203) based upon the theories available about an area of investigation. This should be followed by an attempt to describe and explain if the reality truly is what the theories earlier stated, they continue. If the conclusions result differently from the theory, it might need a modification. In contrast, Eriksson and Wiedersheim-Paul, (1999, p. 202) assert that the inductive approach is not based on any theory at all, rather an approach of collecting data from which a general conclusion can be drawn. They finally argue that this could lead to a future development of a new theory. According to Johansson and Svedner (1998, p. 16) a qualitative approach allows the researcher to describe the individual case more thoroughly, where the goal is not to generalize. They further stress that if the researcher instead collects a great amount of facts, and analyses them with the purpose to find patterns that are presumed to answer for a large group of individuals, a quantitative approach is being used.

We have pursued a deductive approach, as our study was based on a theoretical frame of reference, which were to be compared to empirical evidence. We found this approach more appropriate since a theoretical base would lead us towards asking more relevant and interesting questions throughout the study. Since the purpose of this investigation required a methodology that could lead us to a deeper understanding of the problem at hand, we adopted a qualitative approach that allowed us to investigate our problem area in depth. As the aim was not to seek generalized knowledge, it further supports our decision of using a qualitative approach.

3.2 Literature Review

To support our deductive research approach we went about collecting information from books concerning rapid company growth, organizational change, internal marketing,
internal communication, and research methodology. All of this literature support was searched for and found at the library of Luleå University of Technology, where most of the material was considered to be of scientific character. However, a small number of consultancy handbooks were also used as a complement to enrich our knowledge regarding the problem area. We further gathered scientific articles from the databases Academic-Search-Elite, ABI-Inform, and Emerald. Throughout the database search we used key words such as growth, rapid growth, organizational change, communication, internal communication, and effective communication. Such key words were utilized in presented forms, yet also put together in different combinations in order to find relevant articles. Although we found it somewhat difficult to come across scientific articles, the majority still constitute of such value. As an additional complement, we also searched for and found useful articles at the Internet homepage of a communication consultant, which can be found at http://www.JKL.se/.

3.3 Research Strategy

According to Yin (1994, p. 3) there are several strategies to be used for social science research and they all have their own way of collecting and analyzing empirical evidence. He further states that each strategy has its own advantages as well as disadvantages, and to get the most out of the research, one must know these differences.

Wahlbin and Lekvall (1993, pp. 139-145) claim the research strategies to consist of surveys, experiments, desk investigations, and case studies. Furthermore, Zikmund (1994, p. 58) explains the survey to be a research technique in which information is gathered from a sample of people through a questionnaire. Wahlbin and Lekvall (1993, p. 144) add that a survey further is characterized by the investigator’s interest in expressing an opinion on an entire population that the selected respondents are supposed to represent. In addition, Wahlbin and Lekvall (1993, pp. 141-147) declare that desk investigators use literature and earlier research to study a problem area and make different analysis from this existing material. A general problem when only using secondary data is that it often has been gathered for a completely different purpose than one’s own, they argue. Zikmund (1994, p. 59) states that experiments hold the greatest potential for establishing cause/effect relations, allowing the investigation to changes in one variable, such as sales, while manipulating one or two other variables, perhaps price or advertising. Zikmund (1994, pp. 132-133) further states that the purpose of the case study method is to obtain information from one or a few situations that are similar to the researcher’s problem situation. He argues that it is a technique that intensively investigates a problem. He continues that the advantage of a case study is that an entire organization or entity can be investigated in depth with attention to detail. This highly focused attention enables the researcher to concentrate on identifying the relationships among functions, individuals or entities, he finally adds.

Yin (1994, pp. 6-7) emphasizes that the most important condition for differentiating among these various research strategies is to identify the type of research questions being asked. He further explains that research questions that are built on how and why questions
The proclaimed advantages of the case study convinced us in our choice of research strategy. We wanted to increase the understanding of how internal communication is performed in organizations undergoing change, which required an intense and detailed investigation of an environment respondent to this problem area. Our stated research questions are also of a how character, which we feel, deal with operational links over time. This is because the internal communication within an organization can be seen as a complex process of behavior, dealing with people that are making decisions and acting upon these decisions. Finally, we decided to conduct a case study of two companies active in different areas of business in order to strengthen the empirical evidence.

3.3.1 Sample Selection

Our choice of case study objects was primarily impressed by our subjective notion, that companies that have gone through, or still undergo growth or major changes are stimulated towards developing more flexible and effective internal communication programs. We also felt that the two case study objects should not be involved in the same area of business, since the industry itself could leave traditional impressions to the single actor of how to handle their internal affairs. In addition, Ahrens (1996, p. 15) states that internal communication problems that evolve in rapid growth companies are not related to a specific area of business, but can develop in any company undergoing change. Thus, based on these premises, we have chosen to conduct our case study on WM-data AB and Manpower AB.

WM-data AB is however not growing at this very moment. Yet, an article in Bizniz (Sveriges, 1998) regards WM-data AB as an organization that has grown heavily through years of continuous acquisitions. We felt that this fact made the company experienced in dealing with overwhelming changes that involve internal communication problems. Ahlgren (1999) states that Manpower AB has spent several years to develop a coordinated way to communicate with the market. To succeed externally with an annual growth rate of 50 percent, the company values and vision must be communicated, he continues. Therefore, Manpower AB is putting a significant amount of resources to improve its internal communication, he finally adds.

3.4 Mini Case of LUVIT AB

The Mini Case of LUVIT AB, presented in chapter one, was performed simply as a guidance to exemplify the nature of internal communication problems within rapid growth companies, or in other words, organizations undergoing change. Strikingly but not surprisingly, our visit at LUVIT AB was characterized by spontaneous meetings with co-workers and managers who in a hurry expressed their views upon the current internal situation. Moreover, during our stay that took place on October 9th and 10th, 2000, we had
the privilege to discuss these issues with Henrik Kleist – Business Manager, Jonas Haraldson – Vice President Marketing, Charlotta Thollin – Project Manager/Product Communication, Karin Martell – Business Manager, Caroline Fredberg – Vice President Partner Network, and Ola Badersten – Business Manager. However, the Mini Case presentation holds our subjective interpretation of each and every individual view that LUVIT AB’s personnel shared with us, for that reason we decided to leave out the names of the respondents in the discussion accessible in chapter one. This peak at LUVIT AB’s current problems further provided us with an understanding of what issues to focus on in the problem discussion, as well as what theoretical content to search for. The Mini Case should therefore be viewed as a separate frame of guidance, for defining an interesting problem, not to be confused with our research strategy of collecting and analyzing empirical evidence.

3.5 Data Collection

Eriksson and Wiedersheim-Paul (1999, pp. 65-66) state when gathering data the investigator can either collect new data by him- herself, so-called primary data, or use secondary data, that is material that someone else has gathered for his or her own purpose. However, according to Yin (1994, p. 80) no single source has a complete advantage over all the others. A combination of these is often necessary to receive the desired information, he discusses. Our study required both primary- and secondary data. To be able to find the relevant case study objects that were required to conduct this investigation, we searched for and found articles that could support the choices that finally were made. However, primary data alone was gathered to perform the actual case study.

According to Yin (1994, pp. 79-85) there are six different sources of evidence: documentation, interviews, archival records, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artifacts. One of the most important sources of case study information, he claims, is the interview. Yin (1994, pp. 84-85) further explains how interviews can take several forms:

1. The open-ended interview, in which you can ask key respondents for the facts of a matter as well as opinions about events.

2. The focused interview, in which a respondent is interviewed for a short period of time. In such cases the interview may still remain open-ended, but you are more likely to be following a certain set of questions from an interview-guide. For example, a major purpose of such an interview might be to corroborate certain facts that you already think have been established, but not to ask about other topics of a broader, open-ended nature.

3. The formal survey, which resembles a survey but is an interview technique containing more structured questions.
Wahlbin and Lekvall (1993, p. 185) state that the interview enables a more controlled data gathering, which allows more flexible questions. Svensson (1987, p. 76) further supports a consequent advantage, which involves the opportunity for both parts to ask complimentary questions, thus correct potential misunderstandings and errors. But primarily, she celebrates the interview’s ability to provide deep-going answers. However, Yin (1994, p. 85) argues the downsides to be; poorly constructed questions that may bias the outcome, answers that for different reasons may be biased, inaccuracies that may occur when interpreting the answers, and that the respondent might give answers that the interviewer wants to hear.

According to Zikmund (1994, pp. 242-243) telephone interviews are becoming increasingly popular. He argues that in comparison to the personal face-to-face interview it is less time consuming and relatively inexpensive, as travel time and travel costs are eliminated. Wahlbin and Lekvall (1993, p. 187) support the statement and add that although the telephone interview is cheaper and faster, it is still almost as good as the personal interview. However, Zikmund (1994, p. 243) continues, it is important to be aware of that the absence of face-to-face contact could be a liability. He further explains that this is due to a lack of body language and expressions, which has a tendency to create confusion that could produce incomplete answers.

Minding the advantages and disadvantages of the interview and the telephone interview as sources of evidence, we chose to collect our primary data through telephone interviews with one respondent at each company. This decision was based on the fact that we needed to search for answers to a rather complex phenomenon. Such a close perception upon the case study topic required a high level of flexibility and, therefore, we also decided to conduct focused telephone interviews. However, we did prefer to make personal face-to-face interviews since this would give us the opportunity to visit the companies and avoid the various problems associated with the telephone interview, but due to issues of time and costs we had to choose otherwise.

To be able to obtain relevant data we had to make subjective choices of whom within the two case study objects to interview. First we considered the criterion of knowledge that the respondents ought to have due to their company key-positions. The final choices were based upon the recommendations made by the companies themselves. At WM-data AB, we chose to interview Crister Stjernfelt who besides being the Executive Vice President and having a 23-year long career within the company, also answers for the specific areas of information, market, and international issues. Stjernfelt therefore possesses a vast deal of knowledge and experience within our field of investigation. Moreover, we chose to interview Veronica Lysell at Manpower AB, who holds a position of Managing Editor and Information Coordinator at the Public Relations & Information department. This department embraces a total of six employees, where Lysell’s specific responsibility is to coordinate the company printed communication channels. As Manpower AB only has had an articulated communication strategy for less than a year, where these six people have been working closely to resolve issues of communication, we felt that Lysell’s position and overall knowledge was suitable to the support of our study.
In order to perform our telephone interviews under more controlled circumstances we made advance appointments with the chosen respondents, and also designed an interview guide that was to be used on both occasions (see appendix A for English, and appendix B for Swedish). The interview questions were based on the literature review, which reflected upon the problem discussion, purpose and research questions. These interview questions were structured but still remained somewhat open-ended to allow a technique called probing. Probing is according to Zikmund (1994, p. 514) necessary when the respondent must be motivated to enlarge on, clarify, or explain the answers. He also states that the technique is useful if the respondent begins to ramble or lose track of a question. However, we decided to send the interview-guide in advance to the respondents as this prepared them in a proper manner. Moreover, to provide us with some practical support throughout the events, we used a speakerphone and a tape recorder. The telephone interview with WM-data AB was finally realized on December 1st, 2000, which was followed by Manpower AB on December 4th, 2000. The telephone interviews approximately lasted for about an hour each.

3.6 Data Analysis

Yin (1994, p. 102) states that each investigation should start with a general analytic strategy. He asserts that too many investigators start case studies without having the foggiest notion about how the evidence is to be analyzed. It is important to prioritize what to analyze and why, since case studies in lack of such plans easily become stalled at the analytic stage, he finally adds.

Yin (1994, p. 103) also states that a preferred strategy is to follow the theoretical framework that led to the case study. The original objectives of our case study were based on such a framework, which in turn reflected reviews of the literature, a purpose, and a set of research questions. For this analysis we have used what Yin (1994, p. 106) claims to be a pattern-matching logic. With this logic in mind we could compare the empirically based pattern with the predicted theoretical pattern. This means that the empirical findings of WM-data AB and Manpower AB were compared and described in two separate within-case analyses, and further put in relation to the theories of the Internal Communication chapter. However, we have also conducted a third section of cross-case analysis that according to Yin (1994, p. 111) has an explanation-building character. A comparison of the two within-case analyses enabled us to explain and increase the understanding of how internal communication is performed in organizations undergoing change.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

Eriksson and Wiedersheim-Paul (1999, p. 38) state that validity can be defined as the instrument of measurement’s ability to measure what is intended to measure. Zikmund (1994, p. 357) argues that this obvious purpose of measurement is not as simple as it may seem. However, we did take preventive actions in an attempt to improve the validity of
this investigation. First of all, we made an effort to find the right people to interview within the two companies. In other words, depending on the respondents’ experience and knowledge within the area of investigation, we selected Executive Vice President Crister Stjernfelt at WM-data AB, and Veronica Lysell who holds the position of Managing Editor and Information Coordinator at Manpower AB. We further formed the interview questions so that they would reflect upon our theoretical framework, thus, leading us towards asking the kind of questions that was relevant to the purpose and research questions of this study. To increase the validity further, we tested the interview guide on an independent individual in order to get an objective opinion. We also sent the interview guide to the respective respondent before the telephone interview, so that they could add to their knowledge what might have been unclear or missing. Moreover, focused telephone interviews allowed us to take, to some extent, more open-ended actions. Probing was therefore used when necessary to enlarge on, clarify, or explain the answers in a further matter. Finally, we were aware of the problems of validity that may occur when interpreting the English literature and translating Swedish into English. Potential mistakes were therefore minimized through double-checking any terms and expressions that caused any confusion.

The most significant problem within this investigation concerns validity. Internal communication is a very complex process that involves the knowledge and opinions of every single individual within an organization. It is therefore likely that some knowledge and opinions concerning this matter might be lost in an interview of a single key-respondent at each company. While we had no doubts concerning the suitability, and overall knowledge of our subjectively chosen respondents at WM-data AB and Manpower AB, there might have been other people within the companies that alone or together could provide different and more enriching insights to various parts of this investigation. These resources could have been identified, carefully chosen and used in several overlapping interviews. Yet, such an attempt to improve the validity would unfortunately have been too time consuming and costly for us, and too bothersome for WM-data AB and Manpower AB. In addition, due to the fact that we decided to conduct a Mini Case on LUVIT AB, we had to dispose our time and resources in most efficient way, enabling only two case study interviews. Another problem connected to validity involves the fact that the selected respondents at WM-data AB and Manpower AB hold such positions that might result in a desire to improve the outcome of the interview in order to promote the company. Furthermore, as some of the gathered literature and articles were of a non-scientific character, this may have had a negative effect on the validity. To deal with these problems of validity, we have kept these issues in mind, trying to be as careful and critical as possible throughout the literature review and our analysis of the empirical findings.

Eriksson and Wiedersheim-Paul (1999, p. 39) state that validity is the most important concern upon an instrument of measurement and if the instrument does not measure what is intended, it is less important for the measure itself to be reliable. However, they continue, this second concept called reliability means that an instrument of measurement, for an example an interview-guide, should give reliable and stable answers. That is, they exemplify, should other investigators have reached the same result using the same
method? If someone were to repeat the attempt at another time with another sample selection, would this person get the same results? A method should therefore, in order to consist of high reliability, be independent from the investigator and, depending upon the chosen level of generalization, also be independent from the selected sample, they finally add.

To improve the reliability of this investigation efforts were made to decrease the probability of interview bias. First, we aimed to design the interview questions in such a way the respondents would find easy to understand. Here we considered issues such as forming structured questions, and sending the Swedish version of the interview-guide to the respective respondents. The interview guide could to the respondents hence represent an additional impression of our questions, other than our voices during the telephone interviews, and therefore decrease the probability of misunderstandings. Furthermore, we felt that it was important not to ask leading questions, therefore we had to be very careful in our probing for answers. Finally, a speakerphone was used to allow a recording of the whole interview. This tape represented additional and more accurate notes to ease and improve our interpretation of the empirical findings.
4 Empirical Findings

In this chapter, the empirical findings from the data collection will be presented. Brief company backgrounds of WM-data AB and Manpower AB will be introduced, followed by a more exhaustive description of the results, focusing on the areas of investigation.

4.1 WM-data AB

The empirical findings concerning WM-data AB were conducted on December 1st via a telephone interview with Crister Stjernfelt, which lasted for about an hour. Stjernfelt holds the position of Executive Vice President at WM-data AB, with a responsibility of the areas information, market and international issues, thus possesses a great deal of knowledge within these particular units. Moreover, he has a long experience within the business due to him being active at WM-data AB since 1977, hence has followed the development of the company.

According to Stjernfelt, WM-data AB and its 8,500 employees are active in an industry that can be defined as Information Technology, since they provide full-coverage solutions within this particular area in terms of hardware, software, administration and services. Stjernfelt further explains the organizational structure to consist of a matrix structure divided into six different business areas operating in four countries, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark. He additionally gives a brief elucidation to each of the various business areas.

1. Industries include industry-oriented solutions.
2. Consulting and Application is more of a horizontal character and contains different kinds of specialist competence, yet is not industry related.
3. Infra Solutions involve computer issues and network administration.
4. E-direct simply consist of hardware, such as workstations, storage, servers and PCs to mention a few.
5. Assistance is a resource-oriented consultant business with information technology as aim and direction.
6. Total Design is a consultant business focusing on design and construction.

Stjernfelt claims that WM-data AB has had an established communication policy since the beginning of the 1990s. Along with this, they provide a handbook on how to create effective internal communication, which is placed on the Intranet, accessible to all employees.

According to Stjernfelt, rapid growth is always a challenge in terms of a well functioning internal communication. WM-data AB has previously experienced such difficulties as the company was undergoing rapid change. Such organizational change complicates an unstructured internal communication, he discusses. A small company with approximately 1000 employees may provide a successful internal communication via oral distribution
and personal contacts, Stjernfelt explains. However, as the company grows the harder it becomes to reach each co-worker with such methods. Up to the year of 1990, WM-data AB was focusing on distributing communication in a face-to-face matter, and only turning to written channels if necessary. Using oral communication channels has its benefits, yet the limitations are becoming clear when communicating with more than two people, as one cannot be sure that the intended message reaches all parts involved. A well-organized communication strategy thus becomes essential, especially during circumstances of rapid change, he adds. Moreover, rapid growth itself also requires a greater amount of information than during normal times.

Stjernfelt argues that WM-data AB mainly has expanded through acquisitions involving an increasing number of co-workers, who demand more information as well as improved communication. In order to fulfill these requirements, and to respond to the rapid changes that the company was being exposed to, WM-data AB developed an Intranet in the beginning of the 1990s. At that moment, WM-data AB was in need for other communication channels, as the classical “corridor chat” and non-electronic messages no longer were satisfactory sources of information. Stjernfelt finally claims that the previously rapid growth of WM-data AB actively has contributed to the improvement of the internal communication.

Moreover, Stjernfelt declares that the primary purpose with internal communication is to unite and sustain the company culture. He further explains that internal communication is the only way of maintaining a clear company culture, or rather common company values. In order to clarify things, he asserts it is not enough to be in possession of the employees’ knowledge, and emphasizes to create and maintain a common base of values. This enables the co-workers to deliver pleasing solutions to the customers and deliver stockholder value to the stockholders. In addition, he states that WM-data AB and its six business areas make internal communication extremely important when doing business. These areas all need to be included in order to create a complete offer that later on will be delivered to the customer.

4.1.1 Categorization of Internal Communication

According to Stjernfelt, internal communication can be divided into three different categories.

1. Administrative communication, information necessary for the employees’ to perform their daily work.

2. Business communication, information involving WM-data AB and its business environment, as well as the events touching upon the company. Moreover, it contains customer-oriented information with the intention of letting the employees know everything there is to know, in terms of who the customers are and where they operate. Production-oriented information constitutes another type of business communication concerning issues essential for the co-workers handling the delivery of the offerings.
3. Social communication, information connected to the co-workers as individuals, enabling to create and maintain relations, as well as form a unified base of company values.

4.1.2 Criteria for Effective Internal Communication

Stjernfelt emphasizes the internal communication to be true, reliable and concrete in order to be effective. However, to rely on these criteria only is not enough, rather it becomes necessary to create a positive power of attraction. The internal communication at WM-data AB is focusing on each co-worker taking an individual responsibility in finding his or her own information. While the Intranet has become a common channel of communication, the employees must further be interested in using this channel, enabling them to obtain the required information. To facilitate this aim, Stjernfelt highlights the importance to be consequent, thus make the Intranet as the primary source of information gathering.

As WM-data AB is a Nordic concern, Stjernfelt argues the co-workers to have different backgrounds in terms of language for instance. Yet, WM-data AB does not have a unified language within the concern, meaning that the communication is performed in local language. All internal communication is based on the responsibility to communicate information connected to a specific geographical area. He further exemplifies this asserting internal communication disseminated from Karlstad to contain information, which only touches upon that particular region. As the information is broken down with regards to region and business area, it is possible to keep the information somewhat relevant to the co-workers. There will however always be general information that some co-workers will find irrelevant, which nevertheless is necessary to communicate to everybody. Along with this, Stjernfelt explains it is possible to obtain pertinent information from the central unit as well.

To disseminate the same information, independent of the sender is one of the most difficult tasks to achieve, according to Stjernfelt. When communicating information that is of a downward character, such as economical facts, it is essential that everybody involved obtain the same message. To realize this issue, Stjernfelt claims such information to be communicated by one single person who possesses this particular expertise. In a technical matter, WM-data AB further provides a national publication on the Intranet or via other channels, which present identical information. Stjernfelt further underlines the importance of communicating vital information, for example issues that touch upon the business and economical facts, in the same way. Therefore, such information proceeds from the parent company and is to be placed on the Intranet with the criterion that the content cannot be changed by anyone but the management. As a result, he states all employees to have access to the same material. Yet, one can never guarantee that the intended message will not be distorted, as it depends on how the person who acts as an intermediary chooses to present the material. There are however clear directions on what is allowed, and what is not allowed to do with this kind of information.
Moreover, Stjernfelt explains that they do not put extra time and effort on presenting the information in such way that appeals to the receivers. He additionally argues that it is not really a problem to get the employees interested in the internal communication. Yet, if the co-workers are not interested in such information, it does not really matter how it is being presented.

Stjernfelt clarifies that they need to make sure that the information available is interesting for the co-workers, thus motivating them to search for the required information. With the intention of making the employees more committed in the internal communication, WM-data AB has established prize contests and chat pages. Consequently, the co-workers thus become more motivated in their communication, as well as increase their ability in terms of receiving new information.

In order to perform a continuous internal communication within the organization, WM-data AB has “info-masters” on each business area, both on a national level and concern level, whose task is solely to maintain the information flow on a continuous basis.

4.1.3 Challenges to Effective Internal Communication

According to Stjernfelt, the main challenge in achieving effective internal communication at WM-data AB is due to the fact that they push the information onto the employees, without knowing if they actually have the ability to obtain it. By this he means that vast amount of information is placed on the Intranet, requiring the employees to pull the information that is of interest. As a consultant business, WM-data AB also has a problem in reaching out to each co-worker, since many of them are moving about among the customers, thus are influenced by additional information. He further argues that as the consultants are active on the field and not attached to a specific office, they have no access to the Intranet of WM-data AB. Moreover, he asserts that the internal problems rather have its foundation in the difficulty in reaching out to the employees, than a lack in the communication itself.

Stjernfelt stresses that the organizational structure has not caused any communication problems, as it to the fullest possible extent is based on electronically channels. The main idea with utilizing such channels is that it makes the information easily accessible to everybody regardless time and location. In other words, as long as there is a computer available, each co-worker has the ability to reach the desired information in spite of business area and position.

Moreover, Stjernfelt declares that lack in internal communication has resulted in differences of opinions. Although WM-data AB has put a lot of time and effort in improving the internal communication, there are no limits of how much can be done. There will always be co-workers complaining about not receiving enough information, which leads to disagreements among the employees. As a result, co-workers disappointingly ask themselves “why do we have to do this, and why do you get to do that?” Stjernfelt emphasizes the difficulty in making the employees to actively seek and obtain the information available.
The management’s ability to communicate has also entailed internal problems. Referring to the senior management, Stjernfelt claims various personalities to have different abilities to communicate effectively. This does not only touch upon the top management, as some people on other hierarchical levels are not clear enough in their way of communicating information, thus deteriorating the internal communication. This lack in communication becomes even more obvious the more hierarchical levels the information passes. Stjernfelt states it speaks for itself that it is most significant to have communicative leaders to prevent the message from changing, as a large part of the information is communicated orally. It is rather easy to tell who is a good communicator and who is not, in terms of how well things are functioning within the organization.

Lack in communication in terms of people feeling uninformed, basically depends on the physical distance between the employees. This issue does not concern geographical areas, as it has no affect if a co-worker is situated in Luleå or Stockholm, rather as the employee do not have access to the common Intranet. Today, there is no proper solution to this matter, yet an idea is to develop a mobile Internet, enabling the employees to reach the information easily without any exceptions.

4.1.4 Communication Channels

According to Stjernfelt, the most important communication channel is the Intranet. As WM-data AB is scattered geographically, and considering the size of the organization as well as the physical distance that comes with it, this channel is the best thing happening in order to achieve effective internal communication. Each morning when the co-workers turn on the Intranet, the Swedish news bill appears automatically where new information is being presented. The information thus becomes up-to-date and leaves the receiver with the choice of reading the information directly or save it for later use. The main disadvantage with using the Intranet is that it easily may be filled with irrelevant facts, he finally argues.

E-mail is another functional channel used for internal communication. Stjernfelt states that this channel is suitable for mass distribution of information, as well as individual communication. However, he asserts one must be careful when utilizing this channel and only send what is relevant for the co-workers, in order to prevent them from being overloaded with irrelevant information.

Stjernfelt further claims WM-data AB to utilize printed media as another source of internal communication. Moreover, he explains that they provide the employees with a personnel magazine and a newsletter once a month, which take various forms depending on where it is produced, with regards to business area and senior management. The personnel magazine contains some internal communication, yet its primary focus is the families of the employees. However it does constitute a popular internal channel, and has many frequent readers. The benefit to gain with such media is that one can easily attract readers due to appealing layout and cover. The downside with personnel magazines is that it often contains obsolete facts due to time for production and execution. This kind of channel is therefore most suitable for creating and maintaining company values. As for
the newsletter, Stjernfelt argues it possesses the benefit of providing timely information, since it is produced the day before distribution.

Face-to-face communication is another valuable source of information, according to Stjernfelt. The personal communication involves formal meetings, as well as informal meetings, such as “corridor chat”, gossip during lunch hours, or coffee breaks. Such a channel is extremely helpful when aiming to influence the employees in some way, compared to the other channels presented above, which allow the co-workers to stay passive. However, oral communication does not permit the possibility to prevent the content of the message from changing along the way, he discusses.

4.1.5 Selection of Communication Channels

When making a decision on what communication channel to use, Stjernfelt emphasizes it to be a balance in presenting as objective and interesting information as possible. He further declares the strongest criterion to be that each co-worker should have access to all information of value, regardless time and location. What counts for WM-data AB is to provide identical information and make it available to each co-worker when needed thus reduce the call for middle management.

The choice of what communication channel to select foremost lies in the hands of senior management. Moreover, it is dependent on the purpose of the information. Stjernfelt exemplifies this issue by claiming if the information is perishable, the Intranet constitutes the most suitable channel. If the information includes material that is of great importance to each co-worker and needs to be communicated rather fast, the e-mail thus becomes a more valuable source. E-mail as a distribution channel requires a great deal of information filtering to prevent misuse in terms of information overload that easily arise with this channel. If sending too many e-mail messages, Stjernfelt argues the employees to not have the time or the ability to read each one of them, with a risk of loosing important information in the vast amount of messages. Value based information or communication related to the company culture is preferably distributed via personnel magazines, Stjernfelt further discusses. The personal communication channel is a reliable source if the aim is to create a deeper understanding on a certain matter.

The selection of communication channel is somewhat dependent on who the information is for. If only the management is to take part of the material, Stjernfelt explains that e-mail is the most suitable source to choose, as it allows the selection of individual communication. Otherwise, he argues that up to 90 percent, the communication is distributed in the same way to everybody within the organization, usually via the Intranet.

Stjernfelt finally states that the selection of communication channel is not dependent on costs. However, it may appear in relation to the initiation of a new channel, yet the most important thing is that the internal communication is functioning in most efficient way.
4.2 Manpower AB

The acquirement of this empirical information took place on December 4th through a telephone interview with Veronica Lysell, that lasted for about an hour. Lysell states that she has been working at Manpower AB for three years and now holds a position as Managing Editor and Information Coordinator at Manpower AB Public Relations & Information department in Stockholm, where she has a specific responsibility to coordinate the company printed communication channels. However, Manpower AB’s rapid growth has gradually created a fundamental need for a unit that strategically could work with external and internal information and communication, and in January 2000 scattered functions were developed and put together into a new Public Relations & Information department. Lysell states that she, since the January initiation has been working at this position and is well involved in the company strives for improved internal communication.

Manpower AB is according to Lysell currently active in the competence provision industry, holding a total of 10,800 employees, where a rough 1,000 are working at the core activities of the company and the rest constitute the actual products of competence. To clarify the products of competence, these are the external workers that Manpower AB provides its clients. Manpower AB is divided into different Swedish geographical regions, or different market areas, Lysell discusses. These market areas constitute the Mid-North, West, and South of Sweden, but the Stockholm market area is profoundly larger than the others and is therefore categorized into its own region. In this last market area, the senior management can be found as well as the Public Relations & Information department. However, the characteristics of the company’s internal communications strategy and the common work that is performed at the department of Public Relations & Information, often involve the coordination and prioritization of information throughout the company. Furthermore, when various employees at Manpower AB need to communicate in a more complex matter than might be obvious, the department takes on a consultancy role guiding them to reach the targeted group and to perform the actual information work themselves. Lysell explains that the department also takes on the responsibility to perform the actual communication when needed.

Lysell states that the rapid company growth has created internal communication problems that are being considered throughout the new strategic approach. During the earlier stage the organization was more perspicuous where everybody knew each other and could attend to various meetings or communicate in different ways, and therefore keep a clear and ongoing dialog. When the company growth later increased, this became a more difficult task as the need for a fast and common channel of internal communication suddenly was critical. As a consequence, an Intranet was introduced in January 2000 to come to terms with this new situation.

Furthermore, Lysell argues that Manpower AB’s purpose of having a well functioning internal communication foremost is to communicate the company values to the extent that all the people involved become a strong unit. She further claims Manpower AB to be an extremely value-based company, which requires this communicative approach.
However, another important purpose is of course to communicate issues that support the daily business. To communicate these issues successfully, the management has to create relations and emphasize important information by addressing themselves.

4.2.1 Categorization of Internal Communication

Lysell states that there is no clearly articulated categorization of communication within Manpower AB. However, she discusses various evident categories such as company value-based information, news, facts, information regarding quality, environmental issues, and economical information.

4.2.2 Criteria for Effective Internal Communication

Lysell categorizes three different, but very important criteria for achieving effective internal communication. First, it is necessary to consider which people are in need of the information. This criterion makes it possible to select the information a certain individual needs, and thus avoids a very common problem of information overload. Second, it is important to select a suitable communication channel to reach the attended receiver. This criterion enables to actually reach the final destination with the information as it considers communication channels that are suitable to the receiver. Third, the sender must ensure that the receiver has understood the information. This is done through communicating in an attractive and interesting matter, and taking the responsibility to follow up the information that has been sent.

To perform internal communication with regards to the receivers’ different background and experience, Manpower AB does very little. Lysell states that the choice of communication channel is made to suit the attended receiver. However, the information will of course be communicated differently depending on how much the receiver knows about the certain area of information. For example, a senior executive can often handle more complex information than the average co-worker due to his or her very broad experience and knowledge.

Manpower AB works to relieve information overload by only presenting relevant information to the right receiver. If the information only regards managers it might be appropriate to communicate through a publication that is aimed towards those individuals. Moreover, if the information regards the organization as a whole, the information will most likely be communicated through the Intranet. However, if the attended message regards the Manpower AB’s external competence-workers the personnel magazine is an appropriate communication channel. Finally, if the information only touches a specific group of people, e-mail might be appropriate.

Lysell states that to make sure that a certain type of information is communicated in the same way, independent of how many the communicators is, Manpower AB works to control the information. It is common to produce some kind of written material that can be used by several communicators. Moreover, sometimes meetings are called upon where communicators are explained how to inform in a further matter.
Lysell argues that communication must be consequent over time. Important information is however often communicated by a small number of individuals, and if the information is vital, one of the senior managers delivers it to the different market areas in person. If this information suddenly needs to be communicated in a further matter, the person in charge of this particular issue thus controls the information flow. This increases the probability of understanding and makes sure that the information is not communicated differently at several occasions.

To make the communication interesting to the receiver, Lysell states that it is essential to start out with the core and most important part of the information, not very much unlike a news bill. Furthermore, it is also important to package the information in a fun and interesting way. This was illustrated throughout the internal promotion of the new Intranet, where an amusing and personal brochure was released to interest the co-workers. However, information further becomes interesting dependent on how relevant it is to the receiver’s daily work. Manpower AB’s values are gathered into a slogan, which constitute words such as personal, reliable, and competent, and all of the company activities and all of the internal communication strive to relate to these values. The company’s internal communication is therefore often extremely personal towards its targeted receiver.

Lysell further emphasizes to create a mutual commitment between the sender and receiver of the internal communication. Most of the employees at Manpower AB are extremely committed and sales oriented, and therefore it has not been a problem to engage people as many feel the need to be seen and take part in the dialog. However, this fact is taken advantage from in different prize contests. If there for an example is a need to inform about a new graphical profile, it is often easy to ask co-workers for evaluations that could lead to a prize or some other advantages. Furthermore, when expecting a commitment, it is vital to evaluate what the receiver has to gain from the situation. To enforce a receiver advantage often results in a clear commitment.

Lysell explains that continuous communication is very important and that Manpower AB commonly uses its Intranet for this purpose. The information on the Intranet is usually updated several times a day and is available to all of the 1.000 core-workers. Optional but slower channels such as printed medias are also used for this purpose.

**4.2.3 Challenges to Effective Internal Communication**

Lysell states that there are difficulties in achieving an effective internal communication. Company growth means a growing number of people within the organization who wants to inform everybody about everything, thus results in an overload of information. The activities in Västerås are not always of relevance to the people in Lund, and information stress has therefore become evident throughout the organization. Manpower AB therefore works to prioritize and coordinate the information to create a well functioning communication environment. It is a challenge to learn the organization and explain to the people how to work with information and communication, where they must understand what facts are relevant to the organization as a whole. Moreover, Lysell further states that
the Intranet is no total solution to all of the problems but many co-workers have a tendency to trust this new channel blindly. Co-workers who put information upon the Intranet tend to think that the job is done, which implies that there is a lack in responsibility to make sure that the information is actually perceived and understood. The department of Public Relations & Information’s responsibility in this matter becomes evident as there is a need to follow up the information and persuade people to utilize the Intranet with care, in order to avoid flaws in the internal communication.

Lysell asserts that the Manpower AB organizational structure not presents any significant problems to the internal communication. She states that the company has a very decentralized structure that enables decisions to be taken very close to the reality. The information therefore appears very close to the intended target group. The Intranet is also a very handy communication channel to surpass possible difficulties when the organization as a whole are in need of a certain kind of information.

Lysell further argues that a lack in internal communication not has lead to increased disagreements regarding the company values, goals, and strategies. Manpower AB is an exceptionally value-based company and its employees are very keen to share these values. Moreover, all of the core-employees are annually participating the strategic planning where their sub-units, constituting a maximum of eight people, to some extent are given free hands in developing frames of how to work the coming year. This creates a great commitment and avoids disagreements.

Lysell does not think that the communicative ability of the management has lead to any significant lack in internal communication. The communicative environment is described as fast and open, where senior management trusts the co-workers to handle confidential and sensitive information with care. However, she claims that there of course exist individual differences in the effectiveness of having weekly meetings or using other communicative tools. However, Lysell asserts that these minor problems do not present any serious issues.

Lysell asserts that the physical distance between employees always can provide problems to the internal communication of an organization, but she feels that this has been properly solved through the introduction of the Intranet. A vast amount of the information that touches the organization as a whole are available to all employees at the same time, which enables the middle managers to further inform groups the same day.

### 4.2.4 Communication Channels

Lysell states that the Intranet constitutes the most important channel of internal communication. It is only available to the core-employees and not to the products of competence. Today’s primal mean to reach the products of competence is through personal contacts, but Manpower AB is also developing an Extranet for this purpose. The advantage of the Intranet is that it can be used to reach everybody within the organization at the same time, wherever they are. The disadvantages culminate in the information
overload that often leads to a disconnection between the sender and the receiver of information. This disadvantage is also valid to the use of e-mail as well.

Lysell further discusses that Manpower AB uses printed media as another source of internal communication. The personnel magazine that comes out every second month is a useful channel, but the time to produce this media has a tendency to make information out of date, hence it is appropriate to carefully select the right information when using the personnel magazine. The printed media further constitutes letters, brochures, printed economical information, and a minor magazine called “anslagstavlan” containing personal information aimed at the product of competence. Lysell further states the face-to-face communication to constitute another and very important source of internal communication, which involves formal as well as informal meetings for instance.

4.2.5 Selection of Communication Channels

Lysell presents a few criteria that are of importance to Manpower AB when selecting communication channels. These involve who and how many the receivers are, how important the information is, and how urgently the information needs to be communicated. According to Lysell these criteria all sums up how the right person receives the right information. The department of Public Relations & Information has proclaimed guidelines of when to use a certain channel of internal communication and normally, people have a pretty good idea of how to transfer information in an effective way. These guidelines are of course not always followed as have been illustrated by the overload of information upon the Intranet.

Lysell asserts that the selections are dependent on the attributes of the internal communication channels. An example that Lysell provides concern how much time the channel needs to deliver. If the information needs to reach the receiver quickly, the Intranet or perhaps e-mail is selected. Furthermore, the selections are also dependent upon the type of information that is to be communicated. If the information is of a broader extent that perhaps needs to be expressed by explanations, the personnel magazine might be a suitable choice. If the information further is of a character that probably will awake many thoughts and questions, a meeting might be appropriate to support this need. Moreover, the choice of communication channel depends on who and how many the receivers might be. Information that needs to be sent to many employees within the organization will probably go via the Intranet, but might be sent via e-mail if it only regards very few people. Lysell asserts that the selection of channels to some extent is dependent upon costs. The aspect of cost is always an important factor but it has to be put into relation to the importance of internal communication. For an example, to have the senior management travel around and inform co-workers may be very expensive, but in relation to this cost, it might be crucial for the future of the organization that this information is enforced in a consequent matter.
5 Analysis

This chapter involves a comparison between the empirical findings and the theoretical content, presented in chapter two. Beginning with within-case analyses of WM-data AB and Manpower AB, the results from these will later on be discussed in a cross-case analysis.

5.1 Within-Case Analysis of WM-data AB

For this within-case analysis, the empirical findings of WM-data AB have through a pattern-matching logic been put in relation to the predicted theory.

5.1.1 Categorization of Internal Communication

As for the categorization of internal communication, Stjernfelt divides it into three different groups, in comparison to theory where Erikson (1992, pp. 40-41) presents a variety of five classifications. Although the structural categorization differs, the content of the diverse communications is rather similar.

Stjernfelt describes the administrative communication to contain information necessary for the employees’ to perform well in their daily work, while Erikson (1992, pp. 40-41) refers to such facts as work communication. Moreover, business communication involves information connected to WM-data AB and its business environment, as well as events that touch upon the company, according to Stjernfelt. He further argues it to embrace customer-oriented information and production-oriented information. Connected to theory, these issues can be found in the two categories of news communication, containing information about the latest issues in the organization, and manage communication, where for instance manuals for production and memos regulating the business are included. The third category presented by Stjernfelt involves social communication, while in theory this classification is named culture communication. These categories both contain information connected to the co-workers as individuals. Stjernfelt argues such information to enable the creation and maintaining of relations, as well as form a unitary base of company values. In agreement, Erikson (1992, pp. 40-41) claims culture communication to entail information concerning company values and ethics, as well as attitudes towards people. This only leaves one category behind, named change communication in the theory chapter. Stjernfelt has not specifically mentioned such communication.

5.1.2 Criteria for Effective Internal Communication

According to Stjernfelt, the most important criteria for effective internal communication are to present information that is true, reliable, concrete and consequent. This is a narrower categorization of criteria for effective internal communication than what is presented in theory. However, when investigating the various criteria with the theory
chapter as a base, it was discovered that WM-data AB however does consider supplementary criteria for effectiveness, which can be viewed below.

Stjernfelt explains, as WM-data AB is a Nordic concern, the co-workers within the organization thus possess different background in terms of language. In order to make the information easily understandable and concrete for the receivers, he states the communication to be broken down with regards to region and business area, as well as performed in local language. In concordance with theory, Lewis (1999) and Erikson (1992, p. 38) discuss the importance to profile the receivers of the information in terms of differences in knowledge, language, culture and assignments, to increase the perception of the message.

To make the information relevant, Stjernfelt states the information to be separated with regards to the various geographical regions. Information that is of importance to a certain region should only appear on that particular regions’ Intranet, thus reduce the potential for information overload. Erikson (1992, p. 38) agrees with this as he suggests the sender to keep the information concentrated, and only communicate issues that are essential for the receiver. Andersson (1971, p. 20) supports this, asserting that a communication, containing a mix of different kinds of information will appear as disturbing to the receiver.

According to Erikson (1992, pp. 38-39) the communication must further be coordinated, as it is not rare that two managers choose to present a certain message in two separate ways. Stjernfelt argues to disseminate the same information, independent of the sender, is one of the most difficult tasks to achieve. To solve this problem, Stjernfelt explains that vital information is only to be communicated by one single person who possesses the expertise required. If the information is to be communicated electronically, WM-data AB further provides a national publication on the Intranet. Using one source of information enables to formulate a unitary picture of the message, which is stated in theory as well.

To make the information consequent, Erikson (1992, p. 39) emphasizes the importance of knowing what consequences the information delivery may have later on. Stjernfelt agrees, claiming that to keep the information consequent, certain information is only to be distributed by the parent company and placed on the Intranet, with the criterion that the content cannot be changed by anyone but the management.

Erikson (1992, p. 39) argues as information all too often is solely founded on facts, thus becomes dull and uninteresting for the receiver, the communication must further form contrasts, such as using pictures and present the message in a pedagogical way. Stjernfelt does not agree on this issue, as he states that WM-data AB does not put extra time and effort on packaging the information in such way that will appeal to the receivers. Along with this, he declares if the receivers are not interested in certain information it does not really matter how it is being presented.

Another important criterion mentioned in theory, is that the information must strive to create contacts that lead to a dialogue. All too often, the communication is performed on
the sender’s conditions, he or she should therefore reflect on the receiver’s preferences when distributing a message. Stjernfelt does not only agree with this statement, he additionally emphasizes to use prize contests and chat pages with the intention of making the employees more motivated in their communication, as well as increase their ability in receiving new information. To create a mutual commitment in the internal communication, Stjernfelt states that the information available must be of interest to the co-workers thus make them more motivated in searching for the required information. This is stated in theory as well, as Erikson (1992, p. 39) asserts an effective communication to require a mutual commitment.

In order to perform internal communication on a continuous basis, Stjernfelt explains that WM-data AB provides “info-masters” connected to each business area, both on a national level and concern level, whose task is exclusively to maintain a continuously information flow. In concordance with Stjernfelt, Erikson (1992, p. 39) stresses planning the dialogue in advance will facilitate the continuity of communication.

5.1.3 Challenges to Effective Internal Communication

As the shape and character of organizations are changing from the old, hierarchical chain-of-command structure to the new-age organization it is no longer necessary to follow a vertical path in the organization, thus shifting the focus to a more horizontal perspective. Yet, D’Aprix (1996, p. 119) argues that the single most difficult kind of communication to strategize is the horizontal communication. Stjernfelt asserts the organizational structure itself not to constitute a problem at WM-data AB, as the internal communication to the fullest extent is based on electronical channels. Their main challenge is however, that the information is being pushed onto the employees via the Intranet, without really knowing if they are able to obtain it, thus a risk of loosing vital facts in the vast amount arises.

Andrews and Herschel (1996, pp. 235-241) argue that conflicts often grow from disagreements over the acquisitions and the use of resources, and usually reflect perceived underlying differences in values and goals. In agreement, Stjernfelt declares that lack in internal communication has provided differences in opinions at WM-data AB as well. To respond to this, D’Aprix (1996, p. 123) claims what should be of concern is when those disagreements do not get aired and resolved, and when there is a lack of common direction and commitment to common goals. However, Stjernfelt claims that although putting a lot of time and effort in improving the internal communication, there are no limits of how much can be done. There will always be dissatisfied co-workers complaining about not receiving enough information, which in turn will lead to disagreements among the employees.

Stjernfelt further explains that the management’s ability to communicate has moreover entailed internal problems, yet not in terms of misuse of power as well as the abuse and devaluation of employees, stated by D’Aprix (1996, pp. 131-132). Stjernfelt clams various individuals to have different abilities to communicate effectively, regardless their position in the organization. This lack in communication becomes even more evident the
more organizational levels the information passes. Andrews and Herschel (1996, p. 145) also emphasize these issues as challenging, claiming that downward communication is plagued by several problems, particularly in highly bureaucratic organizations. Stjernfelt states it speaks for itself that it is most significant to have communicative leaders to prevent the message from changing, as a large part of the information is communicated orally. Consequently, Andrews and Herschel (1996, p. 145) argue to blindly rely on oral messages may intensify the problems with internal communication, especially when the information must work its way through several levels of hierarchy.

Moberg (1997, p. 82) mentions the physical distance as another challenging factor for effective internal communication. Stjernfelt also claims the physical distance between the employees to constitute a contributory cause to the internal problems, in terms of them feeling uninformed. However, as opposed to theory, Stjernfelt asserts the geographical distance not to be the problem, rather the availability to the Intranet at WM-data AB. As long as the co-workers have access to the common Intranet, it does not really matter where they are situated at the moment. Yet, as the consultants are operating on the field and are not attached to a specific office, they rarely have access to the Intranet. Stjernfelt further explains that there is no proper solution to this problem today, yet WM-data AB has an idea in order to solve this problem, which includes the development of a mobile Internet, enabling the employees to reach the information more easily.

5.1.4 Communication Channels

Stjernfelt argues the Intranet to be the best thing happening to the company in order to achieve effective internal communication, as WM-data AB is scattered geographically, and considering the size of the organization, as well as the physical distance that comes with it. In agreement with Stjernfelt, Strid (1999, pp. 86-87) emphasizes the benefits of this channel to be the almost unlimited possibility to store information, leaving the receiver with a choice of when, where and how to actively take part of the information. Stjernfelt further stresses that the main disadvantage with this channel is that it easily may be filled with irrelevant facts. D’Aprix (1996, p. 75) concords stating that the Intranet sometimes may deluge the employees with more information than they can handle. It has previously been addressed by Stjernfelt that the main problem at WM-data AB constitutes the information push on the Intranet. From the co-workers point of view, a pull behavior is required in order to achieve the information. According to Thorson (1997, p. 23) such behavior improves the interaction with the user, as he or she thus becomes a part of the communication process. Yet, Stjernfelt highlights the difficulty in making the employees active in the information search, due to the information overload. Carr and Folliard (1999) agree claiming that the biggest disadvantage with using a pull method is the users’ inability to monitor the receipt of information. Still, when organized well, a pull communication can offer a wide range of information at multiple levels of detail without overwhelming the audience, they add.

Stjernfelt argues that e-mail represents an additional channel for internal communication, which is suitable for mass distribution as well as individual communication. Carr and Folliard (1999) mention this matter as well, stressing such communication to be valuable
when disseminating information needed or wanted by a large number of people. Stjernfelt highlights the risk for information overload, as previously discussed regarding the Intranet, and underlines only to send what is useful for the co-workers and not to push irrelevant facts onto the receivers. According to Thorson (1997, p. 23), push communication drives the information to the receivers, leaving them without any choice of influencing the information flow.

Stjernfelt moreover asserts WM-data AB to use printed media as another source of internal communication. He additionally argues that they provide the employees with a personnel magazine once a month, which is also suggested by Strid (1999, pp. 69-70). Stjernfelt moreover explains that the primary focus of such media is to reach out to the co-workers’ families rather than provide important internal communication. Strid (1999, p. 72) adds that distributing the personnel magazines to the homes of the employees will make the co-workers’ families more involved and supportive of their work. As organizations grow, Strid (1999, pp. 145-146) also asserts personnel magazines to turn into several, with a result of a shattered internal communication. At WM-data AB, a variety of personnel magazines have been developed, depending on what audience they aim to impress. Stjernfelt however, argues this to be a positive measure in order to keep the information relevant. The downside with personnel magazine is according to Stjernfelt that it often contains obsolete information due to time for production and execution, thus makes it more suitable for creating and maintaining company values. Högström et al (1999, p. 96) share this opinion and claims it to be appropriate when carrying out longer articles of a complex nature, as well as information regarding the organizational culture. An additional printed media at WM-data AB is the newsletter, which is provided once a month as well. Stjernfelt argues it to possess the benefit of containing timely information, since it is produced the day before distribution. In relation to theory, Petersson and Petersson (1992, p. 144) suggest sending a newsletter once a week, as a complement to the personnel magazine.

According to Stjernfelt, face-to-face communication constitutes another valuable source of information that is extremely useful when aiming to influence the co-workers in some way, or as Kallinikos (1996, p. 24) claims, it also represents a major vehicle for expressing feelings and emotions. Stjernfelt particularly emphasizes the importance of meetings, in concordance with Högström et al (1999, p. 92). They moreover explain that a meeting may take a formal or an informal character, which is stated by Stjernfelt as well. Informal meetings may take several forms in terms of “corridor chat”, gossip during lunch hours or coffee breaks, Stjernfelt argues. However, Strid (1999, pp. 57-58) states a given problem closely related to this is the risk for rumors to occur. In accordance, Stjernfelt underlines the disadvantage with oral communication to include less control over the content of the message as it circulates among the employees.

5.1.5 Selection of Communication Channels

Erikson (1992, p. 46) emphasizes to choose a suitable combination of different communication channels, whereas a blend of oral, written and electronical channels provides most efficiency. In agreement, WM-data AB utilizes all three of these various
categories. However, when selecting communication channel, Stjernfelt argues the strongest criterion to be that each co-worker should have access to all information of value, regardless time and location, which is identical despite of communicator. Due to this, the Intranet has become the primary communication channel. To select channel with regards to the receiver is moreover suggested by Petersson and Petersson (1992, p. 98).

The choice of which communication channel to select, foremost lies in the hands of senior management at WM-data AB, who presents guidelines concerning what channel suits better for what information. Högström et al (1999, p. 30) stress that the communication must be formed by the purpose of the information flow. Stjernfelt supports this statement, claiming that if the information is perishable, the Intranet constitutes the most suitable channel. If the information is vital to each employee and needs to be communicated rather fast, the e-mail thus becomes a more valuable source. Strid (1999, p. 88) is of the same opinion, asserting that such medium is more valid when distributing facts under stressed conditions. Moreover, Stjernfelt explains that value based information is better suited for personnel magazines, thus concords with theory as well. If the aim is to communicate changes in attitude and behavior, Högström et al (1999, p. 30) suggest a well-prepared dialogue to be an appropriate channel. Stjernfelt supports this issue, stating that personal communication is reliable when the intention is to create a deeper understanding on a certain matter.

According to Petersson and Petersson (1992, p. 98) the communication may further be selected with regards to who the receiver is. Stjernfelt does not agree completely, claiming that the communication is distributed in the same way to everybody within the organization up to 90 percent. Yet, if only the management is to take part of certain information for instance, Stjernfelt argues e-mail to be the most effective channel as it allows the selection of individual communication.

Petersson and Petersson (1992, p. 98) additionally assert that when selecting communication channel, costs may be considered. In contrary, Stjernfelt states the selection of communication channel not to be dependant on costs. Moreover, he adds that it may become an issue in relation to the initiation of a new channel, but what counts for WM-data AB is that the internal communication functions in most efficient way.

5.2 Within-Case Analysis of Manpower AB

For this within-case analysis, the empirical findings of Manpower AB have through a pattern-matching logic been put in relation to the predicted theory.

5.2.1 Categorization of Internal Communication

Lysell states that Manpower AB has no clearly articulated categorization of internal communication. However, she mentions various types of communication that can be put into relation with all of the five different categorizations presented in theory.
Lysell mentions that Manpower AB communicates news, which according to Erikson (1999, pp. 40-41) constitutes news communication and involves the latest issues in the organization. Lysell further explains that information within Manpower AB often regard environmental, economical, and quality issues. These economical issues and company policies are what Erikson (1999, pp. 40-41) would refer to as manage communication. Moreover, Lysell states that Manpower AB also communicate value-based information. According to Erikson (1999, pp. 40-41) this culture communication regards information that touches the company values, its ethics, and attitudes. Finally, Lysell mentions facts, which Erikson (1999, pp. 40-41) refers to as work communication that is necessary for each co-worker in order to pursue the daily work. Lysell’s statement about facts can also be put in relation to Erikson’s (1999, pp. 40-41) change communication, where an organization often needs to separate the dialogue that concerns the regular business form the unexpected and drastically.

5.2.2 Criteria for Effective Internal Communication

When first asked, Lysell spontaneously mentions three different criteria for achieving effective internal communication, which concerns the consideration of which people are in need of what information, the evaluation of what communication channel is suitable to the receiver, and considerations that the receiver has understood the information. However, these facts will melt in and be analyzed throughout the following criteria for effective internal communication.

Lysell explains that Manpower AB does very little to perform its internal communication with regard to the receivers’ different background and experience. This is not in accordance to theory as Erikson (1992, p. 38) asserts the importance of communicating concrete in order for the information to be understandable to the co-workers, with regard to their different backgrounds in knowledge, language, culture, and assignments. However, Lysell mentions that the choice of communication channel is made to suit the attended receiver in agreement with Erikson (1992, p. 38). Lysell further argues that information naturally will be communicated differently depending on how much knowledge the receiver already has upon the certain area of information. However, Manpower AB does not claim to perform any of the appropriate methods to increase the understanding of information, which the theory emphasizes. To clarify such methods, Lewis (1999) explains the importance to analyze the audience, whether it contains only one individual, a small, or a large group.

Lysell stresses that Manpower AB is being exposed to information stress due to an overload of information, and that they work to relieve these overloads by only presenting relevant information to the right receiver. Theory confirms this fact as Erikson (1992, p. 38) suggests to keep the information concentrated, as focusing on issues that are essential for the receiver. Andersson (1971, p. 20) agrees that a communication containing a mix of different kinds of information will appear as disturbing to the receiver, compared to a message where only relevant issues are being discussed. Furthermore, co-workers at Manpower AB have to learn to prioritize which information should be sent to whom, to avoid presenting disturbing and irrelevant facts around the organization. In agreement,
Lewis (1999) emphasizes the importance to resist the temptation of presenting all the found facts.

Erikson (1992, pp. 38-39) asserts that communication must be coordinated and it is not rare that several people choose to present a message in different ways. Lysell explains that to make sure that a certain type of information is communicated in the same way, independent the number of communicators, Manpower AB works to control the information. This is secured through the production of written material, thus can be used by several communicators. Erikson (1992, pp. 38-39) supports this stating that an important aspect is to formulate a unitary picture of what the message will be.

Erikson (1992, p. 39) argues that the information must be consequent over time. Lysell agrees and states that Manpower AB has to control important information not to be communicated differently at several occasions. When important information is evident, one of the senior managers might go to the different market areas and deliver it in person. If this information suddenly needs to be communicated in a further matter, the very same person will control additional communication. Lysell claims that this decreases the probability of misunderstandings and makes sure that the information is not communicated differently at several occasions.

According to Erikson (1992, p. 39) the communication must moreover form contrasts as effective communication affects people’s knowledge as well as feelings. Lysell agrees stating that it is important to start out a message with the core and most vivid part of the information, not much unlike a news bill, and package the information in a fun, interesting and personal way. This is all in accordance to theory as Erikson (1992, p. 39) states that all to often the information is solely founded on facts, thus becomes dull and uninteresting for the receiver. He further argues the importance of presenting the information in a pedagogical way, which interests the receiver, Lysell concords asserting that Manpower AB aims to maintain an extremely personal approach towards its targeted receiver.

Erikson (1992, p. 39) claims that the information must strive to create contacts that lead to a dialogue. Lysell agrees stating that it is important to create a mutual commitment between the sender and receiver of communication. To be successful in such a matter, Manpower AB aims to make people select a communication channel that is suitable to the receiver. Lewis (1999) supports this asserting that the key messages and knowledge about the audience’s preferred communication styles should determine what channel to use. Moreover, Manpower AB often conducts prize contests that engage into a mutual interest and exchange of information, thus trains co-workers to be active in their communication. Furthermore, Lysell finally asserts when expecting a commitment, it is essential to evaluate what the receiver has to gain from the situation. Theory does not specifically support these two examples, but Erikson (1992, p. 39) claims that it all comes down to that an effective communication requires a mutual commitment from both the sender and the receiver.
To pursue for communication on a continuous basis is according to Erikson (1992, p. 39) crucial when creating credibility among the employees. Lysell claims that a continuous communication is very important and that Manpower AB commonly uses its Intranet for this purpose. Lysell further explains that the information on the Intranet usually is updated several times a day and is available to all of the 1,000 core employees.

5.2.3 Challenges to Effective Internal Communication

Lysell asserts that Manpower AB’s organizational structure does not present any significant problems to the internal communication. On the contrary, Lysell argues the company to maintain a decentralized structure, enabling decisions to be taken closely to the intended audience. Strid (1999, p. 24) stresses the flexibility that comes with this kind of organization and the taking charge of human resources, makes it no longer necessary to follow a vertical communication path in the organization, thus shifting the focus to a more horizontal perspective. However, D’Aprix (1996, p. 119) claims the horizontal communication to be difficult to strategize. Yet, Lysell explains that the Intranet has become a handy tool to surpass difficulties when the organization is in need of a certain kind of information.

Andrews and Herschel (1996, pp. 235-141) state that conflicts often grow from disagreements over the acquisitions and use of resources and usually reflect perceived underlying differences in values and goals. However, Lysell explains she cannot find any profound disagreements that have evolved regarding the company values, strategies, and goals. Being a value-based company, Manpower AB’s core employees are very keen on sharing the same values. Lysell continues that all of the core employees annually are participating in the strategic planning where sub-units to some extent are given free hands in developing frames of how to work next year. This creates commitment and avoids disagreements.

Geddie (1994) states that failure to communicate hard issues is a barrier to effective communication. Lysell states that the ability of Manpower AB’s senior management and middle management to communicate is rather good. However, there are always differences in effectiveness to each individual and their tendency and willingness to communicate hard facts, but Lysell asserts that this situation comes natural and does not present any serious issues. Moreover, D’Aprix (1996, pp. 131-132) emphasizes the importance of having an open communication without fear of personal consequences, to achieve the organization’s larger objectives. Lysell agrees and describes the Manpower AB communicative environment to be fast and open, where senior management trusts the core employees to handle confidential and sensitive information with care.

In agreement with Moberg (1997, p. 82), Lysell states that physical distance always can present problems within an organization, and for this purpose, Manpower AB frequently uses its Intranet. Due to Manpower AB’s rapid growth, involving a growing number of people who wants to inform everybody about everything, an overload of information has become evident. Moberg (1997, pp. 83-89) agrees and emphasizes that the distinction between the required and the actual amount of communication creates stress to the
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employees. Erikson (1992, p. 34) further underlines to come to terms with this problem it is crucial to find the optimal level on the information flow. Lysell asserts that the department of Public Relations & Information therefore works to prioritize and coordinate information. The biggest challenge is to teach the organization and explain to the people how to work with information and communication, where employees must understand what facts are important to the organization as a whole, Lysell finally argues.

5.2.4 Communication Channels

Thorson (1997, p. 23) argues that a pull method requires each co-worker to seek relevant information on his or her initiative. Being such a method, Lysell explains that the Intranet constitutes the most important channel of internal communication at Manpower AB. In agreement with Carr and Folliard (1999) Lysell states the advantage of the Intranet to be the ability to reach everybody within the organization at the same time, wherever they are. However, Carr and Folliard (1999) stress a few disadvantages whereas the biggest is the inability to monitor the receipt of information. In clarification, while a communicator can be assured that a targeted audience has at least received push communication, there is no similar certainty for pull communication. As discussed earlier, Lysell asserts the major disadvantage of the Intranet to be the information overloads that often creates a disconnection between the sender and the receiver. But Lysell also presents additional problems as many co-workers have tendency to exceptionally trust the Intranet. This means that Manpower AB’s employees put information upon the Intranet without making sure that it has been perceived and understood. The department of Public Relations & Information’s responsibility in this matter becomes evident as there is a need to follow up the information and persuade people to do the same, in order to avoid flaws in the internal communication. In agreement, Carr and Folliard (1999) state that when pull communication is well organized, it can offer a wide range of information at multiple levels of detail without overwhelming the audience.

Moreover, Lysell states e-mail to constitute yet another communication channel of information technology, which in many senses share the problem of information overload. D’Aprix (1996, p. 75) consents that people do not like when such channels sometimes stress them with more raw information than they can handle.

Lysell also discusses the use of printed media as another source of internal communication. The personnel magazine is a useful channel for information of a broader extent that perhaps requires explanations, but the time to produce this media has a tendency to make information out of date, hence it is appropriate to carefully select the right information when using the personnel magazine. Högström et al (1999, p. 96) agrees claiming that the personnel magazine is appropriate when carrying out longer articles that are of a more complex character. In continuous agreement, if the information cannot reach the employees fast enough via personnel magazines, complementary channels such as newsletters or internal messages should be used. Lysell states that such complementary media further constitute letters, brochures, and printed economical information.
Lysell further stresses that the face-to-face contact of course constitutes another important source of internal communication, which involves formal as well as informal meetings. Lysell argues that the face-to-face contact is necessary to apply whenever broader discussions and explanations are required in a specific matter. In agreement, Högström et al (1999, pp. 92-93) argue that face-to-face communication channels by far have the greatest penetrative power, as it invites to a dialogue where all parts involved have the opportunity to exchange thoughts and opinions.

5.2.5 Selection of Communication Channels

Lysell describes that a selection is dependent on the attributes of the specific channel, and gives an example of this. If the characteristics of the information require reaching the receiver rather fast, the Intranet or perhaps e-mail will be the channels of choice. In agreement, Petersson and Petersson (1992, p. 98) suggest that a selection should consider which channels could be used in a qualified way. Erikson (1992, p. 46) further adds time as an important factor when selecting communication channels.

However, Lysell asserts the selections also to be dependent upon the type of information, where if the information is expressive and explanatory, the personnel magazine might be appropriate. If the information further is of a character that probably will awake many opinions and questions, a meeting might be appropriate, Lysell adds. Högström et al (1999, p. 30) agree stressing that communication must be formed by the purpose of the information, thus if the purpose is to disseminate knowledge, they emphasize written channels or information technology to constitute reasonable channels. On the other hand, they suggest a well-prepared dialogue to be a better option if the aim is to communicate changes in attitude and behavior.

In concordance with Petersson and Petersson (1992, p. 98) Lysell explains that the choice of communication channel depends on who and how many the receivers might be. Information that needs to reach many or all within the organization will probably go via the Intranet, but might be sent via e-mail if it regards a lesser group of people, she adds.

Lysell further asserts that the selection of channels is dependent upon costs. Although cost always is an essential factor for business, it has to be put in relation to the importance of internal communication. However, as Petersson and Petersson (1992, p. 98) mention that cost is an important selection criterion, theory does not contain further arguments about the relation between costs and benefits. Lysell exemplifies this by the senior management who sometimes has to travel around and inform co-workers in person. In relation to the extensive costs that such a method brings, it might be vital to actually enforce this information in such a consequent matter.

5.3 Cross-Case Analysis of WM-data AB and Manpower AB

For this cross-case analysis, the two within-case analyses of WM-data AB and Manpower AB have been compared to increase the understanding of this investigation.
5.3.1 Categorization of Internal Communication

When comparing how the internal communication is categorized at WM-data AB and Manpower AB, there is a clear difference in how they choose to perform this matter. While WM-data AB presents three categories, Manpower AB does not make any classifications at all, as all kinds of internal communication is viewed as natural events within the company. Yet, when discussing the content of the communication, the analyses of both companies show that they use communication regarding news, work, manage, and culture although referring to them in different terms. Manpower AB however, adds change communication to the previously stated, which is not mentioned by WM-data AB.

5.3.2 Criteria for Effective Internal Communication

As WM-data AB is a Nordic concern, the co-workers within the organization thus possess different backgrounds. In order to make the information understandable and concrete, WM-data AB separates the communication with regards to region and business area, as well as performs it in local language. In contrast, Manpower AB does very little to execute its internal communication considering the employees’ differences in background and experience. However, they do select communication channel depending on how it would suit the receiver in most efficient way. Along with this, Manpower AB further communicates information differently taking the employees’ previous knowledge into consideration.

To keep the information concentrated, WM-data AB again emphasizes the communication to be separated with regards to the various geographical areas. Information that is vital to a certain region should only appear on that particular region’s Intranet, thus reducing the potential for information overload as well. In agreement, Manpower AB highlights the problem with being exposed to information stress due to information overload, hence tries to provide relevant information to the right receiver. Therefore, co-workers at Manpower AB must learn to prioritize which information should be sent to whom, to avoid presenting disturbing and irrelevant facts around the organization.

To disseminate information that is coordinated, independent of the sender is according to WM-data AB one of the most difficult tasks to achieve. To facilitate this problem, such information is only to be communicated by one single person at WM-data AB, who possesses the expertise required. If the information is to be communicated electronically, they moreover provide a national publication on the Intranet in order to formulate a unitary content of the message. Accordingly, Manpower AB works to control the information to make sure that certain information is communicated in the same way. To realize this issue, they secure the material through the production of written channels, which enables such information to be communicated by several people, in contrast to Manpower AB who solely relies on one single communicator for such matters.
At WM-data AB, certain information is only to be communicated by the parent company to keep it consequent over time. Such information will be placed on the Intranet with the criterion that the content cannot be changed by anyone but the management. Manpower AB works a bit differently in this matter, as vital information is delivered to the various market areas personally by one of the senior managers. This will make sure that information is not communicated differently at several occasions, whereas the very same person will control communication further if necessary.

To form contrasts in the communication, Manpower AB emphasizes the importance to start the communication with the core and most vivid part of the information, not much unlike a news bill. Along with this they strive to package the information in a fun and interesting way, as well to maintain an extremely personal approach towards its targeted receivers. In contrast, WM-data AB does not put extra time and effort on packaging the information in such way that will appeal to the receivers. If the receivers are not interested in certain information it does not really matter how it is being presented, they believe.

WM-data AB and Manpower AB both agree on the necessity to create a mutual commitment between the sender and the receiver in order to achieve effective internal communication. To be successful in such matter, Manpower AB aims to make co-workers select communication channel with regard to the receiver. In addition, they often conduct prize contests to engage a mutual interest and exchange of information. WM-data AB utilizes prize contests as well, yet adds chat pages to this in order to make the employees more motivated and increase their ability in receiving new information. Such measures have not been discussed in theory, although they seem to be useful factors to preserve a continuous dialogue. WM-data AB further highlights that the information moreover must be of interest to the employees, which will make them more motivated in searching for the required information. Beyond these issues, Manpower AB underlines, when expecting a commitment, it is vital to evaluate what the receiver has to gain from the situation, which is not mentioned by WM-data AB.

To maintain a continuous internal communication, WM-data AB provides “info-masters” connected to each business area, both on a national level and concern level, whose task is exclusively to sustain a continuously information flow within the organization. As for Manpower AB, they do not hold such decentralized means thus rely on the common Intranet for this purpose.

5.3.3 Challenges to Effective Internal Communication

Although stated in theory, neither WM-data AB nor Manpower AB claims the organizational structure to cause problems in terms of internal communication. Even if they both constitute large organizations, scattered over great areas, they have solved this problem with the help of Intranet, which has become a handy tool in order to make the information easily available to all employees, regardless time and location.
One challenge at WM-data AB is that lack in communication has provided differences in opinions about values, goals, and strategies. Although putting a lot of time and effort in improving the internal communication, it will never be complete. There will always be dissatisfied co-workers complaining about not receiving enough information, which in turn will lead to disagreements. This is however not seen as a problem at Manpower AB. Being a value based company, the core employees are keen on sharing the same values. To secure this, the core employees participate in annual meetings discussing strategic planning for the coming year.

The management’s ability to communicate has to some extent entailed internal problems at WM-data AB and Manpower AB. They both agree on this to occur, as various personalities possess different abilities and willingness to communicate effectively. Yet, at Manpower AB, such matter is not considered to be of serious kind, and is solved quite easily due to the company holding a fast and open communicative environment. WM-data AB further emphasize the importance to have communicative leaders to prevent the message from changing, as a large part of the communication is performed orally.

Another challenge to effective internal communication identified at WM-data AB as well as Manpower AB is the physical distance that comes with large-scale organizations. WM-data AB does not consider the geographical distance between the co-workers to be the problem, rather if they have access to the Intranet or not. As the consultants are operating on the field and are not attached to a specific office, a mobile Internet has been mentioned as a considerable solution to satisfy these co-workers better. At Manpower the physical distance has also been reduced with the help of an Intranet. Since the Intranet only is available to the core employees, Manpower AB is currently working on the development of an Extranet to ease the communication, all co-workers included.

The most challenging task for WM-data AB and Manpower AB at the moment is that the vast amount of information available on the Intranet, makes it difficult for the employees to find what is relevant for their individual use. WM-data AB however, tries to keep the information relevant by only presenting information that is connected to a particular region. At Manpower AB on the other hand, the department of Public Relations & Information strives to prioritize and coordinate the information. Yet, it is a challenge to teach the co-workers and explain how to work with information and communication, enabling them to understand what facts are important to whom.

5.3.4 Communication Channels

Considering the size of WM-data AB’s and Manpower AB’s organizations, and the physical distance that comes with them, both companies assert that their Intranets have become the most important channel of internal communication. They moreover emphasize the benefits of the Intranet as being a channel where the sender can make information available to all people within the organization, leaving the receiver with a choice of when, where and how to actively take part of the information. However, WM-data AB and Manpower AB claim to have a problem with information overload that makes it hard to pull for the right information and, thus creates disconnects between the
sender and receiver. Manpower AB also mentions an additional problem that has not been touched by WM-data AB. This involves that Manpower AB’s employees have a tendency to exceptionally trust the Intranet, where they put information without any care or assurances that the information has been perceived and understood. Therefore, Manpower AB works to follow up the information and to persuade employees to do the same.

WM-data AB and Manpower AB mention e-mail as another channel of internal communication. WM-data AB also asserts that e-mail is suitable for mass distribution as well as individual communication. However, both companies highlights the problem of information overload and underlines only to send what is useful for the co-workers to the extent that irrelevant facts are not pushed onto the receivers.

Both WM-data AB and Manpower AB use printed media as well for internal communication. The personnel magazine at Manpower AB primarily aims to reach the core employees and the products of competence, while WM-data AB’s personnel magazine foremost is aimed to reach out to the co-workers families and to some extent the employees. At WM-data AB a variety of personnel magazines have been developed, depending on what audience to impress. This is argued to have a positive effect upon the relevance of the information. Moreover, WM-data AB thinks that this channel is more suitable for creating and maintaining values. Manpower AB however thinks that it should contain information of a broader extent that perhaps requires explanations, which could include values. These arguments culminate in both companies feeling the downside of the personnel magazine where it often contains obsolete information due to time for production and execution. However, an additional printed media at WM-data AB is the newsletter, which is argued to have the benefit of containing more timely information since it is produced the day before distribution. Manpower AB’s additional media constitute letters, brochures, and printed economical information.

Face-to-face communication constitute yet another valuable source of information at both WM-data AB and Manpower AB, which involves formal as well as informal meetings. WM-data AB asserts that such communication is extremely useful when aiming to influence co-workers, while Manpower AB argues that it is necessary to apply whenever broader discussions and explanations are required. However, WM-data AB asserts that informal meetings may take several forms in terms of “corridor chat”, which is an essential part of the communication but provides less control over the information.

5.3.5 Selection of Communication Channels

The selection of communication channels at WM-data AB and Manpower AB is dependent upon on the attributes of the specific channel. Manpower AB provides an example where if something needs to be communicated very fast, the Intranet or perhaps e-mail might be suitable. Considering this situation, WM-data AB consents such a choice to be valid as well.
However, the selection of communication channels is also dependent upon the purpose of the information. This criterion might not always be easy to separate from the earlier, but as an example Manpower AB asserts that expressive and explanatory information might be best suited for the personnel magazine. WM-data AB consents stating that value based information is better suited for personnel magazines. Both companies on the other hand support face-to-face communication when the intention is to create a deeper understanding on a certain matter.

Petersson and Petersson (1992, p. 98) claim the selection of communication channels should consider who and how many the receivers are. Manpower AB consents stating that information needed to reach many or all within the company will probably go via the Intranet, but might be sent via e-mail if it regards a lesser group of people. However, WM-data AB somewhat agrees to this but states that approximately 90 percent of its internal communication is distributed the same way to everybody within the organization, often via the Intranet.

According to Petersson and Petersson (1992, p. 98) cost is an important criterion when selection communication channels. Although cost is an important factor in every business, neither WM-data AB nor Manpower AB let this interfere in their selection of channels. Instead, both companies stress the importance of letting the internal communication function in most possible efficient way. Manpower AB, however mention that costs has to be put in relation to the importance of the specific communicative matter, so that money is not wasted for nothing. Moreover, WM-data also mentions that costs most probably will be taken into consideration for initiations of new and expensive channels.
6 Conclusions

This chapter involves a presentation of the conclusions conducted through the analysis of the empirical findings. The purpose of this study and the previously stated research questions will be answered and explained. Implications for further research will finally be provided.

6.1 Internal Communication in Organizations Undergoing Change

The purpose of this study is to increase the understanding of how internal communication is performed in organizations undergoing change. By looking at WM-data AB and Manpower AB, we were able to gain a deeper understanding of how they choose to perform internal communication. The rapid growth that Manpower AB is currently undergoing and the previous experience of turbulent change that WM-data AB has been exposed to, enabled us to realize how effective internal communication is achieved and how communication channels are selected, during such circumstances. The conclusions of these research questions will thus be presented in the two subsequent sections.

6.1.1 How Do Organizations Achieve Effective Internal Communication?

To achieve effective internal communication, it is vital to know what kind of information is to be communicated, as it constitutes the base when determining who the information is relevant for and what channel is suitable for such matter. WM-data AB as well as Manpower AB have realized this issue, and although not referring to the communication in the same manner, the content of it is equivalent. Both companies rely on communicating information about news, work, manage, and culture to make the employees well prepared in order to perform well in their jobs. Besides these categories, Manpower AB moreover provides communication regarding change in contrast to WM-data AB. Due to the companies being in different stages of growth, a conclusion can be made that the relevance of this category is strongly related to what situation the company finds itself in.

As the Intranet has become a vital part of today’s decentralized organizations, this channel presents new problems to the achievement of effective internal communication. The main challenge for WM-data AB and Manpower AB is therefore not to consider traditional means, but to make the Intranet work for its primary purpose. This purpose involves to unite the co-workers not only in terms of company values, but also to continuously make the information available to everybody regardless time and physical distance. However, as many co-workers often find themselves in locations where it is not possible to utilize the Intranet, it becomes essential to provide unlimited access to such technology. A mentioned possible solution to this problem is a mobile Internet. Additionally, pushing information onto the Intranet often provides the employees with more information than they can handle. To prevent overload of information, it is
necessary to maintain messages concentrated, thus structure the Intranet to only present relevant information to specific groups or regions that are in need of such facts. As this will not be enough, management must therefore teach its co-workers to deliver the information in a relevant manner, to the extent that it is continuously maintained in future communication. A connected problem evolves from the fact that communicators, putting information upon the Intranet rarely make sure that it has been received. It is therefore vital to secure a mutual commitment where both sender and receiver are involved throughout the information exchange. Along with this, information must moreover form contrast in order to motivate the employees, thus increase the receivers’ ability in actually taking part of the messages that are communicated. In order to make the internal communication effective throughout the organization, management must articulate clear directions that support every aspect that comes with such effectiveness, and teach all personnel how to take charge of such means.

6.1.2 How Do Organizations Select Communication Channels?

WM-data AB and Manpower AB utilize a number of different electronical, written, and oral communication channels. These primarily constitute the Intranet, e-mail, personnel magazines, newsletters, as well as formal- and informal meetings. It is essential to be aware of the respective communication channel’s advantages and disadvantages, as both companies base their channel selections upon these specific attributes. However, selections are also dependent upon the purpose of the information, which illustrates the importance of defining categorizations for different types of information. In conclusion, such categorizations do not have to follow any traditional pattern, as it is more important to articulate structures that suit the specific planning for effective internal communication.

WM-data AB and Manpower AB does not concur with theory that emphasizes cost to be a significant criterion when selecting communication channels. Instead, both companies articulate the importance of letting the internal communication function in most possible efficient way, where costs naturally are put in relation to the substance of a specific communicative matter, but hardly ever becomes an issue. Moreover, Manpower AB claims that selection of communication channels should consider who and how many the receivers are. WM-data AB agrees on this matter yet emphasizes that most of the internal communication is distributed in the same way to everybody within the organization, often via the Intranet. This means that the attributes of an electronical channel, such as the Intranet, could present opportunities to surpass the criterion of whom and how many the receivers are, but at the same time engages into the disadvantage of information overload. In conclusion, the entry and establishment of an Intranet has therefore changed the view upon internal communication in modern organizations.

6.2 Implications for Further Research

As the Intranet has become an everyday part of organizational life, this study has shown that new and impressive solutions do not come without evolving into consequential
problems. However, since there is an enormous development within the field of information technology as an aid to effective internal communication, further research needs to be performed on a continuous basis, as the validity of facts today may not be true tomorrow. Moreover, investigators who choose to study this field in a further matter will most likely, from a different perspective, build their own frame of reference that could lead to additional and interesting insights to the subject.
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Interview Guide

Introductory Information

1. What is the name of the respondent?
2. What is the company name?
3. In which industry is the company active?
4. What is the current organizational structure?
5. How many employees does the company embrace?
6. What position does the respondent hold within the company?
7. What are the respondent’s assignments?
8. How long has the respondent been active within the company?
9. Does the company hold a clear strategy of internal communication where the aim is to actively work with such issues?
10. How long has this strategy been obvious?
11. What are the benefits with internal communication?
12. How are these benefits illustrated throughout the organization?
13. Has the company’s previously rapid growth caused any problems with the internal communication?
14. Have these problems contributed to an improvement of the internal communication?

Categorization of Internal Communication

15. How would you categorize the different kinds of information flowing within the company?
16. What kind of information do the various categories contain?
17. Why categorize the information in such matter?
Criteria for Effective Internal Communication

18. What criteria do you find important in terms of creating an effective internal communication?

19. Why are these particular criteria of importance?

20. What is to be done in order to ease the internal communication with regards to the different backgrounds of the employees?

21. What is to be done in order to only present relevant information for the receiver?

22. What is to be done in order to communicate identical information regardless the sender?

23. What is to be done in order to present identical information at two separate occasions?

24. What is to be done in order to make the information interesting to the receiver?

25. What is to be done in order to create a mutual commitment with regards to the sender and the receiver?

26. What is to be done in order to maintain a continuously internal communication?

Challenges to Effective Internal Communication

27. What are the challenges in achieving effective internal communication?

28. What is the cause to lack in internal communication?

29. Has the company’s organizational structure resulted in problems regarding the internal communication? How? Why?

30. Has a lack in internal communication resulted in disagreements regarding company values, goals, and strategies? How? Why?

31. Has the management’s communicative ability resulted in problems regarding the internal communication? How? Why?

32. Has the physical distance between the employees resulted in lack in internal communication? How? Why?
Communication Channels

33. What channels are used in order to communicate internally?

34. What are the advantages with the selected channels?

35. What are the disadvantages with the selected channels?

Selection of Communication Channels

36. What criteria are considered to be important when selecting communication channel?

37. Why are these particular criteria of importance?

38. Who makes the decision regarding selection of communication channels?

39. Is the selection of communication channels dependent on the qualifications of the channel?
   How? Why?

40. Is the selection of communication channels dependent on the purpose of the information?
   How? Why?

41. Is the selection of communication channels dependent on who and how many are to take part of the information?
   How? Why?

42. Is the selection of communication channels dependent on costs?
   How? Why?
**Intervjuguide**

**Inledande information**

1. Vad är respondentens namn?
2. Vad är företagets fullständiga namn?
3. I vilken bransch är företaget verksam?
4. Hur ser rådande organisationsstruktur ut?
5. Hur många anställda finns i företaget?
6. Vilken position i företaget har respondenten?
7. Vilket/vilka är respondentens ansvarsområden?
8. Hur länge har respondenten varit verksam i företaget?
9. Har företaget en överliggande strategi där man aktivt arbetar med intern kommunikation?
10. Hur länge har man arbetat med detta i företaget?
11. Vilka funktioner/syften uppfyller den interna kommunikationen i företaget?
12. På vilket sätt kan dessa åskådliggöras i organisationen?
13. Har företagets snabba tillväxt åsamar problem i den interna kommunikationen?
14. Har dessa problem bidragit till en förbättring av den interna kommunikationen?

**Kategorisering av intern kommunikation**

15. Hur skulle du vilja kategorisera den information som flödar i företaget?
16. Vilken typ av information finns i de olika kategorierna?
17. Varför kategorisera informationen på detta sätt?

**Kriterier för effektiv intern kommunikation**

18. Vilka kriterier anser ni vara viktiga att beakta för att skapa en effektiv intern kommunikation?
19. Hur bidrar just dessa kriterier till en effektiv intern kommunikation?
20. Hur gör ni för att underlätta den interna kommunikationen med hänsyn till medarbetarnas olika bakgrund och erfarenhet?

21. Hur gör ni för att endast presentera relevant information för mottagaren?

22. Hur gör ni för att viss typ av information ska bli kommunicerad på samma sätt av olika personer?

23. Hur gör ni för att informationen som förmedlas vid två olika tillfällen ska innehålla samma budskap?

24. Hur gör ni kommunikationen intressant för mottagaren?

25. Hur gör ni för att skapa ett ömsesidigt engagemang från både sändare och mottagare av kommunikationen?

26. Hur gör ni för att uppehålla en kontinuerlig intern kommunikation?

**Utmaningar till effektiv intern kommunikation**

27. Var ligger svårigheterna i att uppnå effektiv intern kommunikation?

28. Vad beror eventuell bristande intern kommunikation på?

29. Har organisationens struktur medfört problem i den interna kommunikationen?
   Hur? Varför?

30. Har bristande intern kommunikation lett till meningsskiljaktigheter gällande företagets värderingar, mål och strategier?
   Hur? Varför?

31. Har ledningens kommunikativa förmåga medfört bristande intern kommunikation?
   Hur? Varför?

32. Har den fysiska distansen mellan de anställda i organisationen medfört problem i den interna kommunikationen?
   Hur? Varför?

**Kommunikationskanaler**

33. Vilka kanaler använder ert företag för att kommunicera internt?

34. Vilka är fördelarna med de valda kanalerna?

35. Vilka är nackdelarna med de valda kanalerna?
Val av kommunikationskanal

36. Vilka kriterier anser ni vara viktiga vid val av kommunikationskanal?

37. Varför är just dessa kriterier av betydelse?

38. Vem väljer kommunikationskanal?

39. Styrs ert val av kanal beroende på kanalens egenskaper?
   Hur? Varför?

40. Styrs ert val av kanal beroende på den typ av information som skall förmedlas?
   Hur? Varför?

41. Styrs ert val av kanal beroende på vem/vilka som skall ta del av informationen?
   Hur? Varför?

42. Styrs ert val av kanal av kostnader?
   Hur? Varför?