Leaders and Social Media
Improving HRM through better internal communication

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to create understanding for how social media affects the relationship between employees and leaders in organizations, and how social media could be used to improve internal communication. We also want to explore how this type of internal communication could be implemented in large organizations. From a theoretical perspective our ambition is to see how our findings relate to the theoretical field of internal communication and human resource management.

The empirical findings in this study were gathered by conducting an interview with the CEO to reveal his intentions, methods and practices when working with social media. A questionnaire was then developed by using the knowledge gained from the interview with the CEO, as well as by using theories regarding communication, social media and corporate culture, this questionnaire was filled out by company employees. The empirical data that was gathered was analyzed in the light of relevant theory. We also checked the various data variables for correlation. This was done so we could study what factors determine why an employee follows the blog, and also so we could study which factors are impacted by the employee reading the blog.

The results of this study show that social media as a communication tool has enormous potential to transcend geographical barriers and to flatten the organizational hierarchy in a way that is not possible through the usage of conventional communication methods. Social media can affect the relationship between a leader of an organization and its employees and has the power to spread values, practices, routines and build corporate culture. Social media however, has a sensitive nature and factors such as accessibility, target group characteristics and planning are directly relevant to the outcome when a CEO uses social media to communicate with the employees.

Accessibility problems can result in some employees having a hard time being reached by social media communication and the lack of a proper integration plan can cause disturbance in the communication, employees may not be aware of the purpose of the CEOs efforts or maybe not even be aware that the CEO has started using social media tools. However the individuals who do follow the CEOs practises are likely to gain a better relationship with their leader. The informal nature of social media is a great way for CEOs to show more of their personalities and in that way form a closer bond with the employees. We believe that if planned and used in the right way, CEO social media communication has even more potential than this study reveals.

Keywords: social media, internal communication, blog
Preface

We would like to aim a special thanks to our supervisor Mr. Kiflemariam Hamde for his guidance and advice throughout our degree project.

We would also like to thank the CEO and employees of the organization in which we carried out our study, as well as everyone who has supported us during our thesis work.

Daniel Westman       Peter Lindfors
# Table of Contents

Abstract.............................................................................................................................................. I
Preface.................................................................................................................................................. II
Table of Contents................................................................................................................................. III
Figures and Tables............................................................................................................................... V

1. Introduction................................................................................................................................. 1
   1.1. Problem Background........................................................................................................... 1
   1.2. Research Questions............................................................................................................ 4
   1.3. Purpose................................................................................................................................. 4

2. Theoretical methodology........................................................................................................... 5
   2.1. Pre-conceptions.................................................................................................................. 5
   2.2. Research philosophy.......................................................................................................... 5
   2.3. Research approach............................................................................................................ 6

3. Theoretical Framework............................................................................................................. 9
   3.1. Communication.................................................................................................................. 9
       3.1.1. Internal communication............................................................................................ 11
   3.2. Evolving Management...................................................................................................... 15
   3.3. Leadership and the Relationship between Leaders and Employees............................ 16
   3.4. Corporate culture............................................................................................................ 19
       3.4.1 Defining Corporate Culture....................................................................................... 19
       3.4.2. Corporate culture and Communication.................................................................. 20
   3.5. Social media.................................................................................................................... 23
       3.5.1. What is Social Media?............................................................................................... 23
       3.5.2. Examples of Social Media Tools.............................................................................. 25
       3.5.3. Possibilities and Usage of Social Media................................................................. 26
   3.6. Our theoretical perspective.............................................................................................. 27

4. Practical Methodology.............................................................................................................. 30
   4.1. Research strategy............................................................................................................... 30
   4.5. Gathering of primary data................................................................................................ 30
       4.5.1 Semi-structured interview with the CEO...................................................................... 30
       4.5.2 Questionnaire with Employees................................................................................... 31
       4.5.3 Sampling and Sample Selection.................................................................................. 33
       4.5.4. Quantitative data analysis......................................................................................... 35
       4.5.5. Qualitative data analysis........................................................................................... 35

5. Empirical data........................................................................................................................... 37
   5.1. Case company.................................................................................................................... 37
   5.2. Qualitative data................................................................................................................ 37
       5.2.1. Internal communication............................................................................................ 37
       5.2.2. Social media............................................................................................................... 39
Figures and Tables

Figure 1. Internal Communication Matrix.................................................................13
Figure 2. Internal Corporate Communication..........................................................14
Figure 3. Our Theoretical Model..............................................................................28
Figure 4. Reasons for reading the CEO blog............................................................43

Table 1. Age distribution..........................................................................................41
Table 2. Work length distribution.............................................................................41
Table 3. Work place distribution...............................................................................42
Table 4. Social media usage among employees.......................................................42
Table 5. Frequency of employees reading the CEO blog.........................................43
Table 6. Employees giving feedback to the CEO......................................................43
Table 7. Employee views on CEO communication frequency in relation to reading the CEO blog.............................................................................................................44
Table 8. Questionnaire results on CEO communication and corporate culture.........44
Table 9. Correlations of employee demographics and employees who read the CEO blog..................................................................................................................44
Table 10. Correlation of people reading the CEO blog and satisfaction with CEO communication........................................................................................................47
Table 11. CEO trust in relation to how often employees read the blog.......................48
Table 12. Employees reading the blog and the perception of the CEO communication.48
Table 13. How accessibility affects the likelihood of reading the CEO blog...............51
Table 14. Employees reading the blog and the effect on corporate culture..............53
1. Introduction

This chapter provides a description of the problem background and a discussion to help the reader understand why this study had been conducted. The problem discussion leads to us formulating two research questions that we through the chapters in this study will work with, and in chapter 6 - Discussion and Conclusions, will answer.

1.1. Problem Background

Organizational behavior is made up by the interactions of individuals and groups. In accordance with this many organizations believe that their success is dependent on the successful management of people. Human resource management is concerned with finding the right person and developing people to ensure the successful implementation of strategies that enable organizational growth. It is the role of the human resource department to be active throughout all levels of an organization in motivating staff to reach their full potential, not only for the individuals well-being but also for the organizations development (Bloisi et al, 2003, pp. 26-27).

We find this role of the human resource department of motivating staff on all levels of the organization has a lot in common with the role of the CEO. Everyone involved in an organization is responsible for the effective management of people (Bloisi et al, 2003, pp. 26-27).

It is clear that human resource management is vital to any organization, and therefore also a relevant subject to study. However HRM is a wide term with many activities and tools such as building groups and teams, conflict management, creating productive interpersonal relationships, motivating staff and communication (Bloisi et al, 2003, p. 27). Communication in itself is one of the many tools used in human resource management but we believe communication to be especially important and interesting because none of the HMR activities can be carried out without communicating, in fact communication is central in everything we do. Because of the important nature of communication and our interest for this subject we will be focusing this study towards communication.

Regardless of social context we humans have to communicate to be able to interact. Communication has always been a central part of human nature but the way we communicate and the tools we use to communicate have evolved drastically over time. We believe that the ever changing nature of communication due to technological advancement makes the theoretical communications field a relevant and interesting subject. There are many different ways of defining communication. Krebs and Davies (1993) defined communication as “the process in which actors use specially designed signals or displays to modify the behavior of reactors”. This definition is fundamental and acknowledges that communication is an interactive activity and that there are many ways to communicate.

In the corporate world with today’s internationalization, communication is becoming more complex but yet more important than ever. When growing from a small business...
to a multinational corporation effective communication becomes even more critical to keep the corporate values and goals aligned throughout the whole organization. Corporate social behavior has in modern age become an increasingly important part of the organizational society. Business communication is now at the focus of both media and academics and the importance and potential of corporate communication is now being recognized as a way of creating value (Hooghiemstra, 2000, p. 63). Corporate communication has internal and external aspects, and these forms of communication are executed and applied in different ways but can serve the common goal of creating added value.

Corporate external communication in the form of marketing and public relations has clearly been acknowledged as a contributor to building corporate image and differentiating a brand from others. The brand image a company portrays is crucial because it is this image that will determine if a potential customer experiences a positive or negative association with the company (Chong, 2007, p. 201). External communication has a recognized ability to build corporate value. However, Internal communication and its role in value creation has not been explored to the same extent. Internal communication in value creation is an underestimated tool as employees are thought to be one of the most important audiences for a company's organizational communication and branding efforts. Companies that have managed to instill the corporations values in their employees will be more likely to have employees that practice brand supporting behaviors. Employees that are aligned with a corporations values can also help the company gain a sustainable competitive advantage, this is done through the employees sharing experiences of their values to external shareholders. (Chong, 2007, p. 202)

Internal communication within an organization has different purposes. Looking at organizational communication as a whole it can often be said to have two goals. The first is to keep employees informed of their tasks and other policies of the organization, and the second is to communicate and build a company culture (Francis, 1989, De Ridder, 2003, referenced by Elving, 2005, p. 131). These two goals were further broken down by Richmond (et al., 2005, p. 25) into 6 functions. The informative function makes sure employees have enough information to perform their tasks, while the regulative function communicates policies, rules, norms and values. The integrative function focuses on coordination of tasks, and to get employees to work towards the same goals. The managerial function focuses on getting to know employees, getting them to do what it takes to achieve the organizational goals, and to build strong relationships. The persuasive function is a consequence of the managerial function and serves to convince and influence employees to perform their work. The sixth function, the socializing, is about how an individual survives in an organization or not. It is about getting employees to become an integrated part in the organizational culture and learning informal rules and norms. (Richmond et al., 2005, p. 26)

All of these six functions are integral to the success of an organization, but when looking at internal communication from the perspective of an individual leader, the managerial, persuasive and socializing functions are the three most relevant where an individual can make an impact. The socializing function, to create a sense of
community, has been shown to create high commitment to the organization, build trust of employees with management, and employees identifying with the organization (Elving, 2005, p. 133). Building emotional ties with co-workers can thus be said to be an important factor in establishing a company culture. A study by Roberts and Dunbar (2011) explored how communication patterns are affected by kinship, emotional closeness and network size. The study was rooted in the fact that relationships are not static entities but require active maintenance in the form of frequent communication to survive (Dindia & Canary, 1993, Oswald & Clark, 2003). Management may not take this into regard when planning their internal communication, and thus risk relationship decay with employees due to infrequent communication.

Infrequent communication leading to relationship decay becomes even more likely as there are constraints on the amount of people an employee, or any person for that matter, can have in their personal network. It has been shown that no more than 150 people have room in the average person's social network (Roberts et al., 2009).

What if it was possible as a leader of a large organization to build such emotional ties with hundreds or thousands of employees so that the CEO could be considered to be one of the 150 people in the employee's personal network? Roberts (et al., 2009, p. 143) has shown that if you have a larger network you are less emotionally close to the members in your network, and you also have less frequent contact with each member of the network. As a manager in a leading role this poses a challenge, as you might want to maintain hundreds or thousands of active relationships with your employees. It would be desirable in the managerial position to be able to maintain a large number of active relationships, but there are obstacles to this. In organizations with thousands of employees there is not only the large vertical distance from the employee to the CEO, but in multinational companies there is also a large geographical distance.

The question is how you as a leader can have more frequent contact with employees on a more personal level without having it consume all of your time. In an organization with hundreds or thousands of employees it is not possible to dedicate time to each employee, but rather it must be done through communicating with all employees at once, yet in a personal way. The rise of IT and social media as communication tools has made it possible to have frequent contact with large groups of people on a personal level. There is “a close link between frequency of communication and the emotional intensity of the relationship” (Roberts & Dunbar, 2011, p. 448), which may suggest that social media can be used to develop emotional ties with a large number of employees simultaneously. This is also in line with what Cozzens (et al., 1991, p. 30) says about mass communication channels, that it is possible for CEOs adept at using mass communication channels to simulate face-to-face communication with a large number of employees.

Although the importance of internal communication is now being recognized there seems to be a knowledge gap concerning how to utilize modern technologies to make this communication more effective. A challenge with internal communication is finding appropriate channels for reaching all the personnel and at the same time portraying a message that everyone can understand and relate to.
We know that the ever advancing technologies are rapidly expanding communication possibilities. Research thus far regarding communication and social media use has been mostly focused towards network building. The possibilities of using social media as a tool in human resource management has not been extensively explored, neither generally nor specifically from the perspective of management-employees. We believe that this knowledge gap needs to be filled and that the results of our study could be helpful for CEOs and managers that are experiencing difficulties structuring their internal communication in a suitable way.

Throughout the years researchers have again and again emphasized the need for further research in internal communication. Argenti (1996, p. 94) said that “... no other corporate communication subfunction offers more of an opportunity for genuinely sought-after research than employee communication.”, while Smidts (et al, 2001, p. 1051) suggests that managers are neglecting internal communication. More recent scholars such as Elving (2005, p. 129) acknowledges that there is an enduring interest in studying this topic, but that there is still “little to no empirical research on the topic[of internal communication]”, and Friedl and Vercic (2010, p. 86) ask for qualitative studies to try and answer “what the actual usage of social media is and how this impacts internal communication”. The number of available social media tools and applications is growing day by day, and the adoption rate of new communication tools is growing at an exponential rate. With mobile communication on the rise where people are constantly connected to each other through the Internet we believe that employee communication will become a prioritized part of human resource management. Just as the distinction between external and internal communication is becoming blurred we believe the distinction between work and free time will become blurred.

Still after decades of research scholars are acknowledging the need for further research within internal communication, and with the rise of social media this area is a growing field of studies where we hope to contribute by answering the research questions below. We believe that working with the most modern technologies within social media could possibly enable wider and more accessible communication channels.

1.2. Research Questions

Question 1: With regards to the possible ramifications, advantages, and disadvantages, should a leader use social media tools within internal communication?

Question 2: How can leaders in organizations use social media to strengthen the relationship towards its employees and build a corporate culture?

1.3. Purpose

Our purpose with this study is to create understanding for how social media affects the relationship between top management and employees, and how social media could be used to improve internal communication from this perspective. We also want to explore how this type of internal communication could be implemented in large organizations.
From a theoretical perspective our ambition is to see how our findings relate to the theoretical field of internal communication and human resource management.

2. Theoretical methodology

In this chapter we will lay a methodological groundwork in preparation for the theoretical review. We will go through our pre-conceptions when carrying out this study, the research philosophy most reflective of our reality, and the chosen research approach which we believe have the greatest chance of answering our research questions.

2.1. Pre-conceptions

Both of us studied Civilekonomprogrammet with a specialization towards retail and supply chain management, and have been in contact with subjects such as leadership, communication and management throughout our studies. One of us continued with studies on a D-level within Business Development and Internationalization, while the other carried on with D-level studies in Management. We believe our previous insights in communication and management, both professional and educational, will be of help when carrying out this study, as the focus is on using communication in management.

Both of us have work experience which might affect our pre-conceptions on the subjects touched in this study. Daniel has worked with web development, online marketing, and social media for many years. He has a positive view of social media and believes that it will become even more important in the future. This work experience may affect his view on social media in terms of objectivity, but it has also given him a great understanding of social media and the various ways in which it can be used in external and internal marketing within organizations.

Peter has mainly worked within production oriented industries and has five years working experience. During high school he studied social science with a specialization towards economics. Peters view on social media is more neutral than Daniels but he believes this to be an important area for research much due to the fact that social media use has increased rapidly during recent years. Peter however is very interested in management and communication in general.

2.2. Research philosophy

The research philosophy is determined by the way the author views the development of knowledge. The way an author views knowledge in turn impacts the way he or she goes about doing research. There are three main views to contemplate regarding the research process, positivism, interpretivism and realism.

In accordance with positivism the author takes the philosophical stance of a natural scientist. Here the researcher will work with an observable social reality and the results of the study are viewed as law-like generalizations(Saunders, et al, 2003, pp. 83-85). We believe the field of communication, especially with a social media perspective, to be far
too complex and subjective to study and define through making law-like generalizations. Therefore a positivist research philosophy is not suitable for this study and we do not believe that our research question could be answered if this philosophy would be applied. Interpretivism on the other hand acknowledges that the social world is far too complex to be defined and theorized into definite laws. Furthermore there is a notion that rich insight is lost by trying to create generalizable law-like results from complex phenomenons. Realism is based on the existence of a true reality that is independent of human values and interpretations. This would mean that there are large scale social forces and processes that affect human interpretation and behavior but without the individual being aware of this. Social objects or phenomenon that are external to or independent of the actual individual will therefore still affect the way the person perceives the world.(Saunders, et al, 2003, pp. 83-85) We do not believe that a “true reality” without human values exists. However we do believe that communication is very dependent on, and effected by human values and interpretations. With this we mean that we believe a sender-receiver relation to be directly impacted by what both parts put into the relationship, and not by large scale social forces. Social media communication is made up of so many individual interactions and reactions. For this reason we do not believe that a realist philosophy is in accordance with our intentions with this study.

Bryman and Bell (2005, p. 29) state that the interpretivist view seeks to create empathy and understanding for the actions of humans rather than trying to explain the forces behind the individuals actions. We will be studying a specific business case. Businesses are unique and complex, they are a result of circumstances and individual interaction. Due to the complexity of these social constructions generalization is hard to achieve(Saunders, et al, 2003, p. 84). We do not believe that reality can be perfectly portrayed by studying it. Nor do we seek results that are generalizable. We will come back to this in our discussion about the transferability and usability of the study. Our ambition is rather to create understanding and meaning. When reading our research questions and our purpose it is clear that understanding is central and that we want to be able to study and interpret human interactions. We believe that rich insight would be lost if another philosophy than an interpretive one was applied when executing this study. For this reason, and because we are not studying large social forces behind individuals actions we believe that an interpretative philosophy is a logical approach that will enable us to answer our research questions and fulfill our purpose.

2.3. Research approach

When determining a research approach the author must make decisions regarding how he or she will apply and use theory. Two choices can be made. If the author chooses a deductive approach a theory or hypotheses is developed and a research strategy is then designed to test this theory. The other option is to use an inductive research approach, where data is collected and a theory is developed as a result of data analysis. The deductive approach is more in accordance with a positivist research philosophy and the inductive approach is more linked with an interpretive research philosophy. When conducting research with the inductive approach it is common to use a small sample of subjects and pursue these with qualitative methods in an attempt to create understanding. In contrast when dealing with deductive research a bigger sample size is
studied, usually through applying quantitative methods. However the two approaches are not mutually exclusive and it is possible, and often advantageous to combine an inductive and deductive approach in the same research. (Saunders, et al, 2003, pp. 85-89)

Johansson Lindfors (1993, pp. 59-60) talks about a “golden route” between induction and deduction. She states that in an ideal situation the researcher takes a stance regarding deduction and induction dependent on his or her research philosophy, however this is often not the case. A positivist researcher might, in practice start off empirically to then move on to theory and then end up back in making more empirical observations.

While there are scholars arguing against combining qualitative and quantitative research, Bryman (2008, p. 604) states that the two main arguments against combining the two research methods are based on an assumption that there is a fixed connection between method and knowledge theory. This can not be proved according to Bryman. These arguments have their roots in one of the two versions of the qualitative versus quantitative research debate. There’s another version, called the technical version, which sees qualitative and quantitative research as two strategies for collection of data, and where the strengths of each method can be combined. (Bryman, 2008, p. 606)

Hammersley (1996, cited in Bryman, 2008, p. 607) mentions three ways in which qualitative and quantitative research can be combined; triangulation, facilitation, and complementarity. Combining qualitative and quantitative research through facilitation is when one of the strategies is used as a support to carry out the other research strategy, for example when the qualitative study is used as a support to formulate and carry out the quantitative study. This is the main way in which we will combine our qualitative and quantitative study.

A qualitative study with the CEO will be done as a investigation of his way of communicating with the employees as well as a support to the theoretical base when formulating the survey questions that will be used in the quantitative study that will be carried out among the employees. The other reason for combining the two research methods is because they are complementary as described by Hammersley (1996, cited in Bryman, 2008, p. 607). Using both qualitative and quantitative studies can help with making the different aspects of the study fit together. In this study using qualitative research as a support for the quantitative research mainly takes the form of providing social context when constructing the survey questions(Bryman, 2008, p. 620), and it might also help in explaining relationships between variables in our findings(Bryman, 2008, p. 616). Interviewing the CEO with open and semi structured questions will help with setting the context for developing the quantitative survey questions further.

The field we have decided to study is relatively modern and there is not much research done on social media as a leadership communication tool, therefore we do not wish to, or believe that there is enough theory to formulate and test a clear hypothesis. We do however want to learn all there is to know on the subject and then analyze our data collections in the light of other theories regarding leadership, internal communication and social media. The fact that we do not develop a clear theory or hypothesis but still
use existing theory to determine what we will be studying and then use preexisting theories to analyze this data to be able to reach conclusions means that we are applying a combined deductive and inductive research approach. We will use a combination of an inductive and deductive approach by first building a base of theory and setting up research questions, and then we will go on to collect data to on one hand find answers to our research questions and on the other hand see if further theory can be developed from the findings.
3. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter theory relevant to answering the research questions will be presented. This chapter will help the reader to understand which factors are relevant in this study. Some general internal communication, social media and leadership theories will be included. More detailed theories regarding building relations between management and employees and corporate culture are also presented.

During the literature review an emphasis was put on searching in established scientific sources such as ScienceDirect, Business Source Premier, and Google Scholar. Examples of keywords that were searched for are “social media”, “internal communication”, ”communication”, “corporate culture”, and combinations of these keywords.

3.1. Communication

Communication as a field of study is made up of a range of ideas. Craig (1999, p. 119) in his frequently cited paper Communication Theory as a Field argues that communication theory as an identifiable field does not even exist yet. As an example he mentions how many college textbooks on communication theory exist, but while there are many theories on communication there is no consensus of what really makes up the field of communication theory.

The basics of communication is that there is a sender and a receiver. The various communication tools that exist are all different ways in which the sender can convey the message. Wood proposes that regardless of which communication channel the sender uses to send the message the receiver decodes the communication, “listening for the ‘real’ message”. Wood goes on saying that management needs a wide range of options and tools to convey their message depending on the circumstances. (Wood, 1999, p. 137)

What the sender communicates in their message and what the receiver hears can be two different things. As Quirke says, culture can affect how messages are interpreted, and “You may say one thing-but they hear another. If you do not know how your employees listen, you are not in control of your communication.” (1995, p. 107)

In the case of our study there's one sender (the CEO) and many receivers (the employees), which has been made possible thanks to electronic communication. As there are many receivers who can interpret the message in different ways we believe this might be relevant going forward with this study.

Communication in social networks: Effects of kinship, network size, and emotional closeness

This article by Roberts & Dunbar (2011) is a study about how the patterns of communication in a large sample of female social networks are affected by kinship, network size and emotional closeness.
The subjects studied with large kin networks tended to have a longer time to last contact with each of the network members in comparison with the participants from smaller networks (Roberts & Dunbar, 2011, p. 445). The result of this is that longer time passed before friends and kin of large social networks groups had any interaction. The author argues that these results suggest that kin network size puts constraints on friend network size (Roberts & Dunbar, 2011, p. 440). These constraints can manifest themselves by an individual having longer time to last contact with individuals from all their social networks. The authors also found that members with close emotional relations had shorter time between contact with each other than with other members that they were not as emotionally close with. The emotional closeness had a bigger effect on time to last contact for kin than it did for friends, even though both kin and friends with high emotional closeness had a short time to last contact. In contrast, within groups with low levels of emotional closeness friends had a shorter time to last contact than kin did. (Roberts & Dunbar, 2011, p. 448)

Dependent on the size of the network and the type of relation individuals within networks pay different time costs. For instance, within large friend networks individuals contacted each other as often as in small friend networks, the only difference is that the contact was spread out over more individuals resulting in different “payoffs”. Within large networks of friends with fewer occasions of contact with every friend the “pay off” is a greater access of a variety of information. Within smaller networks of friends with more frequent contact with every friend the “payoff” is network members offering emotional or material support. This study suggest that there is a link between frequency of communication and emotional intensity of the relationship. (Roberts & Dunbar, 2011, p. 448)

We believe that when structuring internal communication between any managers and employees the frequency of communication may play a role in a successful implementation from the perspective of building trust and strengthening the relationship. Roberts & Dunbar (Roberts & Dunbar, 2011, p. 448) argues that a higher frequency of communication increases emotional intensity of a relationship, and in this study we will see how that knowledge can be used to aid the fulfillment of the purpose of this study.

Research in Corporate Communication: An Overview of an Emerging Field
Van Riel (1997, p. 289) says corporate communication can be summarized in three clusters: corporate identity, corporate reputation, and orchestration of communication. Corporate identity describes how the company presents itself through behavior and symbolism to internal and external audiences (Van Riel, 1997, p. 290). This includes logos, colors, values, branding efforts etc. Corporate reputation refers to the level of esteem that external stakeholders have in the various areas that makes up the company. The third cluster, orchestration of communication, is where Van Riel work mostly ties in with the purpose of this paper. He acknowledges that organizations are becoming more aware of the fact that they do not fully exploit external or internal communication for the good of the organization. (Van Riel, 1997, p. 300) We believe this to be the case in this study, as the purpose of the case study is to see how the organization can better exploit social media within internal communication.
We also believe that corporate identity, how the company presents itself through behavior and symbolism, particularly towards internal stakeholders is a relevant cluster to take into consideration when going forward with this study, as social media is in our opinion one way of how the company can present itself.

3.1.1. Internal communication

Many terms have been used instead of internal communication throughout the years, as noted by Welch and Jackson (2007, p 178). Among these alternative terms are internal relations, employee communication, internal public relations and staff communication.

Just hearing the name internal communication makes you think that it is communication that takes place within an organization. Not all people agree that these organizational boundaries exist though. Mazzei (2010, p. 230) defines internal communication as “a set of interactive processes to generate knowledge and allegiance”, and goes on saying that this definition definitely abandons the perspective that refers to organizational boundaries. What the author means by that is that internal communication is more and more the same thing as external communication. Mazzei (2010, p. 222) argues that the boundaries between what is external and what is internal communication in an organization has been blurred. If this is the case then achieving the purpose of our study would not only improve the internal communication of the organization but also the external communication.

Another frequently cited definition for internal communication is by Frank and Brownell (1989, pp. 5-6), and that is “the communications transactions between individuals and/or groups at various levels and in different areas of specialization that are intended to design and redesign organizations, to implement designs, and to coordinate day-to-day activities”. While this definition from Frank and Brownell has been cited by many it is also been criticized by Welch and Jackson (2007, p. 179) for referring to organizational communication and not internal communication. Welch and Jackson (2007) acknowledged in their study the need for a better definition of internal communication. Their attempt at defining internal communication is that it is "the strategic management of interactions and relationships between stakeholders within organizations across a number of interrelated dimensions including, internal line manager communication, internal team peer communication, internal project peer communication and internal corporate communication." (Welch and Jackson, 2007, p. 184)

Mazzei approaches internal communication from two perspectives. The resource model versus the system model. The system model takes a more top down approach with push communication as the main goal and distinguishes between internal and external communication. The resource model on the other hand promotes active communication and stimulates allegiance and has stronger links with human resource management than the system model (Mazzei, 2009, p. 224). Mazzei concludes that the resource model seems to be a more fitting model for internal communication, and that the word “internal” in internal communication could better be exchanged for “creative”, “collaborative”, or “organizational” as the resource model does not distinguish between
internal and external communication. (Mazzei, 2009, p. 232) As we have mentioned earlier in this chapter if what Mazzei proposes in his studies are correct that would mean the usage of social media to improve internal communication would also have the possibility to improve external communication, or as Mazzei says improve “organizational” or “creative” communication. With regards to our study we also believe the resource model seem to be a more fitting model for internal communication, as Mazzei(2009, p. 224) argues it has stronger links to human resource management.

Van Riel(1995) approaches internal communication within the frame of corporate communication. There are three types of corporate communication according to Van Riel(1995, p. 13), and these are marketing, management and organizational communication. Internal communications can be found under organizational communication, as one of seven sub sections. The other six are corporate advertising, environmental communication, investor relations, labour market communications, public affairs and public relations. Van Riel says that human resources relates to management communication.

As human resource management and internal communication are also related to each other we believe that internal communication could belong as much under management communication as under organizational communication. This is a perspective that is not excluded in this study even though Van Riel think otherwise, as social media could prove to be an effective management tool in internal communication.

Welch and Jackson(2007, p. 183) on the other hand takes a stakeholder approach to internal communication, where they differentiate between various groups of stakeholders instead of treating all employees as one public. They identify the following stakeholders in relation to internal communication: All employees, strategic management(CEOs, senior management teams), day-to-day management, work teams, and project teams. One company that has used this stakeholder approach successfully is Singapore Airlines, where communication needs to be adapted to the various internal stakeholder groups such as ground crew, cabin crew, and pilots(Chong, 2007, p. 208). Singapore Airlines put focus on the cabin crew as the most important stakeholder because the cabin crew were the group which was most in contact with external stakeholders, i.e. their customers. As the cabin crew were in most contact with the customers that was the stakeholder group which has the most opportunity to convey Singapore Airline’s core values(Chong, 2007), or as Harkness(1999, p. 88) puts it, they are the ones who are “living and breathing the brand because their behavior will make or break the effort to build a distinct and lasting image in the hearts and minds of customers.”

A danger that can arise when internal communication is not handled properly is when employees hear news about their organization in the mass media before they are informed themselves, or hear about it through rumors. This can cause resentment as noted by White(et al, 2010, p 77). We believe this is relevant to consider when structuring the internal communication flow and deciding what information to communicate to employees, so as to avoid this danger.
Within internal communication the most influential stakeholder group is the strategic management group, and within that group the person with the most influence is the CEO. Without the support of the CEO White (et al, 2010, p. 67) states that successful internal communication is impossible. This is also the view of Wood (1999, p. 136). When middle managers decide to share or withhold information based on personal judgement this causes information to not flow evenly throughout whole organizations. To counter this White (et al, 2010, p. 80) proposes that use of electronic channels by top management in internal communication can flatten the traditional, hierarchical structure in organizations, and according to Kosonen (et al, 2007, p. 440) these new electronic channels can be used to foster internal communication and knowledge sharing. We believe it can be interesting in our case study to look at if the use of electronic channels in the form of social media by the CEO actually can flatten the traditional hierarchical structure.

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

Figure 1. Internal Communication Matrix (Welch and Jackson, 2007, p. 185)

The internal communication matrix tries to answer the questions put forth by Welch and Jackson (2007, p. 185): “who communicates, to whom, in what way, with what content, and leads to the question, for what purpose?” Just as in Welch paper this paper will also explore the fourth dimension, internal corporate communication, which looks at internal communication from the top management level.
As defined by Welch and Jackson (2007, p. 186) internal corporate communication is defined as “communication between an organization's strategic managers and its internal stakeholders, designed to promote commitment to the organization, a sense of belonging to it, awareness of its changing environment and understanding of its evolving aims”. Going back to the alternative definitions for internal communication we believe this sounds a lot like employee communication.

As noted by Welch the model in Figure 2 can be criticized because it depicts communication from the top management to employees as predominantly one-way. Two-way communication is important for successful internal communication (Welch and Jackson, 2007, p. 187; Harkness, 1999, p. 94), but one-way communication is “both unavoidable and necessary”. This one-way communication is represented in Figure 2 by the four one-way arrows. The white two-way arrows represent two-way symmetrical communication, i.e. channels through which employees can have a dialogue with top management. One key element when the company Woolwich implemented internal communication practices was two-way communication with the CEO, both through face-to-face communication and through digital communication channels such as e-mail (Harkness, 1999, p. 93).

What they noticed in the case study of Woolwich was that when the CEO sent out “challenges” via email and asked for feedback the employees were likely to reply because they knew that their feedback went straight to the CEO. This goes back to what
White (et al, 2010, p. 80) proposed on the use of electronic channels by top management to flatten the organization. Various electronic channels that can be used by the CEO will be explored in the theoretical chapter on social media. We also believe it is important to look into employees preferences when it comes to communication channels and content, and as we will see in the theoretical chapter on social media these preferences can vary. (Welch and Jackson, 2007, p. 187)

To learn if social media should be used in internal communication we believe it’s important for top management to be clear about what they hope to get out of improving their internal communication. In our study we hope to find out if internal communication as a means of conveying information can be a good way to build trust and allegiance within the organization. In fact some people believe that internal communication is all about establishing trust. Daly (et al, 2003, p. 159) were told by an interviewee that internal communication is useless without “openness, transparency, truth and integrity. So in actual fact properly communicating ... is about establishing trust”.

White (et al, 2010, p. 69) says however that a balance is needed. Too little information can create distrust and speculation, while too much information can cause information overload. They found in their study that employees wants to receive information as directly as possible from the CEO or top management, and found that as a sign of being respected, and also found that information more credible. This was also found to be a more effective way of communication by Proctor and Doukakis (2003). Even if the employees only have a perception that they have a relationship with the CEO it will still lead to increased employee wellbeing and sense of community (White et al, 2010, p. 72). We think this leads to an interesting question worth exploring in this study. What if the CEOs social media usage can strengthen this perception that the employee has a relationship with the CEO? Further on in White's (et al, 2010, p. 72) study top management found they received adequate information, while many employees felt that information was being filtered as it was passed down the organization. This leads us to believe accessibility can be an important factor when exploring social media usage.

Going back to Figure 2. Welch and Jackson states four goals of internal corporate communication, each represented by one of the four one-way arrows (2007, p 188):

- Creating employee commitment;
- Creating positive sense of belonging;
- Creating awareness of the changing environment;
- Creating understanding of what needs to happen in the organization in response to the changing environment.

Knowing the common goals of internal communication will help us in evaluating how social media can contribute to achieve those goals, as well as give us something to relate to the theoretical base on leadership and company culture.

### 3.2. Evolving Management

**The reinvention of management**
Stephen Denning(2011) believes that business leaders and writers are increasingly exploring a fundamental rethinking of the basic tenets of management. His paper aims to address this issue. The author means that management as we know it can not handle the very nature of how business is done nowadays. Furthermore he means that there are five fundamental shifts in management practice that is causing business experts to rethink the basic tenets of management(Stephen Denning, 2011, p. 10). These are the firm's goal (a shift from inside-out to outside-in), role of managers (a shift from controller to enabler), mode of coordination (from command and control to dynamic linking), values practiced (a shift from shareholder value to social and customer values) and communication (a shift from command to conversation). These shifts individually are not unique, but it has been shown during recent years that pursuing only one shift is unsustainable because it goes against traditional management practices. However, Denning proposes that when all shifts are undertaken simultaneously the results are a sustainable change that is beneficial to the organization and more satisfying for both the employee and the employer.(Stephen Denning, 2011, p. 10)

We believe several of these shifts relate to social media. The communication shift from command to conversation is what social media is all about. It is a conversation. The shift from shareholder value to social and customer values can be communicated through social media within the organization. And as a top manager we believe the CEO can use social media not to control employees, but to enable and empower them.

Denning(2011, p. 15) says that executing these five shifts at once is difficult and a lot of work, but the rewards of high productivity, continuous innovation, disciplined execution and a greater job satisfaction are the results of a well implemented shift. These benefits are created through a shift in focus from production processes that maximize shareholder value to a focus on people. All five shifts are people oriented enabling the organization to focus on “people” who are the organizations customers. As Denning puts it, “That is, by adopting a people-centered goal, a people-centered role for managers, a people-centered coordination mechanism, people-centered values and people-centered communication – the firm can focus on the people who are its customers”.(Stephen Denning, 2011, p. 15) Utilizing social media might thus in our opinion be one way to execute this shift in adopting more people-centered communication and values, and this is something. This is something that will be explored in this study.

3.3. Leadership and the Relationship between Leaders and Employees

Well-connected leaders: The impact of leaders' social network ties on LMX and members' work attitudes.

Green et al., 2010 means that a leader is expected to provide his or her employees with benefits, such a good information, social stimuli, decision management and organizational status. The employees perception of the leaders ability to deliver these benefits will in turn regulate whether the employee will be committed to the leader and in turn deliver a good working performance, resulting in a high quality LMX
relationship. A key factor to high quality LMX relations is that the employee perceives the leader as one with organizational status that has the influence to “get things done” throughout the organization. A large contributor to the leaders state of status is his or hers network of connections to other individuals with status. These status connections enable the leader to utilize resources throughout the organization.(Green et al., 2010, p. 1072)

There are two different organizational ties that can strengthen the leaders perceived status according to Green(et al., 2010, p. 1072), upward ties to the leader’s bosses and lateral ties to the leader’s peers. The authors state that the resources and influence that a leader has over his employees is influenced by the quality of the relation that the leader has with his or her own bosses. The leader’s lateral ties represents his or her relations with peers. These relations enable the leader to seek formal and informal advice from many relevant sources, this helps access valuable resources and information which in turn bestows the leader with a higher status. The findings in this article suggest that there is a strong correlation between a leader’s social network and his or hers follower relationships.(Green et al., 2010, p. 1072) In our study the upward ties to the CEOs bosses might not be relevant, as those relationships are likely not visible from the perspective of an employee. But if the leader's lateral ties are something that can affect the quality of relationship with employees that's something that can be looked into further.

**The impact of positivity and transparency on trust in leaders and their perceived effectiveness**

In this article by Avolio(et al., 2010) the authors study how a leader's perceived positivity and transparency impact employee trust and evaluation of leader effectiveness. The authors argue that follower trust is becoming increasingly important in organizations due to today's turbulent global environment. The way a leader acts and communicates during stressful periods is central to building trust with its employees.

The authors define leader positivity using four components that are associated with positive psychological attributes; hope, resilience, optimism and efficiency. When these four psychological capabilities are combined they have been proven to create a high-order core construct, they are thus considered to be an individual's positive psychological resources and capacity. The authors believe that high concentrations of these four attributes leads to the leader being perceived as effective which in turn generates high trust.(Avolio, 2010, p. 351)

Open communication organizations have according to Avolio(2010, p. 352) been historically recognized to be effective organizations. These organization are dependent on all the employees at all levels being receptive to and then responsive to information given from anybody within the organization. From a leader perspective open communication is built on how the leader and follower exchange information. High levels of communication openness is considered to promote better relations between leaders and employees, as well as high follower motivation and trust.(Avolio, 2010, p. 352)
The result of this study suggests that there are clear linkages between both the level of leader transparency and the level of leader positive psychological attributes to employee trust and level of perceived leader effectiveness. All leaders that were perceived as being high in both transparency and psychological positivity were considered to be more efficient than other leaders in every measured area. (Avolio, 2010, p. 360)

The results of Avolio suggests that a certain communication style of being positive and transparent is more effective in generating trust. If this is true also when communicating using social media is however unclear. Knowing that positivity and transparency are important factors in generating trust we can use that knowledge in this study to see if these factors also holds true for electronic communication channels such as social media.

**The Chief Executive Officer's Internal Communication Role: A Benchmark Program of Research.**

This article by Cozzens (et al., 1991) reports on exploratory research on how CEOs view and practice their internal communication role. The authors believe that the role of the chief executive officer (CEO) has been overlooked in the organizational communication process. The data in this article is gathered from studies with two CEOs of large American companies. The authors goal with this study is to better describe the phenomenon of CEO communication to eventually build theory that can be used in many different public relations situations. (Cozzens et al., 1991, p. 1-2)

The authors found that CEOs believe that their internal communication efforts does have an impact on organization and employees. The CEOs thought their efforts especially influenced employees feelings towards work (Cozzens et al., 1991, p. 27). Many of the actions taken by the CEOs such as devoting time to communication activities and approving larger communication budget strengthen the notion that the CEOs truly believe their own communication roles to be important. However even though the CEOs were in agreement that their internal communication roles were important, they were not certain on how to play this role or of the effectiveness of their role. The CEOs were in disagreement on whether they should be the main communicator or not and some of the CEOs expressed a concern with the employees not experiencing their communication efforts as credible or honest. The authors mean that the CEO has to be receptive to suggestions to understand how to more effectively fulfill their communication responsibilities. (Cozzens et al., 1991, p. 28) This study shows in our opinion that there needs to be a clearer strategy for implementing and carrying out communication from the perspective of being a CEO, and if CEOs truly believe their own communication roles to be important then social media could play an important role in carrying out this strategy.

Many of the CEOs in this study viewed their internal communication role as a one-way communication, often to other managers. Often the CEOs communication behavior is not totally in accordance with what they perceived their role to be. They express an interest in giving and getting information with the employees but their behavior limits the potential to do so (Cozzens et al., 1991, p. 28). The authors believe this to be the result the communication activities being based on traditions and circumstances rather
than on clear strategies. The authors suggest developing clear CEO communication strategies that are aligned with the organizations overall communication plan.(Cozzens et al., 1991, p. 29)

Among the CEOs face to face communication was the most preferred way to communicate and there was a common reluctance to utilize mass-media as a way to communicate(Cozzens et al., 1991, p. 29). The three most common channels for face to face communication used by the CEOs were meetings, speeches and management by walking around (MBWA). It was evident that CEOs of large companies do not have the possibility to establish personal relationships with the employees and therefore relied less on using interpersonal communication. In contrast to the small business CEOs the large corporation CEOs were becoming increasingly more reliant on using new communication technologies, for example videoconferencing. Because of this the authors predict the need for CEOs of the future to become more comfortable utilizing media in their communication strategy. The authors believe that CEOs can use mass communication channels to simulate personal communication with many employees at the same time, however this is thought to require the right training.(Cozzens et al., 1991, p. 29-30)

That the authors believe that mass communication channels can simulate personal communication with many employees at the same time shows promise for this study. That it also requires the right training and implementation might very well be true, as well as the suggestion of developing clear CEO communication strategies. How this can be done in relation to using social media is something that will be looked upon further in this study.

3.4. Corporate culture

3.4.1 Defining Corporate Culture

In the article “Organizational Culture” Schein(1990) presents his interpretation of how company culture should be defined and analyzed in order to be applicable to organizational psychology. To do this he uses case material that he demonstrates how to analyze.

Culture is according to Schein(1990, p. 111) the result of the lessons learned over time by a group. As groups solve external problems to survive and thus deal with internal integration, a culture forms, and this process has both behavioral and emotional aspects. Schein(1990, p. 111) goes on saying that “the deepest level of culture will be the cognitive in that the perceptions, language, and thought processes that a group comes to share will be the ultimate causal determinant of feelings, attitudes, espoused values, and overt behavior”. Another in our view important consideration for our study is that as Schein says culture forms when a group of people has had enough stability and shared history for the culture to form. Schein proposes that organizations with a high turnover of members will have a harder time to form this culture.(Schein, 1990, p. 111) In the case of this thesis it is our opinion that this should be taken into consideration, because
turnover might play an important factor in the organization that makes up our case study.

Culture in a group can be the result of complex cognitive interactions, however Schein(1990, p. 111) argues that culture is not always complex and culture can form within a group just because the group has a shared history. The strength of the culture and cohesiveness of internal values varies from different groups. This is determined by the time the group has spent together, the stability of the group, the intensity of the groups experiences and the “strength and clarity of the assumptions held by the founders and leaders of the group”. (Schein, 1990, p. 111)

Schein(1990, p. 111) argues that three fundamental distinctions of at which level culture manifests itself has to be made when analyzing the culture of a group. These are observable artifacts, values, and basic underlying assumptions. The observable artifacts constitutes what can be observed when viewing a group; for example physical layout, dress code, and emotional intensity. Values are harder to uncover and therefore need to be studied by using interviews or questionnaires. The basic underlying assumptions are even harder than values to observe and therefore they need to be researched more thoroughly than values by using more intensive observations and more focused questions(Schein, 1990, p. 112). The author concludes by stating that culture is an increasingly important issue in organizational psychology, because without understanding culture we cannot understand change or the resistance to it, and also that all activities within an organization require the understanding of how the organizational culture affects the present functioning(Schein, 1990, p. 112).

### 3.4.2. Corporate culture and Communication

**The role of communication in organizational change**

In this article Elving(2005) means to provide a conceptual framework for studying communication during organizational change. We argue that organizations are in constant change, which makes this article relevant for studying communication no matter in what situation a company is. The article is focused on the goals a company might have with their communication during change, this to understand how the process of change can be handled by organizations through applying vital communication efforts.

There are two goals with organizational communication. The first is to inform employees of tasks, policies and other organizational issues, and the second goal is creating a community within the organization through communication. A rough distinction between the two is that one seeks to spread information and the other seeks to build unity(Elving, 2005, p. 131). When applying these distinctions to organizational change communication one is focused with giving information about the change and the other is focused with the state of the community before, during and after the change has occurred. When organizations give information about change Elving(2005, p. 131) believes it is important to incorporate the reasons for change and to address initial worries the employees might have with the change, and this information should come from management. He argues that giving the employees knowledge about the motives for change will help to reduce uncertainty and thereby create a readiness for change.
Trust is a factor that can impact the possibility to feel committed to a community. This is because trust results in the employees having a more positive attitude and having higher levels of cooperation. Trust can help guide an individual through ambiguous situations, it shapes perceptions and guides an individual's response to an action thus helping an individual cope with change. Employees committed to the organization, trust between employees and management, and organizational identification are the results of a corporation that has managed to build a community through communication.(Elving, 2005, p. 133)

The author makes a distinction between informative communication and communication to build commitment but concludes that both are central when dealing with communication during times of change.(Elving, 2005, p. 136) In social media communication we are not sure if there is any difference between these two distinctions or if any difference should be made, but when forming an implementation strategy these distinctions might be relevant to take into consideration.

Using Web 2.0 technology in personnel marketing to transmit corporate culture
In this article Laick and Dean (2011) present a conceptual framework on how to use web 2.0 technology and social media to portray a corporate culture that will help human resources to attract, recruit and retain talented personnel. Modern technology and communication has affected almost all business process and one of the processes that has been very influenced is personnel management. Job applicants today are using modern facilities to find information about companies and this is creating a transparency into corporate culture that has never been seen before. Because this information is available, traditional company brochures and websites are no longer the “go to” sources for job applicants who are looking for a more personal review. To cope with the changing informational facilities human resources personnel have to work proactively to convey a corporate culture that is beneficial for the company in attracting new personnel. Web 2.0 technology and social media are tools that can help a company do this.(Laick & Dean, 2011, pp. 297-298) We believe this is relevant to our study, because not only do we agree that conveying an attractive corporate culture is beneficial for attracting new personnel, but also for keeping existing personnel. As Laick and Dean has described conveying this corporate culture has been the job of human resources personnel, but we do not want to rule out that it might also be the case that the CEO can convey this corporate culture through transparent social media communication.

To continue, Laick and Dean (2011, pp.298-299) says that employer branding is the perceived economical, functional and psychological benefits that a potential employee associates with an employment at a company. In other words employer branding is the company’s ability to position itself as an attractive company to its target market and communicate this message to the relevant market. To do this successfully it is key to find the company's unique selling points and to package these into an employer brand. The authors argue that it is important to promote the company as differentiated from competitors, and as a great place to work, this message has to be communicated both internally and externally. Web 2.0 technology has the openness and ability to transmit honest and clear messages which according to the authors is crucial when building employer brand. By using these technologies a company can monitor different forums
and get an understating of how their brand is perceived and then make appropriate changes to redirect the brand. Using this technology can help the company to better understand their target market and to transmit important messages. (Laick & Dean, 2011, pp. 298-299)

The authors conclude that social media is a growing recruitment tool that personal marketing managers are using to transmit a genuine and attractive online employer brand. (Laick & Dean, 2011, p. 302) As we have mentioned before it might be possible that what Laick and Dean says about personal marketing managers using social media to transmit corporate culture might also apply to CEOs using social media. What the authors say about Web 2.0 technology's ability to transmit honest and clear messages also shows promise in our opinion for using social media as a CEO.

**The creation of company cultures**

In this article Wilkins (1984) writes about how informally told stories and human resource systems have a role in creating strong company cultures that can help to support a corporate strategy. The author promotes informally told stories as a way to instill concrete examples of past management actions. One benefit of this that the author proposes is that employees get real evidence that a company philosophy is actually followed, i.e. the philosophy communicated by a CEO high up in the management chain goes from being something on paper to becoming something real to the employees (Wilkins, 1984, p. 42). When these stories of past management actions are passed on throughout organizational generations it creates a true organizational philosophy that can be followed. For new employees these informal stories can work like social maps guiding their behavior to avoid mistakes. These maps however do not only provide the employee with an organizational philosophy, they should also give an idea of what the individual should do in a practical sense. “People want to know how to fit in and avoid major blunders in a new culture.” (Wilkins, 1984, p. 43)

Organizational stories or maps also have the benefit of not being as strict as rules and guidelines, stories are flexible and leave room for interpretation which makes them more responsive to the fact that organizations evolve and change over time (Wilkins, 1984, p. 45). The author argues that stories are powerful because they are easily available, so instead of the employees taking time to form a personal opinion they naturally choose to believe the stories and in that way form an opinion about the organization (Wilkins, 1984, p. 48). Naturally all stories that surface are not positive and some stories can even be very disruptive for the organization following its corporate strategy. It is important according to the author that managers do not try to eliminate these stories, but rather that they work hard to disprove the main notion of the negative story (Wilkins, 1984, p. 51).

In conclusion the author states that stories are great for transmitting values because they give context to abstract issues and at the same time they give a structure on how to get things done in the organizational context (Wilkins, 1984, p. 59).

Even though this article was written in 1984 we still believe Wilkins conclusions are relevant for this thesis paper. Stories have been told for millennia by our ancestors to
pass down knowledge from generation to generation, and we believe stories will be told millennia from now as a means of conveying values and information. We believe it might be the case that social media is a suitable tool to transmit these informal stories, and could thus play a part in successfully implementing social media in the CEOs internal communication mix.

Corporate Culture and Corporate Success
According to White(1984) the culture of an organization affects all aspects of the company; how employees interact, the quality of production and how the company functions. Therefore what a company makes and does is guided by its beliefs. From an individual's perspective the company culture guides what is wrong, what is right, what to believe and how to react. Company culture also determines how the employees view and prioritize processes, whether to focus on quantity or quality. The author argues that there is a strong link between productivity and company culture by pointing out that productivity is the result of motivation and that motivation is the result of a positive company climate. By focusing on some key issues management can turn a good but unstable climate into long-lasting corporate culture.(White, 1984, pp. 15-16)

The key issues are compensation, organizational clarity, decision-making structure, and organizational integration. Compensation needs to be at an appropriate level, not too high so that employees always expect increasing salaries but high enough so that the employees do not feel the need to retaliate in any way. When it comes to organizational clarity the goals and plans of the organization need to be clearly perceived by the employees, as this gives the personnel a feeling of involvement. With regards to the decision-making structure a free flow of information regarding decision-making is crucial, as the whole purpose of the structure is to facilitate decision making. Cooperation with effective communication amongst different departments of the organization can help the company reach its objectives. Thus organizational integration is important.(White, 1984, p. 16) While the issue of compensation is not relevant for our study we believe that organizational clarity as well as a free flow of information is closely related to internal communication, and we will see what role social media can play in solving these key issues.

The author argues that the productivity is the key to managing a successful business and that the most crucial cultural value that determines productivity is intention to produce quality products and quality services. Within these productivity based cultures it is important that the communication channel are informal and that the organization is sensitive towards the customers and the employees needs and wishes.(White, 1984, p. 19) Here is another mention of the importance of informal communication for building a corporate culture, and this informality is something that will be looked at in our study.

3.5. Social media

3.5.1. What is Social Media?
Holtz(2005/2006, p. 24) says that any technology that becomes commonly used on the internet will find its way onto intranets sooner or later. Holtz predicts that so will also be
the case with social media technologies such as blogs, wikis and podcasts. The question he puts forth is if managers and executives should wait until such tools have become the standard in internal communication or if they should implement these tools today to reap the supposed benefits. Social media has been found to offer many opportunities when used in internal communication (Holtz, 2005/2006, p. 25), and the aim of our study is to answer if executives should hold off or if they should implement these tools today.

Elving (2005, p. 131) proposes that with social media two main goals of internal communication can be reached. The first is communication to inform, while the other goal is to communicate with the aim of creating a community. Social media as a phenomenon is thought to have started roughly 20 years ago when a site called “open diary” brought together online diary writers in a community. This was then called a weblog which later became “we blog”. Some years later the availability of high speed Internet sparked the interest further and Myspace and Facebook was created, it was around this time that the term “social media” was introduced. (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 60)

To define social media Blossom (2009, p. 29, referenced in Friedl et al, 2010, p. 84) propose that social media is “any highly scalable and accessible communication technology or technique that enables an individual to influence groups of other individuals easily”. From that definition it would in our opinion seem like social media offers a lot of opportunities for CEOs to influence groups of employees. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p. 61) define social media as “Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content.”. The collaborative nature of social media enable a unique form of democratic creation, a simultaneous creation by many users. The main idea and purpose with many contributing creators is that the joint effort of many lead to better result than the efforts of one individual. (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 62)

Regarding usage of social media in business Friedl (et al, 2010, p. 85) found in their study of digital natives that even though the younger workforce prefer digital media in their personal life this is not always the case in their business lives. The sample of 310 respondents with an average age of 27 years showed that the most popular social media activity among them was visiting social networking sites (69%) and watching videos online (65%), as well as reading online forums or discussion groups. Blogs are preferred to all other social media though, read by 65% of the respondents. The researchers were surprised to find that this younger generation still prefer fairly traditional internal communication channels such as email newsletters, intranet news and employee meetings when it comes to strategic information. (Friedl et al, 2010, p 85) This was also found by White (et al, 2010, p 74).

White (et al, 2010, p 75) found in their study that most employees used the organization website as an archive of information and not as a communication channel. The majority did not visit the website very often, unless they needed specific information. They came
to the conclusion that a website is more of an information-pull technology and not an information-push technology. This could be relevant when choosing which social media tools are appropriate, and how the tools should be used in relation to the website. Further White (et al, 2010, p 79) concludes that having redundancy of communication channels leads to good internal communication, and the various social media channels has the potential to offer this redundancy. At the same time others say that the wide range of communication channels today makes it hard for management to choose which one to use. Quirke (2002, p. 139, referenced in Hewitt, 2006, p. 78) is one of them and says:

“The proliferation of technology has increased the options for communication, but in doing so has created a new problem: how to choose from all the alternatives.”

As we shall see in chapter 3.5.2. there is email, blogs, social networking, video, podcasts, forums, discussion groups, intranets, newsletters, online surveys, and aside from social media channels there is the traditional meetings and face to face communication. Most of the “new” channels such as email, intranets and social media are written communication, and as Stevens and McElhill (2000, quoted by Hewitt, 2006, p. 80) claims “written communication is not the best medium for getting the message across in every situation, and is often not the best way to motivate employees.” Hewitt partly confirmed this claim in a study where employees said that email does not help them understand their role in the organization, and neither did they think that email encourages a culture of openness and trust. The results showed however that employees find email to be a good way to give feedback to management, to understand the big picture in the organization, and to receive positive news and praise.

From what has been said in the two preceding paragraphs we can see that the question of using social media or not is only the first question. After answering that the big question becomes which tools to choose from as a CEO. In the next chapter an overview will be given of the various social media tools a CEO has at his or hers disposal.

3.5.2. Examples of Social Media Tools

Blogs, or web logs, are thought to be one of the earliest forms of social media. A blog is a website that usually displays author entries dated in reverse chronological order. Usually blogs are only managed by one person but in the blog readers are able to comment on author entries enabling two-way communication. Companies have begun to see the potential of blogs in conveying relevant updates and developments to employees, customers and stakeholders.(Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 62)

The CEO blog has been identified as one of three corporate blog types, and such executive blogs can be used to assist strategy implementation and change management(Kosonen et al, 2007, p. 441). Executive blogs was also found in a case study by Kosonen(2007, p. 443) to be the most popular type of blog in the particular company. One comment about the CEO blog was that “The CEO blog attracts the most attention because it has so much influence on large masses of employees”. While blogs are mostly used for informal communication purposes they can also be used for formal
purposes, such as broadcasting official statements and guidelines (Kosonen, 2007, p. 444). Kosonen (2007, p. 445) argues that internal blogs “represent novel forms of coffee-room discussion. They allow dialogue and are perceived to carry a more human voice than other online communication media”.

Another form of social media is content communities, and here the main purpose is the sharing of media between users. What users share is for instance films, books, pictures, presentations and music. From a corporate perspective these communities are sometimes misused to spread illegal content, however these sites are very popular and present easy opportunities for companies to get a wide recognition. Examples of large content communities that could be relevant for this case is YouTube (video), Flickr (photos), and iTunes (podcast). (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 62)

The biggest form of social media in the world is social networking, with the most prominent example of Facebook. As Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p. 62) states these sites offer user connection through the creation of person profiles containing personal information with the option to add and chat with friends, acquaintances and colleagues. Companies have started using these sites to build brand communities, and some companies have even started using these sites as distribution channels.

Another relevant form of social media is podcasts. A podcast is an audio file that can be uploaded to a website or where people can subscribe to it via various softwares. Holtz (2005/2006, p. 25) suggests how podcasting can be used by the CEO to discuss issues of the day, or for example a weekly newscast for employees or departmental updates.

The last form of social media and web 2.0 applications that we have included is wikis. A wiki is a website where people collaborate and where everyone can both add and edit content. Holtz suggest wikis can be used in internal communication to share best practices, polices, case studies etc. (Holtz, 2005/2006, p. 25)

3.5.3. Possibilities and Usage of Social Media

Compared with traditional written communication we believe that the possibilities with social media could be that channels such as video and podcasting offer communication through visual and audio mediums. If Stevens and McElhill are correct in their claim that written communication might not be the best medium these two social media channels could offer a better way to get the message across in certain situations. As put forth by Argenti (2003, referenced by Hewitt, 2006, p. 88) the key to effective internal communication is to keep and strengthen the personal contact with managers.

“Today’s employees do want high-tech and sophisticated communications, but they also want personal contact with their managers. Understanding this fact is the cornerstone of an effective internal communication program (Argenti, 2003, p. 139).”

Personal contact may as have been seen in previously mentioned studies be easier to build between middle managers and employees as they have better and more frequent opportunities for face to face communication, but for top management and especially the CEOs of a large organization it is hard to have face to face communication with all
employees on a frequent basis. We believe social media communication channels could be a way to bridge this personal contact gap.

Kaplan and Haenlein shares in their article five points about using social media successfully. Their advice to companies is to choose carefully, pick the application or make your own, ensure activity alignment, integrate a media plan, and ensure access for all employees (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 65). The main message we believe should be taken away from Kaplan and Haenlein’s advice is that organizations that wish to use social media need to consider the right social media tools depending on their special circumstances, instead of just jumping into using it. Sometimes a mix of different social media tools might be right, or a single social media tool might be the way to go. It is important to have a clear plan to integrate the social media into the rest of the organization's internal communication.

Five points about being social is also shared by Kaplan and Haenlein, and as we will be looking at how the CEO use social media this might help us in evaluating the CEO’s performance and communication style. The five points are that you should be active, be interesting, be humble, be unprofessional, and be honest (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 66). It is important to have a fresh flow of information that is interesting to the reader, and also to not try and stick out by being too professional. The nature of social media is informal, and Kaplan and Haenlein says there is no need to spend a hundred thousand dollars developing the perfect social network profile (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010, p. 67).

The biggest opportunity of social media usage by leaders is the ability to communicate with a large number of employees simultaneously, but still achieve that personal connection that Argenti (2003, p. 139) mentions is wanted by employees. While more frequent social media usage leads to more online friends Roberts (et al., 2011, p. 256) has shown through that it does not always lead to more offline friends, and does not lead to more emotional closeness. So from their study it is not clear what the benefits are, if any, of communicating simultaneously with a large number of employees, and if those benefits carries over from the online world to the offline world. We will see in our study if what Roberts (et al., 2011) says also holds true in a work place between a CEO and employees.

3.6. Our theoretical perspective

Building the theoretical base for this study involves a lot of different areas. The goals of good corporate communication are many as we have seen in the theories. Some of the goals of internal communication are to motivate employees, build trust between co-workers and for the leader, as well as simply conveying information and company goals. Because communication is what makes up an organization a range of theoretical areas must be considered aside from communication itself, such as research on motivation, leadership, management and corporate culture.

Communication and leadership involves many different factors, and narrowing it down to internal communication using social media opens up even more areas of study. Using social media within internal communications to build trust, relationships and a corporate
culture involves four main theoretical areas to explore, and these are (internal) communication, leadership, corporate culture and social media. These main areas are what the theoretical base below is built around, as illustrated by our theoretical model in figure 3. This model will be used both to organize the empirical data and to structure our analysis and results. The aim with the theoretical part is to develop an understanding of what is good internal communication, how it relates to the relationship between top management and employees, and what role social media can play in employee communication. All of these areas flow into each other, and we are interested in the part where all areas intersect, as shown by the dark, striped area in the middle of our model below.

Both established and newer theories has been included. We believe communication in its core has not changed the last millennia. Communication is still about a message that is sent between a receiver and sender, as we will talk about in the next section. What has changed and is still changing rapidly is the communication tools, and the way we use those tools. That is one of the reasons for why both established and newer theories are included. The evolution of communication tools influences how these older theories of communication can be interpreted and used.

Studying theories addressing internal communication has enabled us to understand what constitutes successful internal communication, and how this is achieved. This naturally led us to theories about corporate culture and community building, as these are some of the main goals with internal communication. Building communities is also one of the many functions of social media and culture and community building is therefore relevant for this study not only from an internal communication perspective but also from a social media perspective. The theories regarding social media were included for us to be able to understand what tools are available, how to best apply them and what the risks and benefits of the different applications are.
The social media theories with support from some internal communication theories will enable us to ask relevant questions to unveil how the CEO works with social media and why. This will also at an early stage of the study help us to understand if the CEO is doing something “out of the ordinary” in his communication that we will have to be aware when constructing the employee questionnaire. The corporate culture and internal communication theories will then be used to construct the questionnaire and analyze the findings. We believe that these theories will enable us to find strengths and weaknesses in the communication as a result of the CEO using social media, as well as draw conclusions on how the rapidly evolving social media tools fit in with established theories on communication.
4. Practical Methodology

This chapter describes how we intend to go about answering our research questions. We will describe how we will approach the problem, and technical specifics of how the actual study will be conducted will also be presented. This chapter also deals with validity and reliability issues and gives the reader an understanding of how we as authors view and impact this study.

4.1. Research strategy

The research strategy is an outlining plan of how the authors will go about answering the research questions. Case study is a strategy for making an empirical investigation of a phenomenon in a real life context. This strategy is good when the author seeks to gain a rich understanding of the context of research. This form of research strategy has the ability to answer questions regarding “what? how? and why?” Within case studies various methods can be used to collect data, including questionnaires, interviews, observations and documentary analysis.(Saunders, et al., 2003, p. 93)

Because we are conducting our research at a specific company we are conducting a case study. This method is suitable for us because we strive to create understanding for a phenomenon within this large organization. However the company itself is not relevant for our study as we are not looking at any specific problem at a company. We just need a company that has a leader that has started using social media in his or her communication strategy, as it is this phenomenon we are interested in. So we are not actually focusing on the company at hand but using this company to be able to gain an understanding of how the use of social media has changed the internal communication. We will use a company to describe a phenomenon. We can therefore argue that our study is also a descriptive study. The descriptive study can be used to portray an accurate profile of persons, events or situations(Saunders, et al., 2003, p. 97)

In conclusion our study can be called a descriptive study in a case setting. By using these research strategies we will get a practical understanding of the phenomenon that will then enable us to describe how this has theoretical implications. To get this practical understanding we will carry out interviews with both the CEO and the employees of the chosen organization.

4.5. Gathering of primary data

4.5.1 Semi-structured interview with the CEO

Semi-structured interviews can be considered to be non-standardized. These interviews consist of list of questions and topics to be covered during the interview session. During the session some questions may be left out and some new questions might be brought up depending on which direction the interview goes. The nature of these questions and the general openness of the interview makes it necessary to record the conversation either by taking notes or by using a tape recorder. Semi structured interviews can be carried
Semi-structured interviews are favorable when the author seeks to explore a phenomenon. By conducting this qualitative method of gathering data the author can infer causal relations between variables. Qualitative studies are necessary when the authors strives for more than just answers and wants to create an understanding for actions and opinions. One clear benefit of semi-structured interviews is the author's option to probe certain questions harder, as this enables build on or further explanations where the author feels that he or she is not satisfied with the answers. This is important in cases where the authors research philosophy strives for creating understanding. (Saunders, et al, 2003, p.250) These interviews are to be carried out in a way that enables the interview subject to express his or her thoughts as freely as possible. If the author engages in active listening during the interview session it can help push the dialogue forward and strengthen the perceptions of the interviewee's interpretations. (Johansson Lindfors, 1993, pp.120-123)

For our interview with the CEO we have decided to conduct a semi-structured interview. This is a natural choice for us because of the character of the questions we wish to ask. Some of the questions are of a “hard nature” where answers of yes and no would be sufficient but many of the questions have a “soft nature” where our goal is understanding and comprehension of the dependency between variables. The fact that the interview is semi-structured is also important because we do not know where the CEO places focus regarding his intentions, methods and relationships. It is important that we are allowed to present many follow-up questions on these focus areas to ensure our understanding of his or her actions. The semi-structured interview is also appropriate for us because we want to create a relaxed atmosphere so that the interview subject feels that he or she can express themselves freely, and also so we get to know the “real” respondent so that we better can understand the individuals interpretations.

When formulating the semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix 2) we have based the questions around three major areas; internal communication, social media, and corporate culture. These areas are covered because we wanted to get a picture of how the CEO views these areas, what their internal communication currently looks like, how he use social media, and what his efforts are in communicating improving corporate culture. By getting a deeper understanding from the CEO this will be of help and guide us when formulating questions for the quantitative survey with employees.

**4.5.2 Questionnaire with Employees**

Questionnaire is a collective term used to describe all techniques of data collecting where the respondents answer the same set of questions in a given order without assistance(Bryman, 2008, p. 216). It is an easy and effective way of reaching many respondents and thus collecting large samples of data, because all respondents are asked the same the questions and the respondents fill out the questionnaire without assistance. Questionnaires was chosen mainly because we can collect large amounts of data in a short amount of time, which is one of the advantages of questionnaires stated by Bryman(2008, p. 217).
Questionnaires work best with questions of a “hard nature” that are interpreted in the same way regardless of who the respondent is, i.e. closed questions. They are suitable for descriptive and explanatory research, as closed questions increases the comparability of the answers (Bryman, 2008, p. 235). Questionnaires aiming to collect data for descriptive research often deal with attitude and opinion and the results from such questionnaires enable the author to make conclusions regarding variability of different phenomena. Explanatory research questionnaires however, enable the author to examine and explain relationship between variables (Saunders et al., 2003, pp. 280-283).

For the gathering of primary data from the employees we will be using questionnaires. This is suitable because of the natures of the questions and because of our need for many respondents. The questions we will ask the employees are of a descriptive nature. Using a questionnaire is therefore preferable as we want to know opinions and attitudes of how the employees perceive phenomena, we can thereby obtain answers from agree to disagree on a scale. As our intention with collecting data from the employees is as we previously mentioned to be able to describe and understand the relationship between what the CEO does and what the employees perceive and feel, we naturally have to gain many responses to be able to draw any conclusions from the data. Therefore questionnaires is a logical alternative.

**Questionnaire Design**

Because respondents fill out questionnaires without assistance it is important that the questionnaire is easy to understand and easy to answer, which is why Bryman (2008, p. 216) recommends that closed questions are used, that the design of the questionnaire is easy to follow, and that the questionnaire is short so as to avoid “questionnaire tiredness”. The drawbacks of using questionnaires is that the interviewer can not help respondents with interpreting the questions, and neither can follow up questions be asked. Because questionnaires should be as short as possible it is also a challenge if many questions needs to be asked (Bryman, 2008, pp. 218-219).

A commonly mentioned problem with questionnaires is non-respondents, but as Bryman (2008, p. 219) mentions this is mainly a problem with questionnaires sent in the mail. As we will be distributing and collecting the questionnaires in person with the permission of the CEO we predict that this will not be a problem for the data collection and are expecting a response rate of close to 100%. This prediction is in agreement with what Saunders (2003, p. 158) says about collecting data from secondary sources within organizations. There are some ways to reduce the number of non-respondents that we believe can be used to our advantage though. A good introduction to the questionnaire should state the purpose of the study, who is behind the study, a description of how the respondent was chosen, an assurance that any answers will be handled in a confidential way and that the answers will not be identifiable to the respondent, as well as a statement that participation is voluntary (Bryman, 2008, p. 201).

When arranging the questions one main aspect of designing the questionnaire is how the answer alternatives should be ordered. The two main ways is to order them either vertically or horizontally. While ordering the answers vertically is seen as easier to
understand, it would also take up too much space as many of our questions will have similar answer alternatives. To keep the questionnaire as short and understandable as possible a Likert scale will be used for most questions. (Bryman, 2008, p. 222) When formulating the questions there are several types of questions as stated by Bryman (2008, p. 238). Some examples are personal fact questions, fact questions about other people, attitude questions, opinion questions, value questions and knowledge questions. Knowing these types of questions can be of help when designing the questionnaire, and it is also relevant when using the Likert scale. Bryman (2008, p. 239) states that the various types of questions should have different scales, otherwise the answers will not measure the same thing, which might have a negative effect on validity.

Our aim with formulating the questions for the questionnaire (see Appendix 1) is to get a clear understanding of how the employees use social media in their work and/or during their free time. Using the theories on social media we have formulated a range of questions regarding the various commonly used social media tools today to answer to what extent and how often employees use the tools. From the insights of the CEO and theories on internal communication, questions have been formulated to get an understanding of how employees view, and are benefited by internal communication and communication from the CEO. With the insights about corporate culture from the CEO and support from the theories on creating and strengthening corporate cultures questions have been formulated to see how employees perceive their corporate culture and if that perception has changed due to the social media activities of the CEO.

4.5.3 Sampling and Sample Selection

It is not always feasible due to cost or time restraints to study an entire population (Johansson Lindfors, 1993, p. 92), and that is the case with our study of a large organization. Instead a smaller sample can be made from the population. Probability sampling is commonly used with survey based research where the sample can be used to make inferences about a population. Probability sampling is a four stage process; the first step is identifying a suitable sampling frame, then a suitable samples size, followed by a suitable sampling technique and the last step is checking that the sample is representative of the population. (Saunders, et al., 2003, p. 153)

The sampling frame is a complete list of all the possible cases from the total population. If such a list does not exist the author must compile a sampling frame, where it is important that the sample frame is unbiased, current and accurate. (Saunders, et al, 2003, pp. 154) The company that we are studying could not provide us with a complete list of all their employees so we had to create our own sampling frame. In our sample frame we are limiting ourselves to a larger town in Northern Sweden as well as the main office with an estimated total sample population of 200-300 employees (exact number withheld by request of the company). For our study is is important that our sample was representative of the whole company regardless of hierarchy, store size or employee tasks. To ensure this we chose a sample that incorporates four stores from two different concepts and also the main office. The decided sample size is 50 employees, which represent 16.7-25% of the sample population. We believe that this frame sufficiently represents the company as a whole. The sample is representative for the population
because it covers the major store concepts and thus incorporates the values and culture that may differ depending on what store the employee works in. It is also crucial that the main office is represented in our study. These individuals at the main office work closer with the CEO and might have different values, perceptions, and culture. The different concept stores are very varying in size and we can not just pick two or three individuals from each store as this would not be representative of the whole population. The store employees are a larger group of employees compared to the main office and this is taken into consideration in the sample selection. The sample selection consists of 80% store employees and 20% employees from the main office. This way the results of the questionnaire will be representative for the whole population.

While we might receive a representative sample selection with the simple random sampling technique, where you assign every possible respondent a number and then pick them at random (Saunders, et al., 2003, p. 155), chances are we will not get the desired proportion between the stores and the main office. For that reason we believe the stratified random sampling technique is better suited for this study, where you first identify certain groups or stratas according to a set criteria, and then proceed with a simple random sampling from the individual strata. By doing this you get a proportional representation of the sample population. (Johansson Lindfors, 1993, p. 93) For the stratified random sampling to be possible Saunders (et al., 2003, p. 165) says it is required that you are aware of significant strata in your sampling frame. The strata we have chosen in our sampling is the work place, i.e. the stores and the main office.

The simple random sampling that was carried out in the main office strata was straightforward, because the employees were located in individual rooms and did not move around. Thus we assigned a random number between 1-100 to each employee that was present, and continued with selecting 10 employees using a commonly available random number generator.

The simple random sampling that we carried out in the store stratas was not as straightforward, because the employees moved around in the stores making it hard to keep track of them. Thankfully the majority of stores were small, making it easy for us to make a list of all current employees, using their first names and last initial as basis for the list. When we had all current employees on the list we proceeded as at the main office with assigning a random number between 1-100. After that we used a random number generator to select the desirable sample size in each store.

Generalizations about population are based on probability, so naturally with a larger sample size generalizations regarding the population are easier to make (Saunders, et al., 2003, p. 155). While our intention is not to generalize our results for other companies we believe we can generalize our results for the organization as a whole. The sample size that is chosen is governed by the level of confidence needed from the data, the margin of error that can be tolerated and the types of analysis the data is needed for. The final sample size is almost always a combination of calculations and judgement (Saunders, et al., 2003, p. 155). We are confident in our sample frame and therefore believe the margin of error to be tolerable, also the level of confidence we have in the data we are gathering is supported by our representative sample frame.
4.5.4. Quantitative data analysis

The data we are collecting with questionnaires from the company employees can be called quantifiable data. Quantifiable data is data that can be measured numerically, this data is considered as quite precise as each data value can be assigned a position on a numerical scale(Saunders, et al., 2003, p. 329). The questions in the questionnaire are designed to measure how the social media communication implementation has worked in different perspectives. The employees will agree or disagree with statements on a scale from 1-5. Numbers are often used to code quantifiable data as numeric codes can easily be entered into analysis software so that specific variables and relations can be detected(Saunders, et al., 2003, p. 333). We will enter our findings from the questionnaire into the analysis software program SPSS, which will help us present and analyze our findings for correlations.

Diagrams and tables are useful to understand and explore the data, and although it is important to keep the research questions and objectives in mind, using diagrams can help the author find relationships in the data that he or she was not looking for. With the research questions in mind, key aspects including specific values, highest and lowest values, trends over time, proportions and distributions should be initially analyzed. Then the author can begin to compare and look for relationships between variables(Saunders, et al., 2003, pp. 338-339). The results from our questionnaire will be clearly presented in tables and diagrams in our empirical chapter, in this chapter we will only focus on presenting the key values. These key values will then be compared with other key values to be able to find and analyze dependencies and trends in the analysis chapter.

4.5.5. Qualitative data analysis

Because of the diverse nature of qualitative data there is no standardized approach to analyzing it. Some ways of analyzing quantitative data are highly structured and formalized and other ways are unstructured and built on informal author interpretations(Saunders, et al., 2003, p. 379). Our goal with the CEO interview is to understand how he works with social media tools and why. These questions have a clear nature and have little need for our interpretations, we simply want to know what tool he uses when, and what his intention is with that choice.

The first step in analyzing the data will be to classify the findings into categories that are derived from the theoretical framework(Saunders, et al, 2003, p.381). In our case we will be categorizing data under the subjects communication, social media, and corporate culture. Units of data can then be assigned to an appropriate category(Saunders, et al, 2003, p.381).

The three categories will help us structure the units of data in a way that will enable us to analyze the CEOs tools for internal communication, his intention with internal communication and the result this has on his leadership. The data gathered from the interview will be analyzed in a structured way and then compared with the findings of the questionnaire to be able to analyze how his efforts have manifested themselves compared with his intentions. By doing this we will be able to point out where certain
tools have been successful and why and this will also give us an understanding of how
to choose a social media tool dependent on situation and intention.

The data gathered in the interview will be transcribed. Our empirical presentation of the
interview however will be presented using the three categories where we will present
key comments and thoughts gathered from the interview to make the empirical chapter
relevant and easy to follow for the reader.
5. Empirical data

This chapter presents the empirical findings of this study structured after our theoretical model illustrated in Figure 3. The reader can in this chapter understand what material is needed and directly related to being able to answer the research question, material that is gathered through an interview with the CEO and through a questionnaire with the employees.

5.1. Case company

Due to a clearly expressed notion from the company to be totally anonymous we cannot reveal anything about our case company that would risk the anonymity. We can however reveal that it is a big retail company with strong corporate values, the company has many employees and is active in Sweden. The CEO has for one year used social media in his communication strategy. The company features different concept stores varying in size and location, however the different stores all sell similar types of products, the stores are spread out all over Sweden. In this study employees from the stores as well as the main office will be represented. Therefor we believe that it is relevant to mention that the store employees are a much larger group than the main office employees. Amongst all these employees there are roughly 100 managers. The only criteria we really looked for when trying to find a case company was that the CEO uses social media to communicate with many employees and therefore we do not believe that much information is needed about the company in order for the reader to understand our study.

5.2. Qualitative data

The qualitative data was gathered through a semi-structured interview with the CEO. The interview took place in the office of the CEO during a period of around one hour. The interview was centered around three main areas: Internal communication, social media, and corporate culture. The knowledge gained from the interview is presented below in the form of quotes from the CEO and summaries.

5.2.1. Internal communication

The interview started off with questions of general nature about how the internal communication within the organization looked like, and why. The CEO communicates in two ways. Either he communicates with all employees at the same time through mass communication, or he communicates with individuals or a small group of individuals. As the CEO mentions below email was frequently used in the past but now more communication is concentrated to the intranet. The main disadvantage the CEO finds with the intranet is that the communication is only one way.

“We use email, the intranet, and the internet. We are trying to put more and more focus on the intranet and to email less. Both to make the status of the intranet higher, but also
to gather all the information in one place. We don’t want 40 people at the headquarters emailing back and forth with the store management. If we do that we bring them down if they’re just sitting and answering email.”

“The intranet should be where all handbooks, news, warning flags, “what I should know”, can be found. One place where everything is.”

The organization has stores spread out in Sweden and it is not realistic for the CEO to visit every store every year. He acknowledges that the most important work takes place in the store, as that is where you catch the customer and build a relationship.

The CEO finds it very important to know what happens in the stores, but also that the store employees get information from the CEO.

“I believe that I can’t over inform. There’s always a need for information. Participation is built upon information and understanding. Where are we going? Why are we not reaching the goal? What threats do I see? Why are we changing direction? It’s a hundred questions that arise all the time.”

“For me it’s important that my message arrives untainted to all employees at the same time. I don’t want that shift (that can arise when the message travels from one person to another through the organization). Those who want to know what I think knows where to find it.”

At the same time as the CEO feel it’s important to directly inform employees he doesn’t see it as a possibility for him to directly communicate instructions to employees in stores. As he say in the following quote it would bypass a lot of steps in the management chain.

“Instructions, work tasks, etc. doesn’t come from me. They come from their manager. We’ve got a manager in charge of each store. If I give instructions directly to employees in the store I run over three or four steps in the management chain. Also, if I do that then the store manager doesn’t know it. The region manager doesn’t know it. The operations manager doesn’t know it. In those case I need to communicate down the organization. It’s those managers that are responsible for getting the work done. If I talk straight to the store employees it doesn’t work, and I don’t get any follow up.”

The CEO sees himself very spontaneous in the communication. He is not afraid of giving a lot of himself to make it interesting, and to make himself more present. Employees can take part in what the CEO does, where the CEO is, what the CEO thinks, and the CEO is hoping that it builds a relationship.

There are some subjects that the CEO does not mention in his internal communication to all employees. Subjects that are of strategic or competitive nature, or about future decisions, or information that is not appropriate from an integrity standpoint. In the communication the CEO puts focus on the present. Information related to operations, commentary on present events, thoughts on how to apply different concepts that he likes
in their organization. The CEO wants to avoid having the blog seen as a manual or “pointing sticks”, but rather having it seen as a place where the thoughts of the CEO can be shared.

The company has over 100 managers, so on the question of how often the CEO communicates with managers he says it is not possible to communicate with all managers. The company is too big and he can not “go into details everywhere”.

When the CEO does communicate with managers it is mainly through meetings in person. He prefers to discuss strategic issues in person, as he wants the dialogue, the feedback, create the understanding, and convey his thoughts.

“I don’t believe in pushing information”

Later in the interview he connects back with the previous statement:

“We need to get to a point where people understand that information should be sought, not received. I believe that’s an important point. Everyone should know that all information is gathered on the intranet.

5.2.2. Social media

The CEO has been blogging since February 2011, around 14 months when this study was carried out. He writes on the blog two to three times per week, although the intranet is open seven days per week. The main reason he started the blog was to get closer to all employees, and become more present. As he describes it himself he does not want to be seen as a mysterious CEO in a suit sitting in his office all day. He wants to become a part of co-workers day to day work, and show employees that he cares.

“My goals with the blog is to make everyone feel motivated and a part of the organization. That you feel that we’re a team, and that the goal is clear. What goal do we have? When have we done something well? It’s not enough to go home on Friday and think it’s great that it’s weekend. They need to ask themselves “Have I done a good job?”."

“What I believe and hope is that co-workers will feel closer to me. So I don’t end up visiting in person only once or twice a year. With this (the blog) it’s easier to build a relationship that then carries over (into the physical world) when we meet.”

The CEO spends a lot of time to visit stores, and talks about how employees can mention how they saw him do this and that yesterday. They are following his blog and thus get an insight in his work. The CEO says some feedback is received that way.

Around 250-300 unique user accounts read every article that the CEO posts on his blog and this amount of traffic has been steady at least since January 2012, i.e. it is neither decreasing nor increasing. Regarding the size of the audience there is a large grey zone as computers in stores can be used by multiple employees on the same user account but still count as one unique visitor.
“I don’t know how many employees are reading. That I can communicate with 300 co-workers three times per week is for me incredibly good. They follow me and what I write, and I get comments back.”

While the CEO gets comments back he says that he would like to see much more dialogue. Right now he does not get a lot of comments even though he invites employees to reply. While he would like more comments, he still does not think the blog is the right place to disagree with him. That it is better to take disagreements through other communication channels.

The CEO has not made any efforts to market the blog towards employees. Neither to old employees or newly recruited co-workers. While the blog is highly visible on the intranet homepage there are a lot of employees who either do not have a need to use the intranet, or they go directly to other pages within the intranet. Thus there is a chance that we will find out in the questionnaire that many employees do not know that a CEO blog exists. The CEO says that everyone has something to read on the intranet and thus that everyone should see the homepage with the blog. Everyone with some kind of responsibility visits the intranet. To get more co-workers to read the blog is also mentioned by the CEO as one of the challenges and opportunities of social media.

“Availability. We can’t have computers inside the store. They need to be where employees have a chance to sit down and take a cup of coffee. Instead of reading a newspaper they may read the intranet instead.”

Regarding future social media plans for other social media channels the CEO has none. Each additional social media channel demands time and as a CEO he takes on responsibility to use the social media channel actively. This causes a problem according to the CEO as he does not have time scheduled for these social media activities. He writes on the blog when he has time. At home. On the flight. In between meetings. This is one of the main drawbacks of social media according to the CEO. It takes up a lot of time.

The CEO has thought about making more of the information he shares external, so that customers can read it and have a dialogue. He sees both positive and negative things with having a more external blog, but so far he has not acted on his plans.

We asked about if the CEO has thought about communicating more through video. He has not seen that possibility for two reasons. He does not schedule time for writing, and as he writes when he has some free time a camera might not be available. Thus he sees it more as a technical problem. They have made frequent use of video conferencing for four years though, and find that very effective.

5.2.3. Corporate culture

The CEO has the aim of being informal and write with a playful manner, and aims to be open and transparent in his communication. He acknowledges the importance of keeping it serious yet personal. Trust is also a very important subject for the CEO. The
whole industry is built upon trust and through the company values, the openness and the
information shared the CEO hopes to strengthen this trust. The CEO notes though that
trust is as much a matter of responsibility on the other end, the co-worker. “You’ve got to
give and take.”

“I want to have a relationship with my co-workers everywhere. When I’m in a store I do
not only talk with the store manager but also with the store employees.”

The organization has very strong corporate values, and the CEO makes a conscious
effort to convey these values through his blog. To do this he often uses stories and
pictorial language, as the CEO believes such communication is more easily remembered
and easier to take in.

The CEO definitely thinks that his professional social network has grown bigger since
he started blogging.

5.3. Quantitative data

Of the 50 respondents 30% were male and the other 70% female. In the below two
graphs the distribution of age and length of employment is illustrated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Age distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The single largest group of employees are between 18-30, consisting of 34% of
employees. Although if we combine the groups of 41-50 and +50 makes that the largest
group though with 54% of employees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Work length distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Worktime</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-1 år</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 år</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6 år</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 år</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+10 år</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The biggest group of employees, 34% of respondents, has worked in the organization
for more than 10 years. 44% of employees have worked between 1-6 years.
When conducting the survey two main groups of employees participated; store employees and employees at the main office. The location distribution of the employees are presented below.

**Table 3. Work place distribution**  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workplace</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Store</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Store</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Store</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Office</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.3.1. Social Media and Internal Communication Usage

Related to our study of social media we asked if the respondent had a smart phone such as an iPhone or an Android. Of the respondents 70% owned a smartphone. Also related to social media usage is the fact that 24% of respondents had a personal blog. Regarding the respondents social media usage the results are presented below.

**Table 4. Social media and communication usage among employees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question: How often do you...</th>
<th>A - multiple times per day</th>
<th>B - At least once per day</th>
<th>C - At least once per week</th>
<th>D - At least once per month</th>
<th>E - Less than once per month</th>
<th>F - Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...use a computer in your work?</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...visit the intranet?</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...read blogs outside of work?</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...use Facebook?</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...use email in private?</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...use email in your work?</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of employees who read the CEO blog can be seen in Table 5 below. 68% read the CEO blog, and of those 54% read the blog every week. 32% of respondents never read the blog.
Of the respondents who answered that they follow the CEO blog the three main reasons for why employees follow the blog was to keep updated on current happenings in the organization (41.6%), to learn more about the CEO (25%), and to learn about upcoming changes in the organization (16.6%), as can be seen in Figure 3 below.

![Figure 4. Reasons for reading the CEO blog](image)
As we can see in Table 6 the majority of employees do not give feedback directly to the CEO neither through the blog nor through other communication channels. 66% of respondents never give feedback, and combined with those who give feedback less than once per month it adds up to 88% of respondents.

### 5.3.2. Communication

Below in Table 7 is presented the respondents views on the frequency of communication from the CEO. To better be able to analyze the data the answers have been divided into groups depending on if they read the CEO blog or not. Those who frequently read the blog is to a larger extent satisfied with the frequency of the CEO communication, while those who never read the blog are dissatisfied with the frequency.

**Table 7. Employee views on CEO communication frequency in relation to reading the CEO blog**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ReadCEOblog</th>
<th>CEOfrequency</th>
<th>Too little communication</th>
<th>A bit too little</th>
<th>It's good</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A - Several times per day</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B - At least once per day</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C - At least once per week</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E - Less than once per month</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F - Never</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.3.3. Corporate Culture and CEO Communication

**Table 8. Questionnaire results on CEO communication and corporate culture**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEO communication is one-way</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO communication is two-way</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know more about the</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Table 8 above the answers are presented for how much respondents agree or disagree with a statement. The statements are predominantly about respondents view on communication from the CEO and their views of the company culture. As we can see in the table 50% of the employees think the CEO is enthusiastic in his communication, while only 16% thinks the CEO is formal in his communication. Furthermore, 50% of employees are satisfied with the quality of information from the CEO.

The empirical data presented in this chapter will be analyzed in the following chapter to see if any correlations exist between the various factors presented in the tables above and the factor of how often the employees read the CEO blog.
6. Analysis

This chapter strives to interpret, investigate and analyze the findings from chapter 4. The theoretical model in Figure 3 will be loosely used to organize our analysis. The findings from chapter 4 will be analyzed and interpreted in light of the theories from chapter 2, and in their relevance to the research questions. A deeper discussion on key issues of this study will then be continued in the following chapter which will result in conclusions of this study.

6.1. Social Media

6.1.1. The “Typical” Blog Reader

During our analysis of the data we wanted to find out if any particular demographic of employees could be identified as having a higher probability of reading the CEO blog. The factors that were checked for correlation was sex, age, how long they had worked, their location within the organization, if they owned a smart phone, and their social media usage outside of work.

Table 9. Correlations of employee demographics and employees who read the CEO blog

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>ReadCEOblog</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Worksite</th>
<th>Workplace</th>
<th>Smartphone</th>
<th>Personalblog</th>
<th>Readblogs</th>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Emalysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ReadCEOblog</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.513</td>
<td>-.341</td>
<td>-.211</td>
<td>-.267</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.162</td>
<td>-.179</td>
<td>.096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.142</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>.869</td>
<td>.963</td>
<td>.261</td>
<td>.214</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in Table 9 above no significant correlations could be found between employee demographics and the likelihood of employees reading the CEO blog. One factor that does have a negative correlation is age. Age with a correlation of -.341 is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), meaning that older employees are more likely to read the CEO blog. We believe this more has to do with older employees being more likely to be in a leading position which requires more frequent access to the intranet.

In the questionnaire questions regarding age, sex, duration of employment, place of employment, smart phone and private social media use was asked for us to be able to trace the characteristics of a “typical blog reader”. For the most part no correlation was found and where we did find correlations between these factors and blog reading there were natural reasons why and we were therefore unable to track the “typical reader”. However the only factor that we could find that impacts the likelihood of reading the CEO blog is time on the intranet, and this factor is determined by what position an employee has.

6.1.2. The blog: Intentions and Results
The CEO said that in his internal communication efforts he tries to make three blog entries every week, as he believes that the purpose of the blog is to instill a sense of presence amongst the employees and that it is therefore necessary to use the blog actively. He also said that he always tries to be honest, positive and interesting in his entries. He does this by not only talking about strictly business related issues on the blog, but also revealing facts and stories about himself.

From a theoretical perspective the CEOs efforts and intentions are sound as it is important to be informal, positive and honest when working with social media to communicate (Holtz, 2005/2006, p. 25). From the survey results presented below we can see that the employees were in agreement with the CEO that he is positive and honest in his social media communication however they did not believe him to be very active. We believes this is connected to the fact that 32% of the employees never visit the blog, and many have difficulty of accessing the blog during their work day.

Table 10. Correlation of people reading the CEO blog and satisfaction with CEO communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ReadCEOblog</th>
<th>CEOFrequency</th>
<th>ConvincedCEO</th>
<th>KnowmoreCEO</th>
<th>MoreTrust</th>
<th>FeeRespected</th>
<th>Fitthisinfo</th>
<th>HappyCEOstyle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ReadCEOblog</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-0.364*</td>
<td>0.700*</td>
<td>-0.674</td>
<td>-0.514</td>
<td>-0.070</td>
<td>0.079</td>
<td>-0.049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.630</td>
<td>0.584</td>
<td>0.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in Table 10 above there’s a significant correlation between how often an employee reads the CEO blog and the employees satisfaction with the frequency and amount of communication from the CEO. Those who read the CEO blog frequently are satisfied with the amount of communication, while those who read the blog infrequently or not at all are unsatisfied with the frequency of communication.

In his blog communication the CEO tries to often give examples using stories, because he wants the employees to easily be able to understand what he means. One example is where he likened the organization to a hockey team. Using informal stories in communication is an effective way to create company cultures according to Wilkins (1984). As mentioned in the theoretical chapter Wilkins (1984, p. 59) believe stories to be great for transmitting values because they give context to abstract issues and at the same time they give a structure on how to get things done in the organizational context, and for new employees these informal stories can work like social maps guiding their behavior to avoid mistakes.

We believe it is positive that the CEO uses stories to convey information. We believe it helps with shortening the perceived distance between the employee and CEO, because as Wilkins (1984, p. 42) states it changes the company philosophy from something distant and fuzzy to something real and concrete. By communicating through stories the CEO brings himself down to the level of the employees. This goes back to what White (et al, 2010, p. 80) proposed on the use of electronic channels by top management to flatten the organization. The hierarchical and geographical distance between the CEO
and the employees is large yet 52% (see Table 11 below) of the respondents who reported reading the blog answered that their trust for the CEO has increased. The frequency of reading the blog had a significant correlation with more trust for the CEO, as can be seen in Table 10, with a correlation of -.514. We believe this to be an indication that the blog can serve as a tool to bring the CEO and the employees closer to each other.

**Table 11. CEO trust in relation to how often employees read the blog.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ReadCEOBlog</th>
<th>MoreTrust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly against</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A - Several times per day</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B - At least once per day</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C - At least once per week</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D - Less than once per month</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

That blog readers have more trust for the CEO can be explained by what Roberts & Dunbar (2011, p. 448) says about frequency of communication and emotional closeness. In their study they found that more frequent communication leads to a higher emotional intensity in networks. They also say that larger networks leads to less frequent communication between the individual network members, but this is not the case with the CEOs blog communication where the communication frequency is the same no matter how many employees read the blog. Thus we argue from these results that usage of social media can enable communication with a large network but still create the benefits of stronger emotional closeness. That the use of social media has successfully improved the trust towards the CEO reinforces what Daly et al., 2003, p. 159) found in his study, that internal communication is seen by some as all about establishing trust.

The CEO also stated that he always tries to be transparent and informal in his communication on the intranet. In a study by Avolio et al., 2010, p. 360) clear linkages were found between both the level of leader transparency and the level of leader positive psychological attributes to follower trust and level of perceived leader effectiveness. All leaders that were perceived as being high in both transparency and psychological positivity were considered to be more efficient than other leaders in every measured area. A significant correlation was found between employees reading the blog and the view of the CEOs transparency and positivity, as can be seen in Table 12. Respondents who were active readers of the CEO blog found the CEO to be more open and transparent in his communication. This transparency and positivity could be a contributing factor to why the levels of trust for the CEO has risen amongst the blog readers, as can be seen with the significant correlation of -.514 at the 0.01 level in Table 10. The more an employee reads the blog the greater trust he or she seem to gain for the CEO.

**Table 12. Employees reading the blog and the perception of the CEO communication**

48
Web 2.0 technology has the openness and ability to transmit honest and clear messages (Laick and Dean, 2011). We believe that it is easier for the CEO to appear honest and transparent when working with social media than with other traditional communication tools. The very nature of social media is informal, open, honest and humble (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). When communicating through a social media, a CEO can be personal and informal in a way that if it was done through other communication channels would be perceived as unprofessional and inappropriate. We believe that through social media a leader can show sides of their personality that has not been possible in an accessible way before the launch of social media. If used properly social media is a good tool to create organizational transparency through flattening the hierarchy by the CEO showing a more personal side that the employees can in some way relate to.

Those who read the CEO blog more often perceive the CEO communication as positive, as enthusiastic, as informal, and as open and transparent. By looking at Table 12, we can see that there is significant correlation for all four factors at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Those who did not read the blog perceived the CEO communication as mainly one-way communication. This can be seen in the correlation of 0.706 in Table 10. The less you read the blog the more you perceive the communication as one way, and vice versa. Two-way communication is important for successful internal communication but one-way communication is both necessary and unavoidable (Welch et al., 2007, p. 187, Harkness, 1999, p. 94).

In the blog, the employees have the option to make comments and give feedback but the CEO said that this is very uncommon and that the blog communication is now mostly one-way communication. It was noticed in the case study of Woolwich was that when the CEO sent out “challenges” via email and asked for feedback the employees were likely to reply because they knew that their feedback went straight to the CEO (Harkness, 1999, p. 93). This study suggests that employees are more willing to give feedback when they know it goes directly to the CEO. This leads us to believe, that in our case, the reason why the employees feel hesitant to make comments may be that they are visible for the whole staff to see.

Although it would be positive if the staff felt more willing to make comments we do not see it as a big problem that they do not. Even if the employees only have a perception that they have a relationship with the CEO it will lead to increased employee wellbeing and a sense of community (White et al., 2010, p. 78) Therefore the CEO blog can, even if it only acts as one-way communication, still serve the valuable purpose of improving the relationship with employees.
Elving (2005, p. 131) proposes that with social media two main goals of internal communication can be reached: “communication to inform and communication aimed at creating a community”. From the respondents answers it was clear that the blog has been useful as a tool in informing the personnel about current events and happenings. This is validated by the fact that trust for the CEO has increased amongst the respondents who read the CEO blog since he started blogging. Too little information can create distrust and speculation, while too much information can cause information overload. Employees want to receive information as directly as possible from the CEO or top management as they see it as a sign of being respected and also find that information more credible. (White et al, 2010, p. 69)

The fact that the blog reading employees trust for the CEO has risen is an indication that he provides the right amount of information. This rise in trust can be seen in Table 10, where the correlation of - .514 is significant at a 0.01 level. We believe that the fact that the information comes directly from the CEO, and that the CEO offers the right amount of information causes the employees to trust the information and thereby experience an increased trust for the CEO. The employees who do not read the blog reported experiencing little change in the level of trust for their CEO. We believe this is a further indication that higher levels of trust for the CEO amongst the employees who read the blog can be attributed to the blog.

6.3. Internal Communication – Planning and access problems

Naturally the non-blog readers had never been guided in their work through the blog, nor was their trust affected. This brings forth a need to analyze why these guiding stories do not reach all the personnel. We do not believe the content of the stories to be a problem since many of the blog reading staff has experienced them to be helpful.

The problem is rather that as a new employee you are not officially introduced to the blog and many employees miss the opportunity to take part of the stories that convey the corporate culture. This means that they also miss any chance at understanding the social map of the organization and can end up making major blunders as Wilkins(1984, p. 43) describes it. We also believe the employees can take longer time to “fit in” with the company culture if they do not take part in these stories. White (et al., 2010, p. 75) found in their study that most employees used the organization website as an archive of information and not as a communication channel. The majority did not visit the website very often, unless they needed specific information. They come to the conclusion that a website is more of an information-pull technology and not an information-push technology.

The common notion amongst employees is that a company website is not something you regularly check for spontaneous information but something you check seldomly when you need specific information. We believe this further strengthens the need to rigorously inform all staff, new and old, about the existence of the blog.
When using social media it is important to formulate a proper integration plan that fits the corporate strategy (Holtz, 2005/2006, p. 25). When the CEO blog was started there was no clear integration plan. The blog was just launched on the first page of the company's internal network. If a plan was introduced and the employees were told in detail that the CEO was starting a blog and how often he would be active we believe that the employees would perceive him as more structured and more active. It is also important that access is open for everyone (Holtz, 2005/2006, p. 25). Dependent on what work assignments the respondents have they have different access to computers and thereby spend a different amount of time on the internal network. We believe this to be a contributing factor to why many respondents did not believe the CEO to be active even though he is active.

Table 13. How accessibility affects the likelihood of reading the CEO blog

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>ReadCEO blog</th>
<th>Workplace</th>
<th>Computeruse</th>
<th>Intranetuse</th>
<th>Workemailuse</th>
<th>Emailuse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ReadCEO blog</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.267</td>
<td>.126</td>
<td>.509</td>
<td>.357</td>
<td>.098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.384</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>.508</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in Table 13 above neither the work location nor the amount of computer use had a significant correlation with reading the CEO blog. The main correlation which reached a significance at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) was Intranet use. So when it comes to increasing accessibility and the number of employees reading the blog, access to and use of the Intranet is in our opinion a critical factor.

Furthermore, the blog is accessible only through the intranet, which in turn can be accessed only from the company computers. The reason for this is as the CEO said during the interview to keep the blog internal as sensitive information might be shared there. On one hand this is understandable, but on the other we believe a lot of potential is lost by erecting this wall around the CEO blog. The borders between internal and external communication is fading away as Mazzei (2010, p. 230) argues, and by making the blog available to all it will not only allow employees to read the blog outside of work, but we believe it might also lead to positive effects when external customers read the blog.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) argues that one key issue when using social media is to choose carefully because there are many applications available for a company, and it is important to choose an application that is sensitive to the target group and to what message is to be sent. The messages the CEO chooses to send seems to be fine as the employees experience them to be interesting and relevant but the application of using a blog might not be optimal for the company's needs. In our case because of the varying access to computers depending on what position the employees have, many employees do not have as much access to the intranet and thus the blog as others. It is possible that the CEO could have had more followers if he would have used a different application, or a combination of applications such as video, a podcast, twitter, or Facebook.
6.4. Corporate Culture and Identity

Amongst the employees the vast majority experienced a sense of belonging amongst their co-workers. Culture in a group can be the result of complex cognitive interactions, however culture is not always complex and culture can form within a group just because the group has a shared history. The strength of the culture and cohesiveness of internal values varies from different groups and this is determined by the time the group has spent together, the stability of the group, the intensity of the groups experiences and the strength and clarity of the assumptions held by the founders and leaders of the group. (Schein, 1990) There are many contributing factors to how and why group and company culture is created, and leader values and assumptions is one of them. Because the CEO uses the blog to express his thoughts we believed that this could in some way affect company culture. This was examined in our questionnaire with the employees, and in Table 14 below the results are presented.

Aside from the column with employees reading the CEO blog the three columns signifies how strongly the respondents believe a corporate culture exists in the organization, how much they feel their views of the corporate culture has been improved by the CEOs blogging, and how much they feel they belong amongst their co-workers. As can be seen in Table 14 there is a slight correlation that says the blog might contribute to improved corporate culture and belonging, but the correlations are not large enough to be significant. The CEO blog has no clear effect on employee belonging and job satisfaction, but rather we think it might be the case that employee belonging are more affected by the immediate co-workers than by internal communication throughout the organization. The fact that the other two variables also were not found to be significant shows that the CEOs current use of social media might be unsuccessful in affecting company culture and values.

To understand why the company culture was not clearly affected we took a closer look at the interview with the CEO. He clearly expressed that he does not use the blog to inform the personnel about upcoming change. We thought this was strange because of the blogs potential to reach many employees.

Trust is a factor that can impact the possibility to feel committed to a community and experience a solid company culture. This is because trust results in the employees having a more positive attitude and having higher levels of cooperation. Trust can help guide an individual through ambiguous situations as it shapes perceptions and guides an individual's response to an action thus helping an individual cope with change. Employees committed to the organization, trust between employees and management, and organizational identification are the results of a corporation that has managed to build a community through communication.(Elving, 2005, p. 135) As we have previously mentioned the trust for the CEO has risen amongst his blog followers, however we believe that the trust for him could have risen even more if he used the blog to inform about upcoming change.

The CEOs reason for not talking about upcoming changes was that he believed that sensitive material might leak and become public. We do understand his concern but we
also believe that this might send a signal that the personnel can not be trusted. We believe that if the CEO would use the blog to inform about upcoming change it could help to create a community through communication. Communicating change would then enable trust and trust would enable a community built on corporate culture. Creating awareness of the changing environment is according to Welch (et al, 2007, p 188) one of the four goals of successful internal communication. And another of the four goals dependent on creating awareness of these changes is creating understanding of what needs to happen in the organization in response to the changing environment.

By not communicating upcoming changes we believe this awareness that Welch finds important will be hard to create in the organization, and it will be even harder to create understanding for what needs to happen in response to upcoming changes. We believe that the CEO informing about upcoming change could be the missing part of his communication.

Table 14. Employees reading the blog and the effect on corporate culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>ReadCEOblog</th>
<th>CorporateCulture</th>
<th>CEOImpCultu re</th>
<th>Belonging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ReadCEOblog</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.123</td>
<td>-.237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.366</td>
<td>.098</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

78% (see Table 8) of respondents did not express any increase in experienced company culture and we believe that could be accredited to many different factors. Individuals can experience the CEOs entries differently resulting in different interpretations. Employer branding is the perceived economical, functional and psychological benefits that a potential employee associates with an employment at a company. In other words employer branding is the company’s ability to position itself as an attractive company to its target market and communicate this message to present and potential personnel. To do this successfully it is key to find the company’s unique selling points and to package these into an employer brand. (Laick and Dean, 2011)

We believe that a reason for the split opinion regarding the CEO blogs ability to create company culture could be that some of the readers are appealed by the employer branding of the CEO, and others are not. Like we have previously mentioned the blog had no clear integration plan and no thought was really given on which application to use. We believe that this can have resulted in an employer brand that is not totally accurate for the target group.

In the analysis chapter we have discussed and reasoned back and forth the many implications of a CEO working with social media as an internal communication tool. This discussion has led us to focus our attention on aspects of this study that are especially relevant for us to be able to answer our research questions. In the following chapter Discussions and Conclusion we will break down our analysis into key section and thereby show the conclusions of this study. These conclusion will then be used in the final chapter Recommendations to show aspects of possibilities, threats and best
practices relevant for a CEO that wishes to utilize social media in their internal communication strategy.
7. Discussion and Conclusions

In this chapter we will present the results of this study. We will answer the two research questions through the analysis conducted in the previous chapter. In this chapter the reader can follow and understand the key issues and findings of this study, and thereby understand our theoretical contribution to the field. The practical contributions are discussed in Chapter 8.2.

Social media is in nature an informal form of communicating. Messages can be sent whenever from wherever to millions of receivers. Never before has a communication tool had the potential to yield such influence over so many receivers so effectively and at such a low cost. A tweet or blog entry could be compiled in a few minutes before being posted and within minutes be read by millions. Due to technological advancements the world is becoming ever more internationalized, companies, organizations and governments are dealing with customers, partners and colleagues situated on the other side of the planet on a daily basis. The need for cost efficient communication is here and we saw huge potential in a CEO being able to communicate with hundreds or thousands of employees at once. When we started this study we had concerns that the informal nature of social media might be a problem due to the formal nature of a CEO and employee relation, however our findings suggest that this was not a problem but rather a well needed contrast.

Amongst the blog reading respondents almost all of them were in agreement that the CEO is positive, informal and honest in his communication. This has led to the employees feeling a greater sense of trust for the CEO. We believe that the CEO using a blog in his communication has been key in generating these employee perceptions. The formal nature of social media allowed the CEO to show his “true colors”. Unlike in a board meeting, it is OK for the CEO to be funny, casual and personal when communicating through social media.

Social media communication obviously has the potential to transcend geographical distance due to the quick and instant access, but what is more unique is that we found that it truly has the potential to transcend hierarchical distances. We believe that the employees can experience a more personal relationship with the CEO through reading the blog. By getting to know the CEO on a more personal level it is easier for the personnel to relate to the CEO:s values and beliefs. We believe that this creates a feeling that the CEO is more a part of the group and less some distant figure in an ivory tower that has no understanding for the trials and tribulations of the “common worker”. When the personnel get to know the CEO as an individual and perceive him as more of an equal they will be more receptive for his ideas and wishes. In this way we mean that social media communication that is correctly communicated has the ability to shorten the perceived hierarchical distance.

In this case study the CEO used social media in a very good way in accordance to theories regarding conventional social media usage. He was positive, informal and
honest. This generated a very good effect amongst his employees regarding strengthening employee relations and trust. Social media is however only a technology to facilitate a communication, and therefore it is useless if the communication that is facilitated by social media is not of quality. We have no idea what the relation and trust with employees would look like if the CEO would have been less positive, honest and informal in his communication. All CEOs can not be assumed to be able to be positive and informal, but we believe that those who can, should apply social media in their communication.

The results regarding the CEO blogs ability to build and facilitate corporate culture and job satisfaction were not significant. This leads us to the conclusion that the CEOs efforts could in some way have contributed towards building corporate culture and job satisfaction but we can not be sure to what extent. The CEO chose not to inform the employees about change through his blog. We believe that this might be one of the missing pieces towards the blog being able to clearly contribute towards building corporate culture, because creating awareness of a changing environment is one of the goals of successful internal communication. We believe that if the CEO would talk about change it would help build community through communication and thereby make it more likely for the employees to experience organizational identification.

Another possible reason for the split opinion regarding the blogs ability to create company culture and belonging is that the employer brand promoted by the CEO might not be optimal for the target group. In other words the feelings the CEO managed to create regarding being an employee at the company might not have been suitable to fit the “typical worker”. A result of this is that only small portions of the workforce experience the employer brand as attractive. We believe that this could have been avoided if more planning had been done to identify the actual target group before the CEO blog was launched.

7.1. Answering the Research Questions

Coming back to the first research question of if a leader should use social media tools within internal communication we believe the answer is yes, but a yes that is dependent on a few factors. As we have found in our analysis many benefits could be attributed to the CEOs usage of social media, such as increased trust for the CEO and more satisfaction with CEO communication. While our findings might not be generalizable they could be transferable to other organizations, but it would be a mistake to throw yourself into using social media as a leader without having a clear integration plan. As we found out in the analysis accessibility is a deciding factor in how large effect social media has on the relationship between the CEO and the employees, and thus the question of how all employees can access, and want to access, the social media communication needs to be answered for a successful implementation.

As to the second research question of how leaders in organizations can use social media to strengthen the relationship between top management and employees and build a corporate culture there are several aspects to this. As we saw in our analysis the CEOs use of social media in this particular case did not significantly lead to an improvement
of corporate culture in the eyes of the employees. It did however lead to improved trust for the CEO, i.e. a strengthening of the relationship with employees. We believe the key to this improved trust is frequent social media communication in an informal style. Social media tools are in our opinion best used as channels for informal communication, as they are to a large extent seen as personal.

7.2. Theoretical Contribution

In the theoretical chapter on communication Roberts & Dunbar(2011, p. 448) talks about how larger networks leads to less frequent communication which then results in less emotional intensity in the relationships, and vice versa how smaller networks leads to more frequent communication and stronger relationships. In our study we have seen that larger networks does not necessarily lead to less frequent communication. By using social media tools you can have large networks and at the same time avoid spreading out your communication between the individuals in your network. You can keep a high frequency of communication with a large network and through our findings we have seen that this still leads to increased trust for the CEO. While a leader might not be able to build close relationships with hundreds or thousands of employees, the other way around seem to be possible. That there is no limit to the amount of employees that can build a perceived closer relationship to the leader. Thus the upper limit of 150 people identified by Roberts(et al., 2009). that anyone can have in their personal network does not seem to apply to leaders using social media as a communication tool, and this is one of our theoretical contributions to the field. Using social media as a leader within internal communication is effective in establishing trust and in strengthening the emotional connection with employees.

From a theoretical standpoint we have also learned that conventional ways of executing social media can be applied by a CEO and that the informal nature of social media is not a risk but an opportunity. However more planning is needed when a CEO uses social media compared to when other groups in an organization use social media. A “private” person will often tweet or blog about something they are interested in and like minded individuals will follow due to a shared interest. A CEO that uses a blog however has a more specific target group and therefore has to aim for pleasing a specific segment that may not have anything in common aside from a shared workplace. Planning what to say, how to say it and when to say it is therefore a much more sensitive process with a CEO blog compared with a conventional blog.

8. Truth Criteria

8.1. Reliability

The reliability of a study is determined by how the observations are carried out. Repeated observations should generate the same conclusions. In other terms the reliability is the inevitable impact the researcher has on the study. However a distinction can be made between systematic and random researcher impact. The impact that a
researcher has on the actual empirical observation can be seen as random while the impact the researcher has on formulating the problem and constructing models can be seen as systematic. The “human factor” can cause reliability problems with registration, classification and coding of the data. The best way to ensure a good reliability is to make the proper preparations by creating good and detailed instructions for how to gather the data. (Johansson Lindfors, 1993, pp. 110-111)

Four major threats to reliability can be identified. The first is subject or participant error, and to avoid this the study with the subjects should be carried out at a “neutral” time where the subjects are likely to have a neutral mindset, not overly negative or overly positive. The second threat is participant bias, which can happen when a subject says what they think their bosses want them to say. To avoid participant bias the author should work to ensure respondent anonymity. The third threat is observer error which is when interviews are conducted by different individuals resulting in different approaches to obtaining answers. The fourth threat is observer bias which is the risk of different observers interpreting replies differently. (Saunders, et al., 2003, p. 155)

To ensure the highest possible reliability in our study we have tried to plan our gathering of data in a detailed way by during this process being aware of the major threats to reliability. The questionnaire was filled out by the respondents on a Wednesday. This was done to avoid low and high moods because of the time remaining to the next weekend. By having the respondents answering the questionnaire on Wednesday we obtained answers from the respondents when their mindset was most likely to be neutral. The majority of respondents did fill out the questionnaire on a Wednesday, although due to logistical reasons and availability some were filled out on a Thursday as well. Participant bias was also one of the reliability threats we were concerned about. The subject we are studying has the perspective of looking at the relationship between the CEO and the employees which we were concerned would make the respondents more hesitant when filling out the questionnaire. To deal with this we were very focused on pointing out that all answers would be totally anonymous, this was done both verbally and in written text. Observer bias and observer error was not a factor for us since we only conducted one interview and that the interview was led by only one person.

8.2. Validity

Validity is an indicator of how well a study actually measures and examines what it is intended to measure. Validity can be both external and internal. Internal validity is concerned with if a conclusion that is found between variables is actually true and if the responses generated actually answer what they are supposed to. External validity is concerned with how well the findings of a study can be applied in other cases, in other words external validity is a measure of how well answers that are found are generalizable. (Bryman, 2008, pp. 32-33)

To be sure that we measured what we intended to our problem background, research questions, theoretical framework and methodology were closely scrutinized by our supervisor and other thesis groups. Our questionnaire and interview guide was also
checked by our supervisor to ensure that the answers they generate are aligned with the research questions. We sent out the interview guide and questionnaire before we conducted the interview and questionnaire, this was done to ensure that the respondents had time to give their answers some thought and to maximize their understanding of what we wanted to examine. Because this is a case study of a specific company the results will not be generalizable, therefore we are not concerned with external validity.

Throughout this study we have tried to constantly be conscious of our research questions, this to always ensure that the different chapters of our paper always strive towards answering the research questions.

8.3. Generalizability and Transferability

Generalizability in a traditional sense is said to be non achievable by many (Johansson Lindfors, 1993, p. 169). As mentioned earlier our goal with this study is not to try and generalize our results to other organizations. We believe our results can be generalizable to the organization we have studied though, as it is in the same social context, which is why we chose to carry out a random sample selection. While our results might not be generalizable to other organizations and other social contexts we believe the results may be transferable to other organizations in similar situations. Johansson Lindfors (1993, p. 170) means that other organizations can use the knowledge developed in this thesis and by adding their own experiences and taking into consideration their own unique social context they can get a deeper understanding of their own situation which will help them communicate more effectively with their employees.

9. Recommendations

In this chapter we will present our main recommendations to CEOs and for future research. Our recommendations for future research is derived from our personal interests as well as existing gaps within the subject that we feel needs more attention. The CEO recommendations are a result of dealing with the conclusions that were found in the previous chapter, and these recommendations are our practical contribution that will be presented in the form of guidelines for CEOs that wish to work with social media in their internal communication strategy.

9.1. For future research

At the company we chose to study the CEO limited his social media usage to a blog. This gave us many interesting areas for analysis and we reached many conclusions. However it would have been interesting if the CEO had used more social media applications in his communication. A comparison could then have been made between the different applications to see if some of them was more effective in transmitting certain messages. It would also be interesting to see how the access would be affected and if this would have resulted in more or less blog followers. It is possible that a different application that a different application could be less demanding timewise on the CEO enabling him to be much more active. An interesting future research would be
a comparison of how different social media applications would affect the internal communication when used by the CEO.

Another area for future research that would be interesting and relevant to the usage of social media is the frequency of communication. The frequency of communication has as been proven in our study been of importance for building trust. The CEO blogs 2-3 times per week. We do not know what results we would have gotten if he had blogged once per week, every day, or used twitter multiple times per day.

In this study the CEO made no real effort to plan his social media communication before he started using the blog. However he used the blog well according to relevant theories which resulted in a positive effect amongst the employees, and although we were able to come to some conclusions regarding how to appropriately implement a blog, more specifics would be interesting. It would be relevant to do a study that is totally focused on the implementation stage of CEO social media usage. This could be done by studying two or three cases where the CEO is on the verge of launching a social media application. A comparison could then be made of strengths and weaknesses of the different launches to hopefully be able to isolate the most effective way of doing it. In this study it would be relevant to trace and analyze target group definition, pre launch marketing and chosen application to ensure access.

9.2. For the CEO and Management

While we can not say for certain that our results and recommendations are generalizable for all organizations we believe that the recommendations can be transferable to other large organizations.

As Wood (1999, p. 137) stated the basis of communication is that there is a sender and one or several receivers. For this communication to work the message has to successfully arrive to the receivers. Seeing from this study that ~40% of respondents never or rarely read the CEO blog the communication between the CEO and the employees in question fails at the start. Our conclusion was that many employees, especially in the stores, may not have access to a computer and can not, will not or do not know how to access the intranet. This is also one of the five points on using social media in organizations that Kaplan & Hainlein states: the information needs to be accessible to everyone (2010, p. 66). We believe it is not only a matter of being accessible from the perspective of having access permissions, but also from a usability perspective. Information needs to be easy to access.

With the lines between internal and external communication getting blurred (Mazzei, 2010, p. 230) our recommendation to make the use of social media more open and accessible is to make the CEOs blog accessible by all regardless of if it is an internal stakeholder, a customer, or the press. This would make the blog not only a tool for internal communication and building of corporate culture but also a tool for conveying corporate values and stories to an external audience.
Another recommendation related to social media is to make use of more social media channels. This is important for a couple of reasons. Having a blog on the intranet website is not optimal, as we know from White (et al, 2010, p. 75) that intranets are commonly used as information-pull archives by employees, i.e. they only go there to retrieve specific information. A blog is an information-push medium and might thus be ignored on an intranet.

Recommendations for specific social media channels needs to arise from the organization's specific objectives with internal communication. Building employee commitment and motivation, as well as communicating company goals are two objectives that needs to be taken into consideration. As quoted earlier by Stevens and McElhill (2000, quoted by Hewitt, 2006, p. 80) "written communication is not the best medium for getting the message across in every situation, and is often not the best way to motivate employees". Thus our recommendation is to not only communicate in written form but also through video. A Youtube channel and a simple web camera would allow the CEO to express himself not only through written words but also through body language and imagery. A podcast also has many benefits. It allows the CEO to communicate with audio. Holtz (2005/2006, p. 25) gives an example on how the CEO can use a podcast to discuss issues of the day or have a weekly newscast for employees.

Just as with your “real life” frequent communication with friends is necessary to maintain a relationship. If you communicate infrequently the relationship will weaken and die, and more frequent communication leads to stronger relationships(Roberts & Dunbar, 2011, p 448). Thus if the CEO wants to strengthen his relationship with his co-workers our recommendation is a higher frequency of communication. A more frequent communication can be accomplished by communicating more frequently through the social media channels, i.e. the blog, videos, a podcast, and twitter.

Not only would the CEO reach his co-workers more often, but the CEO would also integrate the communication more into the daily lives of employees as 66.7% of employees read blogs at least once per week, 70% use smart phones, and 60% use Facebook at least once per week. A podcast would allow the CEO to follow the employees home, as they could listen to it on their way home or on their way to work. The CEO can use a podcast and video to tell informal stories and create this sense of belonging that Wilkins(1984) says is so important in building a corporate culture.

Recommendations regarding the style of communication by the CEO depends on the type of communication. As Elving(2005, p. 131) states a distinction can be made between communication with the aim of conveying information and communication with the aim of building unity and commitment. Our recommendation is that communication from the CEO with the aim of building a corporate culture and strengthen the relationship with employees should be informal when communicating through the blog, while communication with the sole purpose of conveying delicate company information can by all means be formal.
References


63


64

Appendix 1 - Quantitative Survey

Den här undersökningen syftar till att få en bild över din användning av sociala medier, och din syn på kommunikationen inom företaget. Med hjälp av dina svar kommer vi kunna se om och hur den interna kommunikationen kan förbättras med hjälp av sociala medier, samt hur sociala medier kan användas till att skapa en bättre arbetsplats och företagskultur.

Frågorna handlar först och främst om sociala medier, om du använder sociala medier och isåfall hur ofta, oavsett om det är på jobbet eller hemma du använder det.

Enkäten är helt anonym. Dina svar kommer att samlas in och sammanställas med de andra enkätorna.

1. Kön
Man
Kvinna

2. Ålder (ringa in rätt svar)
18-30
31-40
41-50
+50

3. Hur länge har du jobbat på företaget? (ringa in rätt svar)
0-1 år
1-3 år
3-6 år
6-10 år
+10 år

4. Vart inom organisationen jobbar du? (ringa in rätt svar)
Liten butik
Mellanstor butik
Stor butik
Huvudkontoret

5. Har du en smart phone som t.ex. en iPhone eller en Android?
Ja / Nej

6. Har du en personlig blogg?
Ja / Nej

7. Vilka sociala medier kanaler är du medveten om att organisationen använder sig av? (ringa in dom du vet)

Twitter  
Youtube  
Blogg  
Facebook  
Forum  
Intranät

För nedanstående frågor cirkla ett alternativ som stämmer mest.

A - Flera gånger per dag  
B - Minst en gång per dag  
C - Minst en gång i veckan  
D - Minst en gång i månaden  
E - Mindre än en gång i månaden  
F - Aldrig

7. Hur ofta använder du en dator i arbetet?

A B C D E F

7. Hur ofta besöker du intranätet?

A B C D E F

8. Hur ofta läser du bloggar?

A B C D E F

9. Hur ofta lyssnar du på podcasts / ljudböcker?

A B C D E F

10. Hur ofta använder du Facebook?

A B C D E F

11. Hur ofta kollar du på videoklipp online på t.ex. Youtube?

A B C D E F

12. Hur ofta laddar du upp dina egna filmer online på t.ex. Youtube?
13. Hur ofta använder du email privat?

14. Hur ofta använder du email i arbetet?

17. Hur ofta får du företagsinformation genom sociala medier som t.ex. VDns blogg?

18. Hur ofta läser du VDns blogg?

19. Om du följer VDns blogg, varför följer du den? (ringa in alla som stämmer)

1. För att få information så jag kan genomföra mina arbetsuppgifter
2. För att lära mig mer om organisationen
3. För att lära känna VDn mer
4. För att hålla mig uppdaterad på vad som händer i företaget
5. För att hålla mig uppdaterad på framtida förändringar i företaget

20. Har du någonsin kommenterat på en artikel som VDn skrivit på bloggen?

Ja / Nej

21. Hur ofta ger du feedback direkt till Vdn oavsett om det är bloggen eller öga mot öga?

22. Genom vilka andra kanaler får du information från VDn? (ringa in de som stämmer)

Sociala medie kanaler som t.ex. bloggen
Ansikte mot ansikte
Möten
Email
Intranät
Annan (specificera):

23. Vad tycker du om frekvensen på VDns kommunikation?
1. Alldeles för ofrekvent information
2. Lite för ofrekvent information
3. Lagom
4. Lite för frekvent information
5. Alldeles för frekvent information

För nedanstående frågor välj på en skala ett till fem hur mycket du håller med påståendet.

1 – Jag är starkt emot påståendet
2 – Jag är delvis emot påståendet
3 – Ingen åsikt / Neutral
4 – Jag håller delvis med
5 – Jag håller starkt med

25. Kommunikation från VDn är i huvudsak envägskommunikation. (dvs jag har dåliga möjligheter att ge feedback på kommunikationen?)

   1  2  3  4  5

26. Kommunikation från VDn är i huvudsak tvåvägskommunikation. (dvs jag har bra möjligheter att ge feedback på kommunikationen?)

   1  2  3  4  5

27. VDns användning av sociala medier gör att jag känner att mer information kommer direkt från VDn istället för mellanchefer.

   1  2  3  4  5

28. Information jag fått via VDns blogg har hjälpt mig i mitt arbete

   1  2  3  4  5

29. Jag vet mer om VDn och dennes arbete sen VDn började använda sociala medier inom företaget

   1  2  3  4  5

30. Jag känner mer förtroende för VDn sen VDn började blogga

   1  2  3  4  5

31. Jag känner mig mer respekterad när jag får information direkt från VDn

   1  2  3  4  5
32. Information som blir förmedlad nedåt i organisationen blir filtrerad när den passerar mellanchefer
1 2 3 4 5

33. Jag är nöjd med kvaliteten på informationen jag får från VDn
1 2 3 4 5

34. Jag känner tillhörighet gentemot mina medarbetare, dvs. jag är en i gänget.
1 2 3 4 5

35. Det finns en företagskultur i organisationen(dvs. vissa värderingar genomsyrar organisationen)
1 2 3 4 5

36. VDns användning av sociala medier har förbättrat min bild av organisationens företagskultur och värderingar
1 2 3 4 5

37. VDn är positiv i sin kommunikation
1 2 3 4 5

38. VDn är formell i sin kommunikation
1 2 3 4 5

39. VDn är entusiastisk i sin kommunikation
1 2 3 4 5

40. VDn är öppen och transparent i sin kommunikation
1 2 3 4 5
Appendix 2 - Questions for Semi-structured interview with CEO

Internal Communication

Which communication channels/tools do you use?
For employees?
For managers?

Why does it look like this?

What types of information do you communicate with all employees?

Would you describe your communication with employees as one-way or two-way?

How often do you communicate with all employees?

How much time do you spend on internal communication per day?

Do you communicate to middle managers who then pass on the information to employees?

What are your goals and intentions with internal communication? What do you hope to improve?

Which are your most important internal stakeholders? (managers? employees?)

Social Media

How do you use social media today?

Why?

How long have you used social media?

What made you start using social media?

What is your thoughts on social media?

Pros Cons Opportunities Threats

What kind of feedback have you received so far?

What is your future plans?
The blog
Why did you decide to start the blog? (compared to other social media?)

How do you use the blog?

How often? (frequency)

Why?

Example when social media has had negative effects?

Example when social media has had positive effects?

Corporate Culture
When you communicate, do you try to be perceived as a certain type of person?
i.e. open, positive, transparent, trustworthy, motivational, formal vs informal, enthusiastic

What would you say are your company’s core values?
Have you tried to communicate these core values to employees? Through social media?

Do you use stories in your communication with employees?
Why? Why not?

Do you communicate coming changes and future plans to all employees?
Through which channels? How often?

How large is your professional social network that you communicate with daily?

Has your social network grown / become stronger by using social media? With employees? With managers?

What is your view on trust in an organization? As a CEO?

Do you communicate company goals to employees?
How? Why? Through social media?

Do you encourage independent decision making in any way through social media?
Do you communicate the reasons for change and why it is important?